

addenda

The University of Tennessee at Martin Faculty and Staff Newsletter | Aug. 25, 2025

The 2025-26 school year gets underway!



Students hit the ground running – figuratively – as they took their first academic steps of the fall semester on the first day of classes, Aug. 25. Students came back to campus during Welcome Weekend, which featured Move-In Mania on Aug 21 and several enjoyable events throughout the weekend. The fall 2025 semester lasts through Dec. 12, with time off for Labor Day (Sept. 1), fall break (Oct. 20-21) and Thanksgiving (Nov. 26-30).



YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

Dr. Ben Le, associate professor of finance, and **Dr. Paula Moore**, chair of the Department of Accounting, Finance, Economics and Political Science and professor of accounting and business law, published a paper Aug. 14 in the Journal of Financial Reporting and Accounting entitled “How financial liberalization moderates the link between financial reporting quality and foreign investment.” The text can be seen [at this site](#).

The paper aims to explore how financial reporting quality, known as FRQ, influences foreign portfolio investment in equity markets, emphasizing the moderating effect of financial liberalization.

Using a panel data set of



Le

461 firms spanning the period 2008–21, we find that foreign investors are more inclined to invest in firms exhibiting higher FRQ. However, the influence of FRQ on foreign investment diminishes as financial liberalization increases.

The study provides empirical support for Information



Moore

Asymmetry Theory (Akerlof, 1970), Institutional Theory (Scott, 1995) and the Efficient Market Hypothesis (Fama, 1970).

The early version of the paper was presented at the 2025 American Accounting Researchers and Educators conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The news at news.utm.edu

[Jones receives UTFI President's Award](#)

[Master of Science in Social Work degree opens registration](#)

[Power generation facility marks 20th year](#)

[Searches begin for leadership positions](#)

UT MARTIN | NEWS



Rasool

Dr. Adnan Rasool, associate professor of political science, appeared on Fox News on Aug. 14 for an interview about the Presidential Summit in Alaska between President Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The segment ran for about seven minutes at the midday prime-time spot. The video is available [at this site](#).

Rasool also has an article in Vol. 10, Issue 2 of The Journal for Research and Practice in College Teaching entitled “Adapting to AI in General Ed Courses: Transforming Assignment Design and Assessment Practices in Political Science.”

The text can be found [at this site](#).

Dr. Laura Hatch, assistant professor of accounting, was featured in the Aug. 18 WalletHub online story “Best Budget Apps.”

Hatch fielded questions regarding the use of a budgeting app, including the kind of app to look for, how to use the app and what a good budgeting app would feature.

WalletHub is based in Washington, D.C., and is a financial website that offers information such as credit-improvement advice and personalized savings alerts.

The site’s business-related features are supplemented with information from subject-matter experts.



Hatch

Upcoming Skyhawk Home Events

Sunday, Aug. 31

- Women’s soccer vs. Illinois State, 2 p.m., Skyhawk Soccer Field.

Thursday, Sept. 4

- Women’s soccer vs. Murray State, 7 p.m., Skyhawk Soccer Field.

Thursday, Sept. 11

- Women’s soccer vs. Evansville, 7 p.m., Skyhawk Soccer Field.

Saturday, Sept. 13

- Football vs. Southern Illinois, 6 p.m., Hardy M. Graham Stadium.

* - conference competition.
Full athletics schedules can be found at utmsports.com.

Dates and times are subject to change.



Submit a YoUTM or a question to addenda@utm.edu!

President's Award winners receive awards



Shown receiving their President's Awards on Aug. 7 from UT System President Randy Boyd are (top left) Kameron Echols, director of student leadership and campus culture; (top right) Gina McClure, assistant vice chancellor for student and residential life (below left) Judy Sandefer, executive assistant, Office of the Chancellor and (below right) Tara Tansil-Gentry, lecturer in health and human performance. In the bottom photo, shown at the awards ceremony representing UT Martin are (l-r) Echols, Sandefer, Tansil-Gentry, McClure and Chancellor Yancy Freeman.

Coffee with the chancellor sessions return

Opportunities for faculty and staff members to share coffee and discussions with Chancellor Yancy Freeman will return to campus this semester.

Called "Building Coffee and Conversations with Chancellor," the hour-long informal sessions were encouraged by

the Employee Engagement Survey.

The sessions provide an opportunity for employees to discuss issues or concerns with Freeman in a relaxed, conversational setting.

The schedule of events for the fall semester is:

- Friday, Sept. 12, 1:30 p.m., Room 203

Business Administration Building.

- Wednesday, Oct. 1, 3:15 p.m., Room 121 Holt Humanities Building (Campbell Auditorium).

- Monday, Nov. 17, 3 p.m., Room 101 Latimer-Smith Engineering and Science Building.

Jones receives 2025 UTFI President's Award

The University of Tennessee Foundation Inc. (UTFI) announced its 2025 President's Award recipients.

UT Martin's **Ben Jones**, assistant vice chancellor for development in the Office of University Advancement, received one of six awards given.

UTFI is an interdependent nonprofit corporation with a mission to raise financial, public and political support for the University of Tennessee System.

The UTFI President's Award recognizes outstanding



Jones

achievements by advancement staff in applying creative concepts to improving performance,

advancing fundraising and alumni engagement efforts and promoting a better understanding of the systemwide advancement activities and asset management services of the UT Foundation.

Jones' thoughtful, strategic approach to cross-campus proposals has resulted in impactful, multi-campus projects that directly benefit students statewide.

Recipients are nominated by supervisors or managers, and a committee of previous-

year recipients select up to six employees to receive the honor.

The other recipients include Lydia Ball, assistant director of stewardship and donor relations at UT Southern; Terri Catafygioutu, senior director of alumni programs at UT Health Science Center; Paul Clark, executive director of development at UT Knoxville; Shuying Liu, associate director of data science at Central Services; and Nancy Mullins, assistant director of events at UT Chattanooga.

CTL fall schedule, Fellow application form released

The fall 2025 schedule for the Center for Teaching and Learning has been released by CTL Director **Dr. Adnan Rasool**.

This semester, the CTL will host three focused workshops that deal with specific teaching challenges alongside four Faculty Brown Bag sessions that offer informal, collegial discussions.

Workshop registration will open three weeks before each event, while the Faculty Brown Bags work just like office hours: People may drop in when they can during that time, stay as long as they want and engage in the conversations that feel relevant to them.

This semester's CTL schedule is:

- Friday, Sept. 26, 1-3:45 p.m., Room 215 Paul Meek Library: Using AI in the Classroom: Upgrading Class Assignments.

The workshop will focus on helping faculty interested in embedding artificial intelligence into their existing assignments or helping them come up with AI-powered assignment ideas. All attendees are requested to preselect an assignment they wish to embed with AI for this workshop or have an idea of an assignment they wish to work on. The first hour is a dedicated discussion on what the skills industry is requesting our students learn and get comfortable with, like the kind of AI usage being discussed and expected from our students. That is followed by **Dr. Bethany Wolters**, associate

professor of plant and soil science, and **Dr. Lily Pharris**, assistant professor of computer science, sharing their experiences and assignments they have embedded with AI over the last semesters.

- Friday, Oct. 24, 1-3 p.m., Room 215 Paul Meek Library: Community Engagement and Project Design.

This workshop is in response to the targets set up as part of the UT Martin Strategic Plan goal "Encourage and provide robust support for faculty-led projects to strengthen ties with the region and provide practical learning experiences for students."

The intention is to help faculty engage in more community projects and local business interactions to help the university strengthen existing partnerships.

The workshop will include a component on writing grants, a discussion on building local partnerships as well as how to embed these projects as part of classes.

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) will partner with CTL for this event.

- Monday, Nov. 17, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Room 215 Paul Meek Library: SOTL ResearchL Testing Out Ideas.

The workshop is designed to focus on helping faculty generate ideas about how their teaching can be converted in Scholarship Of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) research.

Presenters include **Dr. Natasha Varnick**, assistant professor of psychology; **Dr. Saman Sargolzaei**, associate professor of engineering; and **Dr. Tony Delmond**, professor of agricultural economics.

Faculty will get enough time to bounce ideas and discuss what outlets are available for publication of these projects.

■ The Faculty Brown Bag Series will have four dates this semester. Faculty are invited to bring a brown-bag lunch and discuss the topics of each session or other topics seeking opinion and feedback.

Coffee and cookies are provided at the Brown Bag discussions.

The schedule for the fall semester is:

- Tuesday, Sept. 16, 1:30 p.m., Room 116 Paul Meek Library: Adapting to Tech and AI in the Classroom.

- Wednesday, Oct. 1, 1:30 p.m., Room 215 Paul Meek Library: Advising: Beyond Course Selection.

- Wednesday, Oct. 15, 1:30 p.m., Room 215 Paul Meek Library: Grading and SLOs.

- Thursday, Oct. 30, 1:30 p.m., Room 215 Paul Meek Library: Cross-Disciplinary Teaching and Research Possibilities.

■ Rasool also announced that applications for the CTL Faculty Fellows Program are available. Application forms can be found [at this site](#) and should be returned by end of day Monday, Sept. 15.



The annual Tennessee Soybean Festival is a combined effort between the city of Martin and UT Martin. It brings thousands of people to the city in a way to bid farewell to summer with a weeklong celebration with food, rides, contests, shows and concerts. Information about the festival, including access to the festival magazine and a festival map, can be found at tnsoybeanfestival.org.

Tennessee Soybean Festival held Sept. 2-6

The Tennessee Soybean Festival will soon get underway, continuing not only the celebration of one of the county's top agricultural products but also the teamwork between the city of Martin, the University of Tennessee at Martin and several area sponsors, now in its 32nd year.

The festival parade will begin at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 2, and will go along University and Lindell streets. The grand marshal is the David Coates family and farm.

The festival continues through the week and closes Saturday, Sept. 6, with rides, shows and the TLC concert at 6:30 p.m. at the WK&T Amphitheater.

Brad Thompson, city of Martin director of economic and community development, said the longevity of the festival is a credit to the organizers and the community alike.

"We are so fortunate that we have a festival committee that is still active, and that there is still community interest and

community involvement," he said. "What is so neat about it is: We have so many diverse activities and offerings at the festival, and I think that coincides with the diversity of the uses of soybeans."

The complete schedule of events for the Tennessee Soybean Festival – including a festival map, sponsors list and access to the festival magazine – can be found at tnsoybeanfestival.org.

You Tell Me

• **Question** – Will the tribute tree planted in memory of Dr. Milton Simmons in front of Paul Meek Library's north windows be replaced?

• **Answer** – The original tree had significant insect and winter damage, declined rapidly and will be replaced. The tree was a Japanese maple of specimen size. The plan is to replace it with a larger tree; a larger Japanese maple can cost anywhere from \$800 to \$2,000. Grounds is waiting until fall to give its replacement the best chance for establishment. Dr. Simmons served as professor and chair of the Department of Psychology and Religious Studies, was twice dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, was twice vice chancellor for academic affairs, and helped to organize the University Scholars and Honors Seminar programs while vice chancellor. He taught in nine Governor's Schools for the Humanities and was named director in 1990. He was best known as "Uncle Miltie" to hundreds of Governor School students.

Submit your questions to Addenda at addenda@utm.edu.

Freeman begins academic year with Opening Meeting

UT Martin faculty and staff opened the 2025-26 school year Aug. 18 with the annual Opening Celebration breakfast and Opening Meeting, held in the Boling University Center.

The breakfast provided faculty and staff a chance to get reacquainted and catch up on summer events before **Chancellor Yancy Freeman** spoke with them in the Opening Meeting in Watkins Auditorium.

Freeman mentioned highlights for the coming school year, including the university's 125th anniversary, which will be celebrated throughout the school year, beginning Oct. 10 and culminating in the fall 2026 semester.

The university was founded in 1900 as Hall-Moody Institute, with the first classes being held Sept. 2, 1901.

Freeman announced that this would be the last year for Browning Residence Hall. At the end of the spring 2026 semester, it will be razed, and a 400-bed residence hall would be built at its site. The new residence hall is expected to be opened in fall 2027.

Phase 2 of heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) work at the Hall-Moody Administration Building is taking place during this school year. Phase 1 was completed at the end of the last school year, and Phase 2 is expected to be completed in late spring or early summer 2026.

Freeman spoke about achievements that the university and its faculty and staff had over the last year:

- The university attained its largest enrollment since 2012 (7,507 students in fall 2024), an 8% increase. Freeman said when he announced the goal of 10,000 students in the Strategic Plan for 2025-30 that it would take 5% increases each year through 2030 to attain that goal.
- The university received \$8 million in grant funding for Fiscal Year 2025 and more than \$17 million in sponsored projects over the last two fiscal years.
- The university added a sixth UTM regional center, opening a regional center in Springfield, and forming an agreement with Nashville State Community College to provide a pathway to a Bachelor of Science degree in agricultural business through its higher education center in Waverly.
- Ground was broken for the building of the Tennessee Entrepreneurial Science and Technology (TEST) Hub.



Chancellor Yancy Freeman (at left) addresses UT Martin's faculty and staff at the annual Opening Meeting, held Aug. 18 in the Phillip W. Watkins Auditorium in the Boling University Center. Awards and achievements were recognized and plans for the university were announced.

- The university received UT Board of Trustees approval of construction of a Business Administration Building.

- The university added the Center for Teaching and Learning.

- The university added the Skyhawks Achieving In Life (SAIL) program, funded through a Tennessee Believes grant.

- UTM student-athletes had a grade-point average of 3.37 in the spring 2025 semester, marking the best GPA in recorded history for UTM athletics and the 11th straight semester for student-athletes to boast a GPA of 3.2 or better.

- The 2024 season marked the fourth straight year for football to claim at least a share of the conference title and the second postseason win in the university's history as an NCAA Division I member.

- The equestrian team won a conference title and earned a bid to the national championship.

- The tractor team placed 10th at the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) International Quarter-Scale Tractor Student Design Competition, the best finish in the university's 13-year history of competition.

- **Dr. Todd Winters**, dean of the College of Agriculture, was named president of

the national Non-Land-Grant Agricultural and Renewable Sources University board of directors for the 2024-25 year. He also served as president in the 2015-16 year.

- **Dr. Andy Lewter**, vice chancellor for student affairs, received the Joe Buck Service Award for outstanding contributions to the field of student affairs. It is the highest award given for the field of student affairs.

- **Dr. Stephanie Kolitsch**, transitional provost and senior vice chancellor for academic affairs, announced several faculty award winners received during the 2024-25 year:

- **Dr. Philip Smartt**, professor of natural resources management, University of Tennessee Alumni Association (UTAA) Distinguished Service Professor and UTAA Alumni Outstanding Teacher.

- **Dr. Tammie Patterson**, associate professor of education, UTAA Alumni Outstanding Teacher.

- **Dr. Hui "Christie" Chen**, professor of management, Outstanding Academic Adviser Award.

- **Dr. Justin Sims**, associate professor of mathematics and statistics, Coffey Outstanding Teaching Award.

- **Dr. Nathan Howard**, professor

Continued on PAGE 7

University to celebrate 125th anniversary

UT Martin is planning a celebration this year to commemorate its 125th anniversary.

The university was founded in 1900 as the Hall-Moody Institute and was to be located on property donated by Ada Gardner Brooks.

The institute was named for Baptist ministers John Newton Hall and Dr. Joseph Burnley Moody, and was to offer 13 years of study, from lower elementary grades through the early years of college.

The cornerstone of the administration building – the first facility on campus – was laid on Oct. 2, 1900, and the first classes would be held on Monday, Sept. 2, 1901.

The university has seen some changes since then, becoming a University of Tennessee Junior College in 1927, a site for a Civilian Pilot Training program in 1943, becoming a four-year university in 1951 and



being named the University of Tennessee at Martin in 1967.

To demonstrate the pride in the university's history, progress and impact over the last 125 years, a number of events

are scheduled to celebrate the university's 125th anniversary, or quasiquicentennial (pronounced "QUAS-qui-cen-TENN-ial").

A schedule of events can be found online at the UTM Alumni website [at this site](#).

The celebration begins with the celebration's opening ceremony 10 a.m., Friday, Oct. 10, in the Phillip W. Watkins Auditorium in the Boling University Center.

Other events include:

- Friday, Nov. 21, 5 p.m., Conner Community and Ellington Hall lawn: "President's Gala: A Night of Orange and Blue."
- April 13-17: Chancellor's State Tour, to be held at different locations.
- The celebration will extend into the fall 2026 semester.

MEETING from PAGE 6

of history, and **Dr. Saman Sargolzaei**, associate professor of engineering, Cunningham Outstanding Teacher/Scholar Award.

• **Dr. Jack Grubaugh**, professor of biology, OVC Commitment to Student Success Award.

Freeman announced that four faculty or staff members received UT President Awards: **Kameron Echols**, director of student leadership and campus culture; **Gina McClure**, assistant vice chancellor for student and residential life; **Judy Sandefer**, executive assistant, Office of the Chancellor; and **Tara Tansil-Gentry**, lecturer, health and human performance.



Dr. Anderson Starling, associate provost, speaks to UT Martin faculty and staff about the Welcome Weekend and the Aug. 22 convocation at the Opening Meeting.

The Outstanding Employee year were noted. Recipients of Awards for the 2024-25 school the spring 2025 awards were

Tina Harris, Division of Access and Engagement, who received the nonexempt employee award, and **Dr. Laura Foltz**, Division of Finance and Administration, who received the exempt employee award.

Recipients of the fall 2024 awards were **Karen Johnson**, Department of Visual and Theatre Arts, who received the nonexempt employee award, and **Kiara Castleman**, Office of Academic Records, who received the exempt employee award.

Ben Jones, associate vice chancellor for development in the Office of University Advancement, was recognized as the recipient of UT Foundation Inc. President's Award.

**Read more UT Martin news
at news.utm.edu!**

addenda

Published weekly during the academic year and biweekly during the summer by UT Martin, Martin, TN 38238

Randy Boyd – President, University of Tennessee System • Dr. Yancy Freeman Sr. – UTM Chancellor • David Snow – Addenda Editor

UT Martin is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA employer. E05-0415-00-001-26