

addenda

The University of Tennessee at Martin Faculty and Staff Newsletter | Sept. 8, 2025



Shown prior to the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the library learning commons Sept. 3 at the Paul Meek Library are (l-r) Dr. Brad Baumgardner, director of retention in the Student Success Center; Chancellor Yancy Freeman; Dr. Amanda Mansfield, coordinator of the library learning commons; and Dr. Erik Nordberg, dean of the Paul Meek Library. The library learning commons was made possible through a Title III Strengthening Institutions Program Grant awarded in October 2023 that also bolstered the creation of the Center for Teaching and Learning, also located in the library.

Library learning commons officially opens

The Paul Meek Library has made a number of changes on its main floor to make room for a new area of academic assistance and support.

The library learning commons held a ceremonial ribbon cutting at the library Sept. 3.

The coordinator for the new learning commons is **Dr. Amanda Mansfield**, who earned her Bachelor of Science degree in sociology from UT Martin in 2018, her Master's in Business Administration from UT Martin in 2020 and a Doctor of Education degree from Murray State University in 2024.

Mansfield was a supplemental instruction leader as an undergraduate student, helping

students with their academic challenges. As a graduate student, she supervised the supplemental instructors.

Dr. Erik Nordberg, the dean of the Paul Meek Library, said that the library had already hosted several organizations and their activities, including the Supplemental Instruction Program operated by the Student Success Center; a small STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) lab also run by the Student Success Center; and a smaller version of the Hortense Parrish Writing Lab.

Nordberg said the project began nearly three years ago when he and **Dr. Brad Baumgardner**, the director of retention at the Student Success Center, considered how

the Student Success Center and the library could become more collaborative in the way they support students.

"We know from collected data that students who take advantage of academic support functions and services do better," Nordberg said. "They attain higher grade-point averages, they are more likely to progress semester to semester, and they are more likely to progress to graduation and succeed."

"The problem tends to be that students think there is a stigma to ask for help or to get a tutor or do those kinds of things."

The first challenge was to create a space for the library learning commons. The library

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YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

Kurt McGuffin, vice chancellor and director of athletics, has been selected as president of the NCAA Division I Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) Athletic Directors Association (ADA) for the 2025-26 season.

The announcement was made Sept. 4 by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics.

McGuffin was appointed to the FCS ADA board in 2020 and served as first vice president for the 2024-25 year.

In his new role, McGuffin will oversee the FCS ADA executive committee.

In his ninth season overseeing UT Martin's athletics program, McGuffin has presided over nine different programs that have combined for 19 conference or regional championships.

The Skyhawks have also excelled in the classroom, as student-athletes achieved at least a 3.20 grade-point average for 11 consecutive semesters, capped off with a school-record 3.37 GPA in the spring 2025 term.

UT Martin Athletics also



McGuffin

registered 5,400 hours of community service for the 2024-25 academic year, which ranks as the most in school history.



Walker

Dr. Sean Walker, professor of behavioral management, was featured in the Aug. 22 edition of WalletHub with comments about finding the best car insurance companies.

Walker answered questions about why car insurance rates differ from state to state, if the amount of savings claimed in car insurance commercials is accurate, what to look for when shopping for car insurance

and the best way to save on car insurance.

Walker's comments can be seen [at this site](#).

WalletHub, based in Washington, D.C., 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.

The Margaret N. Perry Children's Center was voted "Best Day Care" in "The 2025 Best of Weakley County," published June 24 by the Weakley County Press.

The center opened in 1993 and is named for **Dr. Margaret N. Perry**, UT Martin's sixth chancellor.

The center's staff includes Briana Jimenez, director; Sarah Robison, assistant director; and teaching staff members Maddie Doster, Christi Browne, Candace Flatt, Jordan Fischer, Faith Doster, Amber Adams, Tori York and Michelle Legens. Courtney Mosley is the center's kitchen manager.



The staff also includes three graduate and three undergraduate assistants.

The Perry Children's Center is under the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences.

Upcoming Skyhawk Home Events

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 (Hall of Fame Game).

Saturday, Sept. 20

- *Soccer vs. Southern Indiana, 7 p.m., Skyhawk Soccer Field.

Sept. 26-27

- Equestrian, Blue and Orange Scrimmage, Ned McWhirter Agricultural Complex.

Saturday, Sept. 27

- *Football vs. Southeast Missouri, 6 p.m., Hardy M. Graham Stadium (Family Weekend).

Sunday, Sept. 28

- *Soccer vs. Eastern Illinois, 2 p.m., Skyhawk Soccer Field.

Tuesday, Sept. 30

- *Volleyball vs. Little Rock, 6 p.m., Skyhawk Fieldhouse.

Thursday, Oct. 9

- *Volleyball vs. Western Illinois, 6 p.m., Skyhawk Fieldhouse.
- * Soccer vs. Little Rock, 7 p.m., Skyhawk Soccer Field.

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

Dates and times are subject to change.



Building Conversations and Coffee begins Sept. 12

The first Building Conversations and Coffee get-together will be held at 1:30 p.m., Friday, Sept. 12, in Room 203 of the Business Administration Building.

Chancellor Yancy Freeman will be on hand for an informal hour of casual conversation over coffee.

"This is an opportunity for me to engage with faculty and staff in their building to discuss current issues relating

to what they are experiencing, personally and professionally," Freeman said.

"It will also give faculty and staff an opportunity to share their achievements, ask questions, network, voice concerns and explore innovative ideas and incentives for moving forward in building up our university."

Freeman added that he plans to visit with faculty and staff across campus, building-by-

building, over the next year to get to know employees better and improve campus-wide communications and connections.

Other Building Conversations events scheduled this semester are Wednesday, Oct. 1, in the Holt Humanities Building and Monday, Nov. 17, in the Latimer-Smith Engineering and Science Building.



Freeman

Law enforcement training held on campus



Law enforcement exercises were held Aug. 18-19 on the UTM campus. Participants took part in a tactical active violence response course both days. Participants were in the classroom at the Lawrence D. Bromley Training Center and on the firing range at the City of Martin Police Department's outdoor range Aug. 18, and in Browning Hall conducting scenarios Aug. 19. Participants came from several local law enforcement agencies.

Math colloquium series continues Sept. 17

The Mathematics and Statistics Colloquium Series began Sept. 3 and continues throughout the fall semester.

The first program featured **Dr. Louis Kolitsch**, professor of mathematics, with the program "Number Theory and Its Applications."

The next program is scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 17, and features **Alisha Melton**, executive director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, and "Grant-Related Research Opportunities."

Ronne Cox, electronic resources and discovery librarian, will present a program Wednesday, Oct. 1, called "Library Resources for Mathematicians and Statisticians."

Dr. Shouryya Mitra, assistant professor of mathematics at Xavier University, will have a Zoom presentation, "Statistical Methods in Data Analysis," on Wednesday, Oct. 15.

The series will conclude its fall schedule Wednesday, Nov. 12, with Dr. Jaffar Ali, professor of mathematics at Florida

Gulf Coast University, making a Zoom presentation, "How, When and Where to Use AI."

Each program will be held from 3 to 4 p.m. in Room 311 of the Latimer-Smith Engineering and Science Building. All faculty, staff and students may attend.

For more information, contact **Dr. Shalmali Bandopadhyay**, assistant professor of mathematics and statistics, at sbandyo5@utm.edu.

UTM, Vol State co-host Lunch and Learn event

UT Martin and Volunteer State Community College co-hosted their first Lunch and Learn event June 12 at the F&M Bank in Springfield, bringing together local industry leaders, educators and community stakeholders from Robertson County to explore innovative educational pathways in agriculture.

The event spotlighted UT Martin's on-site bachelor's degree programs in agricultural business and farm and ranch management, initiatives strategically designed to meet the region's growing demand for skilled professionals in the agricultural sector.

The Lunch and Learn event served as a collaborative forum to discuss opportunities for expanding dual enrollment, deepening industry partnerships and enhancing student access to career-aligned academic programs.

"This event exemplified the power of regional collaboration in creating meaningful educational and workforce pathways," said **Erica Bell**, UTM executive director of regional centers and online programs. "By uniting the strengths of UT Martin, Vol State and our local industry partners, we're not only expanding opportunities for students; we're investing in the future of Middle Tennessee's



Meeting to discuss potential education pathways for students in the UTM Springfield Regional Center were (l-r) **Dr. Joey Mehlhorn**, interim dean of the College of Business and Global Affairs at UTM; **Dr. Duane Berry**, assistant vice president for academic affairs at Vol State; **Dr. Emily Short**, vice president for student services at Vol State; **Will Elliott**, career and technical education coordinator for Robertson County Schools; **Erica Bell**, UTM executive director of regional centers and online programs; **Audrey Cochran**, UTM director of dual enrollment; and **John Bartee Jr.**, coordinator of the UTM Springfield Center.

agricultural economy."

Representatives from both institutions were in attendance, including Bell; **Dr. Joey Mehlhorn**, interim dean of the College of Business and Global Affairs at UTM; **Dr. Duane Berry**, assistant vice president for academic affairs at Vol State; and **Dr. Emily Short**, vice president for student services at Vol State.

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Campus Calendar

Ongoing

- Guitar as Art exhibition, 3-7 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 1-5 p.m., Friday through Sunday, art gallery, Fine Arts Building.

Thursday, Sept. 11

- Skyhawk-Palooza, tailgating area, Hardy M. Graham Stadium; food trucks open at 4 p.m., events begin at 5

p.m.

Sunday, Sept. 14

- Miss UTM Volunteer/Miss Weakley County Volunteer Pageant, 6 p.m., Watkins Auditorium, Boling University Center.

Events are subject to cancellation; dates, times and sites are subject to change.

You Tell Me

• **Question** – What causes bricks to “bleed” on different campus buildings? Is there a way to clean what’s occurred and prevent future “bleeding” from happening?

• **Answer** – Efflorescence is a common problem on brick buildings because of salts naturally found in the materials used to make bricks. The quantity of soluble salts in the materials, brick porosity and environmental factors such as weather and temperature can all influence the severity of efflorescence. The Physical Plant has cleaned the brick with an acid wash, but the issue reoccurs. Bricks are porous, and if they’re exposed to water on the top (like a ledge wall – those at the Paul Meek Library and Gooch Hall on the quad side entrance are examples), they will almost always have this issue. The best “fix” is to have a cap over the top ledge, which isn’t always practical. Plantings are sometimes used to hide efflorescence, which somewhat addresses the appearance problem.

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

Domestic Violence Awareness Month events announced

The Office of Access, Compliance and Title IX will host several prevention and education initiatives throughout the month of October as part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

These events include:

- Wednesday, Oct. 1: Self-defense class with Title IX and UTM Public Safety, Duncan Ballroom, Boling University Center.
- Thursday, Oct. 2: Double-Movie Feature Night, Pacer Pond parking lot.

- Monday, Oct. 13: Walk with Freeman, Domestic Violence Awareness Month Walk, Friends statue.

- Wednesday, Oct. 15: Poetry Night, "Speak Your Peace: Unsilenced," 6 p.m., Duncan Ballroom, Boling University Center.

- Thursday, Oct. 23: Purple Thursday; wear purple in support of survivors.

- Saturday, Oct. 25: Domestic Violence Awareness Month 5K Color Run, 9 a.m., Kathleen

and Tom Elam Center.

Times for some events will be announced at a later date.

Dominique Ross, Title IX coordinator and director of the Office of Access, Compliance and Title IX, provided a link to the 2025-26 Policy on Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Dating and Domestic Violence and Stalking [at this site](#).

Ross said that physical copies of resource guides could be found in Room 212 of the Boling University Center.

For more information, call the



Ross

Office of Access, Compliance and Title IX at 731-881-3505 or email Ross at titleix@utm.edu.

LIBRARY from PAGE 1

did a review of its print reference collections, which Nordberg said were very underused, and it integrated important items into the second-floor circulating collection, allowing the library to move those shelves from the first floor to the second floor.

"In effect, we were able to focus and re-energize our print collection on the second floor and open up the area for the library learning commons," Nordberg said. "It's taken us three years to do that, and that's been a lot of hard work by librarians and staff to review

titles, select titles, input from teaching faculty on campus and then, of course, just the physical nature of moving thousands of volumes and shelving."

Funding for the change came from the students' annual facilities fee and a \$1.54 million Title III Strengthening Institutions Program Grant that was approved in October 2023. The grant bolstered the creation of the commons as well as the Center for Teaching and Learning, which is located on the second floor of the library.

Nordberg said the goal of the library learning commons has

been to make it easy for students with academic challenges.

"Come to the library learning commons – the location is right in the name – and ask for some assistance," he said. "If you need help finding a peer-reviewed article, we can get you to a librarian. If you need help getting those peer-reviewed articles into an essay, we'll find somebody from the writing center. If you have a challenge with a harder class, we will connect you to a peer educator student associated with that course."

The library learning commons includes a new welcome desk, new computer furniture and one-on-one consultation booths. There will be six or seven academic coaches this semester, with a goal of increasing to 10 coaches.

The library learning commons is overseen by **Sarah Morris**, assistant director of student Success Services, and Baumgardner.

For more information about the library learning commons, call Mansfield at 731-881-3093 or Nordberg at 731-881-7070.

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They were joined by Will Elliott, career and technical education coordinator for Robertson County Schools; **Audrey Cochran**, UTM director of dual enrollment; and John Barte Jr., coordinator of the UTM Springfield Center.

The Lunch and Learn event reflects UTM's continued commitment to regional

engagement and academic innovation in high-demand fields.

With the support of community and industry partners, the UTM Springfield Center is positioned to become a key driver of workforce development and economic growth in the region.

UT Martin and Vol State Community College

officially formed an academic partnership on Nov. 29, 2023, that enabled students at Vol State to pursue bachelor's and master's degrees through the UT Martin Springfield Regional Center on the VSCC campus in Springfield.

The Springfield Regional Center became the sixth regional center for UT Martin, which also boasts regional

centers in Jackson, McNairy County/Selmer, Parsons, Ripley and Somerville.

For more information about pursuing an education at UT Martin's regional centers, contact Erica Bell at 731-881-7089 or ebell3@utm.edu.

More information about UT Martin can be found at www.utm.edu or by calling 1-800-829-UTM1 (8861).

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

addenda

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