

addenda

The University of Tennessee at Martin Faculty and Staff Newsletter | Oct. 20, 2025



Shown with their UT Martin Outstanding Employee Awards are Jennifer Killebrew (left), the fall 2025 exempt employee award winner, and Heather Coleman, the fall 2025 non-exempt employee award winner. They are shown with UTM Chancellor Yancy Freeman Sr., who presented the awards.

Killebrew, Coleman named Outstanding Employees

UT Martin announced the winners of its fall 2025 Outstanding Employee Awards at the fall clerical and support staff coffee held Oct. 16 in the Boling University Center.

The fall 2025 exempt employee winner is **Jenny Killebrew**, director of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) and undergraduate student services programs, while the fall 2025 non-exempt employee winner is **Heather Coleman**, coordinator of the UTM Parsons Center.

Killebrew, a resident of Dresden, is a recruiter for the College of Business and Global Affairs, traveling across several states to promote the college, helping it to maintain a strong presence and attracting the best prospective students.

She also organizes CBGA student outreach activities and advises first-year students and sophomores within the college, making the experience seamless for them as they

transition to a faculty adviser during their junior year. She also advises MBA students and completes the graduation check sheets to ensure that the graduate students are on track to graduate.

She plays a major role in planning and implementing the CBGA career fair, bringing together more than 30 employers and 250 students.

Killebrew hosts “Breakfast with Jenny” during the first week of classes, providing granola bars, fruit and water to the students and welcoming students to the College of Business and Global Affairs.

At the UTM Parsons Center, Coleman also plays an instrumental role in mentoring students, offering guidance, structure and support. She is often called on to assist with technology problems.

In September, Coleman was named one of four finalists for the inaugural Jim

Ayers Torchbearer Award, recognizing one outstanding Ayers alumnus or alumna who is helping move their community forward through entrepreneurship, community engagement.

Coleman, a resident of Decatur County, serves on the boards of the Decatur County Chamber of Commerce and the Carl Perkins Center, and she plans the United Way table for UT Martin’s regional centers.

Coleman organizes the UTM regional centers’ Homecoming tent to help the centers’ students feel more like a part of the greater Skyhawk community.

UT Martin Outstanding Employee Awards are given to one exempt employee and one non-exempt employee each semester. Recipients are nominated by their coworkers and chosen by a selection committee.

YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff



Cude

The UT Martin counseling program participated in the biannual national conference organized by the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision.

Dr. Tabitha Cude, assistant professor of counseling; **Dr. Covington Hanley**, lecturer of counseling; **Dr. ZeVida Jones**, assistant professor of counseling;; and **Dr. Derrick**

Shepard, assistant professor of counseling all contributed presentations that were accepted for this prestigious event.

Shepard was honored with the President's Award from the Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES) in recognition of his exemplary leadership and dedicated service as SACES treasurer.

Dr. Mahmoud Haddad, professor of finance, was featured in WalletHub's recent story titled "Full Coverage Car Insurance Guide."

The story and related Q&A with Haddad can be seen [here](#).

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.



Hanley



Jones



Shepard



Haddad

Ronne Cox, assistant professor and electronic resources and discovery librarian, presented the session "Gotta Catch 'Em All: CoMeekCon" at the NASIG (formerly the North American Serials Interest Group Inc.) autumn virtual conference Oct. 14-16.

CoMeekCon is an innovative approach to gathering student input for collection development

and resource assessment through nontraditional channels that encourage patron engagement.

This session explored how an academic library leveraged a popular event to connect with students, foster engagement and create new avenues for student input, ultimately shaping the library's graphic novel collection and resources to better reflect their needs and interests.



Cox



Johnson

Brian Johnson, lecturer of and chair of the UTM Department of Psychology, gave a talk titled "Understanding Social Psychology in Elder Abuse" at the Northwest Tennessee Elder Justice Coalition's conference on Elder Justice on Oct. 2.

The lecture included different social psychological factors that play out in

actions leading to elder abuse, including perceptions, conflict, persuasion, rationalization or self-justification, deindividuation and factors involved in decisions to help or not to help or to intervene or not to intervene.

The conference was held Oct. 1-2 at Discovery Park of America in Union City.

The news at
news.utm.edu

[Department of Music to host Dessert Evening](#)

[UTM to host Transfer Experience Day](#)

[Nursing lab named for family of alumnus](#)

[UT Martin's yearlong 125th anniversary celebration begins](#)

[Pusser files made public through UTM](#)

UT MARTIN | NEWS

Department of Music to host Dessert Evening



The UT Martin Department of Music is hosting Dessert Evening at 7 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 25, at the Martin Event Center in the Martin Public Library. This event will feature select ensembles and soloists from the UTM Choirs, accompanied by desserts and coffee. Tickets are available for purchase at the door and online, with tickets costing \$25 for adults and \$10 for UTM students and children. UT Martin's Department of Music helps students refine their musical potential through creative opportunities for students and by cultivating support for the art and profession of music. For more information about the UT Martin Department of Music or Dessert Evening, contact the department at 731-881-7410 or by emailing utmdeptofmusic@ut.utm.edu.

Featured Faculty Scholar

Rasool to speak on rural investment

Dr. Adnan Rasool, associate professor of political science, a Featured Faculty Scholar for the fall 2025 semester, will present in the Paul Meek Library at 4 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 28, discussing a grant-funded initiative to assist local municipal agencies.

The presentation, titled "Investing in Rural Futures: Strategic Assessment and Capacity Building in Tennessee," will also be accessible via a livestream feed on YouTube with a recording available after the program.

The presentation will focus on Rasool's recent work in rural West Tennessee to create community partnerships.

"UT Martin has developed a robust student experiential learning program to assist in rural development projects – everything from rural government assistance to assessment surveys," he said. "Students receive hands-on



Rasool

experience working on real problems in surrounding communities. It has already had a huge impact across the region."

Rasool was appointed in October 2024 as the inaugural director of the Center for Teaching and Learning at UT Martin. He also serves as a founding fellow for the Center for Rural Innovation.

Rasool's work bridges academics with measurable community impact by

developing data-driven pedagogical interventions, securing over \$100,000 in rural development funding and conducting workforce research for Ford's BlueOval City project that helped establish their \$9 million Good Neighbor Plan.

The Featured Faculty Scholar award is designed to recognize faculty members whose research and creative works are judged among the most prestigious on the campus.

This presentation is co-sponsored by the Division of Academic Affairs and the Paul Meek Library.

This presentation will livestream [at this site](#) with a recording at this same link following the program.

For more information, contact Dr. Erik Nordberg, dean of the Paul Meek Library, at 731-881-7070, or visit [the library's Runway page](#).

Upcoming Skyhawk Home Events

Wednesday, Oct. 29

- Women's basketball vs. UT Southern (exhib.), 5:30 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

Friday, Oct. 31

- *Equestrian vs. South Dakota State, time tba, Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex.

Saturday, Nov. 1

- Equestrian vs. South Carolina, time tba, Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex.

Friday, Nov. 7

- *Volleyball vs. Southern Indiana, 4 p.m., Skyhawk Fieldhouse.

Saturday, Nov. 8

- *Football vs. Tennessee State, 1 p.m., Hardy M. Graham Stadium.

* - conference competition.

Full athletics schedules can be found at utmsports.com.

Dates and times are subject to change.

Rogers speaks at Empowering Educators Conference

The educator preparation program in the UT Martin College of Education, Health and Behavioral Sciences hosted its Empowering Educators Conference on Sept. 29 in the Boling University Center.

The conference topic was “Changing Latitudes, Changing Attitudes: Facing the Ever-Changing Environment in Today’s K-12 Classrooms.”

The program featured workshops from various local education professionals, centered on supporting students with disabilities and helping education students traverse the ever-changing educational world.

Laney Rogers, the director of special education and early childhood for Union City Schools, was the keynote speaker for this year’s conference. Her topic was “Focus on Changing the World, Instead of Changing Your Roster.”

- The conference’s workshops included:
- **Laura Plunk**, a lecturer for UT Martin Educational Studies who specializes in special education, “F.A.M.I.L.Y.: Partnering Beyond the Classroom.”
 - **Darian Harris**, a math teacher at Dyersburg High School, “Supporting Students with Disabilities.”
 - **Dr. Michael Morris**, a principal at Jackson Academic Steam Academy, “From



Laney Rogers, director of special education and early childhood for Union City Schools, was the keynote speaker at the Empowering Educators Conference on Sept. 29.

- Chalkboards to Chatbots: The Top 10 Challenges in Modern Education.”
- **Kari Harold**, Metro Nashville Public Schools, “Connecting the DOTS: Creating Access Through Connection.”

The UT Martin Educator Preparation Program aims to prepare and guide students to be effective and professional educators, capable of making a meaningful impact on students, families and communities.

Access and Opportunity Career Fair set for Oct. 23

The UT Martin Access and Opportunity Career Fair will be held from noon to 3 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 23, Duncan Ballroom in the Boling University Center.

The event highlights UT Martin’s commitment to expanding access and opportunity for all Skyhawks.

This fair is open to all majors and provides direct access to students, alumni and community members seeking internships, full-time employment and graduate opportunities.

Special emphasis is placed on engaging:

- Veterans and military-connected

students.

- First-generation college students.
- Pell-eligible and low-income students.
- Students with disabilities.

The career fair provides an opportunity to empower students to explore their career pathways and connect with employers.

Campus Calendar			
Thursday, Oct. 23 • Access and Opportunity Career Fair, noon-3 p.m., Duncan Ballroom, Boling University Center.	Friday, Oct. 24 • UTM Transfer Experience Day, 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.	Monday, Oct. 27 • Office of Research and	Monday, Nov. 17 • Building Conversations and Coffee, 3 p.m., 101 Latimer-Smith Engineering and Science Building.
Sponsored Programs (ORSP) workshop, “Grant Writing Basics: Higher Ed vs. Nonprofit vs. Government,” 3 p.m., 229 Boling University Center.	Tuesday, Oct. 28 • Featured Faculty Scholar Dr. Adnan Rasool. 4 p.m., Paul Meek Library North Reading	Sunday, Nov. 3 • Daylight saving time ends, 2 a.m. Set clocks back one hour before going to bed Saturday night.	Thursday, Nov. 6 • Legacy Series featuring James E. Cherry, 6 p.m., Paul Meek Library.

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

Bynum speaks to FMA club

Jake Bynum, chief of staff in the Office of the Chancellor, spoke to the student Financial Management Association club Oct. 14. Bynum, a former Weakley County mayor, discussed municipal finance and the various governmental and financial structures across Tennessee's local governments. He covered topics related to Tennessee law and what those laws mean for government structures, local government budgets and career opportunities in municipal finance. Bynum gave the students valuable advice on possible careers like being a county finance manager and ways to pursue those careers. The student Financial Management Association club is open to anyone interested in learning more about careers in finance. Rebecca Worley, a senior finance student, is the club president, and Dr. Brittany Cole, assistant professor of finance, is the club faculty advisor.



2025 Homecoming court announced



The 2025 UT Martin Homecoming court includes (l-r) Olivia Roeder, senior nursing major from Bethel Springs; Brocke Hollins, senior mechanical engineering major from Memphis; Kayce Carlough, senior marketing major from Fairview; Blaine Woodard, sophomore health and human performance major from Cornersville; Kensie Burnette, junior management major from Waverly; Blake Travis, sophomore agriculture major from Covington; Daviona Gbee, junior finance major from Memphis; Homecoming King Jeb Graves, sophomore accounting major from Parsons; Homecoming Queen Cara Brooke Hatler, junior English major from Martin; and Beau Shamblin, junior mechanical engineering major from Old Hickory. The court was announced at halftime of the UT Martin Homecoming football game Oct. 11.

UTM to host Kappa Alpha Psi leadership conference

UT Martin will host the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. C. Roger Wilson Leadership Conference for the South Central Province, which includes Tennessee, Kentucky and northern Mississippi.

The conference will be held Oct. 24-25. The conference theme is “Embrace the Leader Within.”

The hosts of the conference are the Kappa Alpha Psi Zeta Kappa Chapter of UT Martin and Jackson Alumni Chapter.

Dr. Mark McCloud, vice chancellor for access and engagement, is coordinating the event for UT Martin.

The conference will consist of leadership training and the

membership intake, where new initiates join the fraternity.

Part of the conference is the “Room to Read” program, where members go to schools in Martin and Union City, read to the students and make a donation of books.

A comedy show will be presented at 8 p.m., Oct. 24, in Watkins Auditorium. The doors will open at 7 p.m. The program is open to the public, and admission is \$25, with proceeds



supporting the Kappa Alpha Psi Guide Right program, which bolsters youth development programs.

The keynote speaker of the program is Dr. Derek Greenfield, a noted speaker,

educator and author. He will speak at the conference on Oct. 25.

A special guest at the conference will be 1971 UTM alumnus Leonard Hamilton,

who recently retired as the men's basketball head coach at Florida State after 22 years. He was also a head coach at Oklahoma State, the University of Miami and the NBA's Washington Wizards.

Hamilton will speak at the conference on Oct. 24. He was a charter member of the Kappa Alpha Psi Zeta Kappa Chapter at UT Martin.

McCloud said that three of the nine campus charter members will be in attendance at the conference.

The South Central Province consists of 450 undergraduate and graduate members among 23 universities and 20 civic chapters within the province.

Cherry to speak Nov. 6 at Legacy Speaker Series

Poet and novelist James E. Cherry has been selected as the 2025 speaker in the Paul Meek Literary Legacy Speakers Series.

He will provide a public presentation on “The Role and Responsibilities of the Writer in Modern Day America” at 6 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 6, in the Paul Meek Library.

The event will include readings from Cherry's poetry. Copies of his books will be available for purchase and for the author's signature.

Cherry is a poet, fiction writer, professor and literary activist. He is the author of four books of poetry, two novels and a collection of short fiction. His latest novel, “Edge of the Wind,” was re-issued in 2022 from the

Stephen F. Austin University Press.

His latest collection of poetry, “Between Chance and Mercy,” was published by Willow Books in 2024.

Cherry has been nominated for an NAACP Image Award, a Lillian Smith Book Award and a Next Generation Indie Book Award and has received fellowships from Summer Poetry in Idyllwild, the Martha Vineyard Institute of Creative Writing and Kimbilio for Black Fiction.

Cherry has an Master of Fine Arts in creative writing from the University of Texas at El Paso and resides in Jackson, Tennessee, where he is founder of the Jazz Foundation

of West Tennessee, a nonprofit dedicated to jazz and blues music.

The event is open to the public and will be held in the north windows area of the Paul Meek Library.

A livestream of the presentation will be recorded and available [at this site](#) for later playback. Light refreshments will be served.

Parking for the event will be in the Paul Meek Library parking lot on Wayne Fisher Drive off Mount Pelia Road.

Further information may be found on the [library's Runway event page](#) or by contacting Dr. Erik Nordberg, dean of the Paul Meek Library, at 731-881-7070.

You Tell Me

• **Question** – What is the current timetable for reoccupying the Hall-Moody Administration Building?

• **Answer** – Work continues to complete both phases of the building's HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) project. Anticipated progress should allow limited move-in to begin sometime in spring 2026. The third floor will be completed but work will continue to finish the final phase of the project. Moving some administrative offices temporarily located in the Johnson EPS Building back to Hall-Moody is important as the Business Administration Building faculty and staff will relocate to the Johnson EPS Building, Holt Humanities Building and possibly Clement Hall at the conclusion of spring semester. Once that move is completed, demolition of the Business Administration Building will begin and make way for construction of the new business building. A future town hall meeting will be held for Hall-Moody occupants to ask questions and cover details of the return move.

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

September Skyhawk Spirit Award winners named

Three staff members were named the winners of the Skyhawk Spirit Awards or Skyhawk Innovation Award for the month of September.

This month's Skyhawk Spirit Award winners are:

- **Heather Coleman**, UTM Parsons Center coordinator in the Office of Regional Centers and Online Programs.
- **Lesa Finch**, grant specialist in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.
- **Olivia Fernandez**, director of the Office of Information Technology Services, was named the winner of the Skyhawk Innovation Award.

Coleman was nominated for the Skyhawk Spirit Award for ensuring that the UT Martin Parsons Center is positively represented in the Parsons community through her service on the Decatur County Chamber of Commerce Board and the Carl Perkins Center in Parsons.

She was also praised for creating a sense of belonging for all students, organizing the regional center's homecoming tent, coordinating student participation in the Singers concert and accompanying students to fitness classes on the main campus.

As a winner of the Skyhawk Spirit Award, Coleman will receive a \$50 cash award and a commemorative plaque.

Finch was nominated for the Skyhawk Spirit Award for providing dependable support, exceptional service and innovative solutions for faculty, staff and students.



Coleman

She was also praised for her work with Kid College, volunteer efforts at the Welcome Home Family Picnic and participation on numerous committees.

As a winner of the Skyhawk Spirit Award, Finch will receive a \$50 cash award and a commemorative plaque.

Fernandez was nominated for the Skyhawk Innovation Award for collaborating with the Department of Computer Science to create meaningful experiential learning opportunities, developing realistic phishing emails for our phishing awareness campaigns, assisting with phishing testing and contributing to AI (artificial intelligence) tabletop exercises.

Fernandez was praised for directly strengthening the campus cybersecurity posture while providing invaluable hands-on experience to students.

As a winner of the Skyhawk Innovation Award, Fernandez will receive a \$250 cash award and a commemorative plaque.

The Skyhawk Spirit Award and Skyhawk Innovation Award began in January 2024 and seek to recognize employee contributions that exceed



Finch

expectations for performance. All regular full- and part-time faculty and staff up to the level of director are eligible to receive Spirit Awards. Independent contractors, temporary employees, volunteers and executive-level staff who report directly to the chancellor and serve as a member of the chancellor's cabinet are not eligible for the Skyhawk Spirit Award.

The Skyhawk Innovation Award seeks to recognize employees who achieve beyond the status quo who implement an idea, initiative, process or system that improves efficiencies or outcomes.

Criteria for the awards include:

- Performance substantially



Fernandez

beyond expectation on a specific assignment, task or goal

- Contributions that have a significant impact on department or university objectives

- Extraordinary efforts above and beyond the normal responsibilities of the position

- An employee who uses initiative and creativity to solve a challenging problem.

Letters of nomination should be sent to skyhawkspiritawards@utm.edu. Nominations for the month of November are due in by Nov. 7. Nominations for each month are due by the first Friday of the month.

Skyhawk Spirit Awards and Skyhawk Innovation Awards are coordinated through the UTM Office of Human Resources.

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Email: orsp@utm.edu

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FOR DETAILS

addenda

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