

# addenda

The University of Tennessee at Martin Faculty and Staff Newsletter | Dec. 1, 2025



The Office of Research, Outreach and Economic Development hosted UT System President Randy Boyd last week as he met with representatives from the newly created UTM Center for Rural Innovation. Pictured are (l-r) Dr. Tony Delmond, holder, Tom E. Hendrix Chair of Excellence in Free Enterprise; UTM Chancellor Yancy Freeman; UT System President Randy Boyd; Dr. Adnan Rasool, director of the Center for Teaching and Learning; and Dr. Allan Strebinsky, director of the UTM Center for Rural Innovation. The discussion centered around the center's current work, goals for the future, and funding opportunities. Housed in the Department of Political Science and Global Affairs, the center will serve as a catalyst for rural community development throughout West Tennessee and the broader American Heartland, connecting university resources with community needs through integrated programming that addresses economic development, cultural preservation, and civic engagement.

## UT System President Boyd visits UTM campus

Several UT Martin students took part in the West Tennessee Solar Farm Pitch Competition held Nov. 20 and sponsored by University of Tennessee Research Foundation.

UT System President Randy Boyd and UT Extension Specialist Jeffrey Silvers, who manages the solar farm exhibit, served as judges.

The projects in the pitch competition aim to develop a comprehensive business plan that integrates the solar farm, the

educational exhibit and interstate-facing signage to maximize UT's assets and showcase its commitment to innovation, advanced energy, educational opportunities and public engagement through 2030 and beyond.

Recognized in the competition were:

- First: UTM Means Business, \$1,000 award, under the direction of Dr. Brittany Cole and Dr. Tony Delmond: Ellie Culpepper, Reyna Joyner, Thomas Rogers, Paul Tolene, Abigail Willard, Sophie Wilson

and Rebecca Worley.

- Second: Busy Bees, \$500 award, directed by Dr. John Cole: Clayton Spencer, Brendan Overman, Carson Beckham, Wes Allison, Joshua Rose and Hunter Watson.

- Third: Agrivoltaics, \$250 award, directed by Dr. John Cole: Nick Carpenter, Sam Sturgis, Kallen Emison, Fisher Calvin, Connor Johnston and Aaron Tallent.

- Honorable Mention UT Solar Innovators Challenge directed by Dr. Saman Sargolzaei: Seth Hatchett.



## YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff



Greenwood



Madden



Shaw



Smart



Warfel



Wilkins

**Dr. Jennifer Greenwood**, professor of biology; **Dr. Donald Shaw**, associate professor of biology; **Dr. James Smart**, professor of biology; **Dr. Jaycob Warfel**, assistant professor of biology; and **Dr. Dawn Wilkins**, professor of biology attended the 135th meeting of the Tennessee Academy of Science at Pellissippi State Community College in Knoxville on Nov. 14.

Seth Hatchett, a senior majoring in biology, chemistry and electrical engineering from Huntingdon, won first place in the cell and molecular biology section for his oral presentation titled "The Spider Phenotype in Ball Pythons (*Python regius*) is Caused by Nonsense Mutation of in BMP4," coauthored by Smart.

Maitri Chauhan, a junior cell and molecular biology major from Ripley, and Layla Loftis, a senior health and human performance major from

Madison, won third place in the Health and Medical Sciences II section for their poster entitled "Investigating HuR as a target for the treatment of Metabolic Disease," coauthored by Warfel.

Tennison Barnes, a sophomore cell and molecular biology major from Oak Ridge, won first place in the science and math teaching section for her poster titled "The impact of lab-themed approach in biology 110 lecture part on students learning and teaching evaluation," coauthored by **Dr. Katie Madden**, assistant professor of biological sciences, and Shaw.

Mickey Rodriguez, a senior natural resources management major from Trenton, won second place in the zoology section for her poster titled "Nesting phenology of Eastern Screech-Owls and Barred Owls in northwest Tennessee," coauthored by Wilkins.

Wilkins collaborated with Dr. Barbara Shock of Lincoln Memorial University on a project presented by Carly Mazingo, a senior biology major at LMU, who won second place for her oral presentation in the ecology, environmental biology and zoology section titled "Prevalence of Avian Malaria and Bartonella spp. in Eastern Bluebirds from a mortality event in western Tennessee and Kentucky."

- At that meeting, Wilkins became the president of the Tennessee Academy of Science.

She had previously served in the organization as chair of the zoology section, as a member at large on the executive committee and as president-elect.

Wilkins will serve a one-year term and will preside over the 136th meeting of the Tennessee Academy of Science at Cumberland University in Lebanon in November 2026.

## The news at [news.utm.edu](https://news.utm.edu)

[Tennessee Farm Bureau provides internship opportunity for student](#)

[WestStar Leadership Program Class of '26 announced](#)

[UT Martin remembers Dr. Phillip Watkins](#)

**UT MARTIN | NEWS**

## Upcoming Skyhawk Home Events

**Tuesday, Dec. 2**

- Men's basketball vs. Charleston Southern, 11 a.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

**Sunday, Dec. 7**

- Men's basketball vs. Alabama State, 2 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

**Sunday, Dec. 14**

- Basketball vs. Champion Christian (double-header): women at 2 p.m., men at 4:30 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

**Thursday, Jan. 1**

- \*Women's basketball vs. Western Illinois, 1 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.
- \*Men's basketball vs. Western Illinois, 3:30 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

\* - conference competition.

Full athletics schedules can be found at [utmsports.com](https://utmsports.com).

Dates and times are subject to change.



## YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

**Dr. Sean Walker**, professor of behavioral management, was featured in the Oct. 2 edition of WalletHub with comments on the topic “Best Comprehensive Car Insurance.”

The story can be found [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



Walker

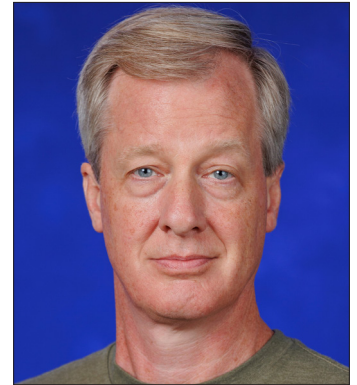
information from subject-matter experts.

**Dr. Daniel Nappo**, professor of Spanish, participated in a round-table discussion broadcast Sept. 11 on Spanish public radio.

Other participants in the discussion included Spanish professors Guillermo Lain Corona, Pablo Núñez Díaz and Javier Soto Zaragoza.

Nappo and the other participants discussed the relationships between poetry and music in the songs of Joaquín Sabina, the celebrated Spanish singer-songwriter.

The round-table discussion was part of a research project called PoEMAS, which helped



Nappo

to fund the Spanish translation of Nappo’s book on Sabina and his music earlier this year.

The discussion was broadcast on Radio UNED and a link to it may be found [at this site](#).

**Submit a YoUTM or question to [addenda@utm.edu](mailto:addenda@utm.edu)!**

## President Boyd speaks to UTM students



UT System President Randy Boyd speaks with student members of the Ned Ray McWherter Institute on Nov. 20. The NRMI is a group that seeks to improve the world by following the lead of the institute’s namesake, former Gov. McWherter. The group has a luncheon once a month with Chancellor Yancy Freeman, and Boyd visited the campus on the day of that luncheon in Room 125 of the dining hall in the Boling University Center. The students listening to him are (l-r) Ethan Tanner, a sophomore mass media and strategic communication major from Dover; Taylor Burke, a senior veterinary science and technology major from Altona, Illinois; and Madison Jones, a sophomore criminal justice major from Memphis.



# Skyhawk Spirit Award winners announced

Two staff members were named as the Skyhawk Spirit Award winners for the month of November, and one was named to the Skyhawk Innovation Award.

The Skyhawk Spirit Award winners were **Texas Culver**, interim director of online programs in the Department of Educational Studies; and **Tonya Evans**, administrative program specialist for the Division of Access and Engagement.

**Melanie Young**, career counselor in the Office of Career Services, was named to the Skyhawk Innovation Award.

Culver was praised for his work with the UTM Ripley Center.

"Texas has gone above and beyond his regular faculty responsibilities at the UTM Ripley Center by stepping up to fill in as online director on our main campus, driving long distances from Martin to Ripley," stated his letter of

recommendation. "Despite the additional workload, he continues to bring enthusiasm, professionalism and positivity to every task he takes on.

"As an educational studies faculty member serving both the Ripley and Somerville centers, Texas consistently demonstrates an ability to connect deeply with his students, creating an engaging and supportive learning environment. His dedication to student success and his ability to build meaningful relationships make him a model educator and mentor.

Texas has previously served as interim director for the Ripley Center on two separate occasions, each time leading with steady guidance and a commitment to excellence."

Evans was nominated for the way she provides assistance, especially with the adaptation of the DASH system.

"Tonya Evans consistently

goes above and beyond to help anyone who calls on her," stated her letter of recommendation. "She is a truly uplifting and positive presence, always willing to lend her time, knowledge and support to others.

"Tonya embodies the Skyhawk spirit through her dedication, kindness and encouragement. Her enthusiasm and willingness to assist with any DASH questions or challenges make a lasting impact on everyone she works with."

Culver and Evans will each receive a \$50 cash award and a commemorative plaque.

Young was nominated for the Skyhawk Innovation Award for the way she handled a recent writing workshop.

"Her schedule is packed with counseling students, visiting the centers when needed, and teaching classes and seminars appropriate to ensuring student success," her letter of recommendation stated. "Ms. Young also holds several special certifications in areas such as personality assessment, which assist students as they embark on their educational and career journeys.

"Recently, Ms. Young provided some face-to-face and online writing workshops on the topic of professional narratives for students. When some of the students who wished to attend the seminar were not able to do so, Ms. Young took the time to record a special video just for those students so they would not miss some valuable information and her insights on the topic."

For being named to the Skyhawk Innovation Award, Young will receive a \$250 cash award and a commemorative plaque.

Skyhawk Spirit Awards are presented to nominated UTM



Culver



Evans



Young

## CHANCELLOR'S Holiday Brunch

IT'S A SKYHAWK  
CHRISTMAS  
MORNING

**DEC. 18TH  
10:30AM**  
RSVP ON  
RUNWAY BY  
DECEMBER 8TH

WHERE TRADITIONS ARE MADE,  
PJS ARE OPTIONAL, AND SKYHAWK SPIRIT IS REQUIRED

JOIN US IN THE UNIVERSITY CENTER BALLROOM  
FOR FOOD, FUN, AND SKYHAWK FELLOWSHIP!

Chancellor's Holiday Brunch is open to exempt and non-exempt staff members.

staff members who go above and beyond expectations. The Skyhawk Innovation Award seeks to recognize UTM staff members who achieve beyond the status quo who implement an idea, initiative, process or system that improves efficiencies or outcomes.

Nominations for each month are due by the end of the first Friday of each month. The next deadline is Friday, Dec. 5. Letters of nomination can be sent to [skyhawkspiritaward@utm.edu](mailto:skyhawkspiritaward@utm.edu).



# UTM students, faculty visit UTSI in Tullahoma

A group of 19 UT Martin students in the College of Engineering and Natural Sciences majors and five faculty members traveled Nov. 20 to the University of Tennessee Space Institute (UTSI) in Tullahoma.

The visit emerged from conversations with the UTSI and was supported through a collaboration involving UT Martin's Office of Development and the Engineering and Computer Science departments.

Together, these efforts created a unique opportunity for students to explore advanced research laboratories, consider graduate study options and begin building meaningful professional connections.

Faculty in attendance included engineering

professors **Dr. Jeffrey McCullough** and **Dr. Ashley Owens**, computer science faculty **Dr. Bob Lowe** and **Dr. Lily Pharris** and assistant professor of construction management **Dr. Rawan Aqel**.

The trip began with an opening session led by Dr. John Schmisser, executive director and associate dean of UTSI, who introduced its mission, research strengths and the array of opportunities available to students.

The two-hour tour included several state-of-the-art laboratories where students explored facilities focused on mobility and power systems, aerospace experimentation,

biomedical engineering and materials science, ceramic materials and high-temperature aerodynamics.

Throughout the tour, graduate researchers and faculty offered demonstrations, shared a wide range of projects and connected the research to real-world applications, giving students a glimpse into active scientific inquiry.

UTSI representatives also highlighted pathways for summer internships, undergraduate research involvement and graduate study, helping students envision how their academic work could evolve into advanced research or professional roles.



(Above photo) Shown is the contingent of UT Martin faculty and students who visited the UTSI on Nov. 20.

(Left photo) UT Martin students observe work in a lab at the UTSI. Presenting the demonstration at left is Bailey Urhahn, a spring 2025 UTM cum laude graduate in engineering from Oak Ridge, Mo., currently studying at UTSI.

# Library selects Alma, Primo VE to modernize

UT Martin has selected Alma and Primo VE from Clarivate to modernize its library infrastructure and unify services under a single, Cloud-based platform.

This strategic decision marks a key milestone in the university’s ongoing efforts to enhance operational efficiency, improve resource discovery and strengthen the role of the Paul Meek Library in supporting students and faculty across the institution.

“The Alma and Primo solutions provide an excellent balance between contract cost and the local technical resources needed to maintain the system,” said **Dr. Erik Nordberg**, dean of the Paul Meek Library. “Improving the library’s information platforms will be critical to engaging and supporting remote learners as well as our traditional on-campus students.”

UT Martin has set an ambitious goal to increase enrollment to 10,000 students by 2030, a plan that includes expanding online programs, teaching at six regional centers, and building dual-enrollment partnerships with high schools across Tennessee.

The implementation of Alma and Primo VE will help support this growth by offering seamless access to library resources for students and faculty anytime,



Nordberg

anywhere.

The decision also reflects the university’s pragmatic approach to managing costs and technical capacity.

The Clarivate team will work closely with UT Martin to ensure a smooth migration and implementation, supporting the university’s vision for a modern, connected library experience.

This commitment to innovation is reflected in the work of the Paul Meek Library, which partners closely with the university’s IT Services unit to maintain a robust suite of software and digital resources.

By joining the growing community of Alma and Primo VE institutions worldwide, UT Martin reaffirms its commitment to innovation, collaboration and student success, ensuring that its library remains a cornerstone of academic excellence well into the future.

Campus Calendar			
<b>Tuesday, Dec. 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 2 p.m., 124 Gooch Hall.</li><li>• Holiday Open House and Toy Drive, 4-6 p.m., Russell Duncan Ballroom, Ed and Carolyn Boling University Center; RSVP to 731-881-7507 or <a href="mailto:abates17@utm.edu">abates17@utm.edu</a>.</li></ul>	<b>Friday, Dec. 5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Harlem Globetrotters: The 100-Year Tour, 7 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center, <a href="#">tickets here</a>.</li></ul> <b>Saturday, Dec. 13</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commencement, 10 a.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center, students earning degrees from the College of Agriculture and Applied</li></ul>	Sciences, College of Business and Global Affairs, and College of Engineering and Natural Sciences (graduate and undergraduate). <li>• Commencement, 2 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center, students earning degrees from the College of Education, Health and</li>	Behavioral Sciences and College of Humanities and Fine Arts (graduate and undergraduate).
<i>Events are subject to cancellation; dates, times and sites are subject to change. Send free-admission, on-campus events to Addenda at <a href="mailto:addenda@utm.edu">addenda@utm.edu</a>.</i>			

You Tell Me

• **Question** – As with other aspects of the university, the Skyhawk athletics program faces higher operating costs. How can someone best support Skyhawk athletics and the university’s student-athletes?

• **Answer** – First, fans can support the Skyhawks by purchasing tickets and attending home athletics events. Ticket sales and concessions both provide needed program revenue. Also, donations go directly to support scholarships and other aspects of the program. Most helpful is giving to the Skyhawk Club, which is UT Martin’s official organization for generating private financial support to the university’s athletics program.

Submit your questions to Addenda at [addenda@utm.edu](mailto:addenda@utm.edu).