

addenda

The University of Tennessee at Martin Faculty and Staff Newsletter | Dec. 15, 2025

UTM summer, fall 2025 graduates receive degrees

(Right photo) Dr. Daniel Pigg, professor of English and a UT Alumni Association Alumni Distinguished Service Professor, was the mace bearer at the fall 2025 commencement exercises Dec. 13 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center. Walking with Pigg are (l-r) Vice Chancellor for University Advancement Jeanna Curtis-Swafford, Chancellor Yancy Freeman Sr., Senior Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration Dr. Petra McPhearson and Transitional Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Dr. Stephanie Kolitsch. (Below photo) Chancellor Freeman presents a diploma to a fall 2025 graduate during the 10 a.m. commencement exercise Dec. 13. Shown at left is Transitional Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Dr. Stephanie Kolitsch.



YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

Dr. ZeVida A. Jones, assistant professor of counseling, co-presented at the 65th annual European Branch of the American Counseling Association Conference on Oct. 23-25 in Timisoara, Romania.

The presentation, "Navigating Grief and Ambiguous Loss: Strategies for Effective Counseling," examined how unacknowledged, unresolved grief and ambiguous loss can significantly impact individuals' well-being and adjustment during life transitions.

The session highlighted how social and cultural contexts, as well as counselors' limited experience, often leave these losses unprocessed.

The presentation emphasized the need to address grief in counseling, particularly amid global events like migration, and offered strategies to strengthen counselors' skills and client outcomes.

The second presentation, "Access-orizing Counseling: Prioritizing Disability-Inclusive Practice," introduced "access-orizing" as a verb that underscores the need to prioritize accessibility for people with disabilities in counseling.

The presentation explored how misinformation, erroneous beliefs and able-focused worldviews prevent counselors from making small changes that can access-orize their practice.



Jones

Jones and her co-presenters addressed common misbeliefs and demonstrated how counselors across settings can access-orize their physical spaces, electronic communication, microskills and treatment planning.

Dr. Britt Koehnlein, assistant professor of political science and global studies, participated in the 2025 International Studies Association (ISA) Midwest Conference held Nov. 21-23 in St. Louis.

ISA Midwest is one of the major regional gatherings of political scientists in the U.S.

Koehnlein has attended the conference for five consecutive years.

At the conference, Koehnlein presented her paper, "Conflict Mitigation through Vaccines: How Fragile States Leverage Health Services to Increase Legitimacy and Reduce Conflict." It draws from her



Koehnlein

recently completed dissertation and examines how governments in fragile and conflict-affected states use vaccination campaigns to build trust with citizens, strengthen political legitimacy and reduce the risk of renewed

violence.

Koehnlein also served as a discussant on the panel "Peacekeeping's Future: Big Blue Meets Blue Helmets?" She provided feedback on three papers addressing artificial intelligence in peacekeeping, global trends in UN missions and the operational challenges of civilian protection.

During the business meeting, Koehnlein was elected to the ISA Midwest Executive Board for a two-year term.

As an at-large member, she will help guide the region's research programming, awards, mentoring initiatives and conference planning.



Cox

Ronne Cox, electronic resource librarian and co-chair of the Government Document Librarians Round Table for Tennessee State Library and Archives, attended the TSLA fall meeting Dec. 5 in Nashville.

The event featured engaging sessions on electronic government document retrieval methods and strategies for

locating and preserving disappearing government information.

Attendees also enjoyed a special tour of the Tennessee State Library Museum led by Chief Curator Richard White, providing an enriching look at Tennessee's historical collections.

The news at
news.utm.edu

Dr. Marshall Priest III
[tells graduates](#)
[to use opportunities](#)

UTM Model UN team
[gets best finish](#)
[in university history](#)

UT MARTIN | NEWS

Upcoming Skyhawk Home Events

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.

Saturday, Jan. 3

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

Thursday, Jan. 15

- *Women's basketball vs. SIUE, 5:30 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.
- *Men's basketball vs. SIUE, 7:30 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

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

Dates and times are subject to change.

Nordberg, Jones speak at Kiwanis Club meeting



Dr. Erik Nordberg (left), dean of the Paul Meek Library, and Ben Jones (right), assistant vice chancellor for development, teamed up to give a presentation for Kiwanis entitled "Giving the Gift of Knowledge" at the Dec. 10 meeting of the Kiwanis Club of Martin. Nordberg outlined the content, spaces, services and outreach of the Paul Meek Library, and Jones highlighted possible areas of the library where donors might give the "gift of knowledge" as their donations in any amount to support library programs for students and the community. Jim Clark, a Kiwanis past president, conducted the meeting in the absence of Katie Parr, president, and presented certificates of appreciation to Nordberg and Jones.

WestTeach Class of 2025 to hold graduation



The UT Martin WestStar Leadership Program's seventh WestTeach class will have its graduation ceremony at 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 16, in the Russell Duncan Ballroom of the Ed and Carolyn Boling University Center.

State Rep. Dr. Brock Martin of District 79 (Carroll, Gibson and Henderson counties), a 2016 graduate of the WestStar Leadership Program, will be the guest speaker.

WestTeach was created as a class project by the 2017 WestStar Leadership class to support teacher development. A new class is selected annually by the program's advisory

committee following teacher nominations by school superintendents and directors.

West Tennessee teachers selected for the program learn about the region's economic needs and opportunities. Each class also meets with regional industry and community leaders to learn more about what students might experience outside of the classroom both in the workplace and beyond. WestTeach graduates have totaled 112 teachers since the program began.

Learn more about WestTeach at www.utm.edu/westteach or by calling 731-881-7298.

Boyd participates in UTM fall 2025 commencement



University of Tennessee System President Randy Boyd attended the two UT Martin commencement exercise programs Dec. 13 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center. He brought greetings to the graduates from the UT System. Boyd is in his eighth year as UT System president.

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.

UTM spring 2026 schedule announced

UT Martin opens its spring 2026 semester one week after New Year's Day.

Classes for the spring semester will begin Thursday, Jan. 8. Final exams for the semester will be held the week of April 27-May 1, with the spring commencement ceremonies being held Saturday, May 2.

Spring break for UT Martin will be March 23-29. Students will also observe the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday on Jan. 19 and the spring holiday on April 3.

Prior to the start of the spring semester, an orientation session for new students will be held Monday, Jan. 5, beginning at the Ed and Carolyn Boling University Center.

Students new to the UT Martin campus will have an information fair and brunch at 9 a.m. and can spend the morning registering for classes, meeting with financial aid representatives and taking a campus tour.

Those wanting to take part in the new student orientation can contact admissions outreach coordinator **Sydney Roney** at sroney4@utm.edu with any questions.

Questions about applying to UT Martin, transcripts, scheduling campus tours and other admissions-related topics can be found at admissions.utm.edu or by calling the UTM Office of Undergraduate Admissions at 731-881-7020.

Chancellor Freeman featured in WPSD podcast



Chancellor Yancy Freeman Sr. (above right) and Murray State University President Dr. Ron Patterson (below) were featured in an episode of the WPSD (Paducah, Kentucky) podcast "The Crossroads Sunscast" called "University Leaders Explore Accessibility in Education," which aired Nov. 17. Also shown at the upper left are WPSD moderators Jasmine Youngblood – a UTM graduate – and Bryce Patterson. [The podcast can be seen here.](#)

UTM employees attend summit in Knoxville



UT Martin employees attending the Administrative Professionals Summit held Nov. 11-13 in Knoxville included (front row, l-r) Heather Coleman, Joni Dewalt, Holly Dethloff, Savanna Fitzgerald, Bonnie Dyer, Candace McCloud, (back row, l-r) Lollie Adams, Heather King, Teresa Hibbard, Ashley Miles, Payton Morrison and Elizabeth Vickers.

Faith Johnson receives Meek Leadership Award

Faith Johnson, a fall 2025 graduate in business management and finance from Bartlett, is the fall recipient of the Paul and Martha Meek Leadership Award, presented at Dec. 13 at the commencement exercises.

Johnson pursued a double-major while working 15 to 20 hours a week to support her education. She had an internship in summer 2024 at the UT Federal Credit Union.

Outside of the classroom, Johnson served as secretary for Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., utilizing her organizational, communication and leadership skills. She was a member of the Student Alumni Council, National Society of Leadership and Success, Women of Excellence, Black Student Association, Financial Management Association, and Flight Crew.

As a leader in the Student Alumni Council and Flight Crew, she played a role in major campus programming for the last three years, working to serve and support her fellow students.

Johnson has completed several volunteer hours, including 40 hours at Caris Healthcare, 50 hours with Mid-South Food Bank and 30 hours with Quail Ridge Assisted Living and Memory Care.

In addition to her organizational leadership, Johnson demonstrated professional experience through her work at the Dungan Alumni Center, where she managed records, assisted guests and maintained data systems.

The Paul and Martha Meek Leadership Award is given to graduating seniors who demonstrate outstanding leadership qualities at UT Martin. Named for Chancellor Paul Meek and his wife, Martha,



Faith Johnson (right), a business management and finance graduate from Bartlett, is shown after being announced as the fall 2025 Paul and Martha Meek Leadership Award recipient. She is shown with Dr. Andy Lewter, vice chancellor for student affairs, who made the announcement at the commencement exercises Dec. 13.

the honor consists of a cash award from an endowment set up by the children of Paul and Martha Meek.

The award is presented at the graduation ceremonies in the fall and spring semesters that the recipient is participating in. The recipients in the previous school year were Bionica Barnes and Lauryn Davis, both of

Memphis, in the fall 2024 semester and Charlie Shipman of Memphis and Isabella Walker of Bartlett in the spring 2025 semester.

The first recipients of the Meek Award were Barbara N. Johnson of Waverly and Carl G. Newby of Union City, both spring 1967 graduates.

You Tell Me

- **Question** – What happens to the UT Martin road banners during the holidays? Alternate banners have been replaced with seasonal banners. When will the UTM banners go back up?
- **Answer** – The City of Martin temporarily replaces the UT Martin banners during the holidays with alternating seasonal banners that celebrate the season. UT Martin banners will return at the conclusion of the holidays.

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

addenda

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