

# addenda

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

## Harlem Globetrotters visit UT Martin

The world-famous Harlem Globetrotters put on a show in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on Dec. 5. At left, Yo-Yo Iwasaki shows his ball-handling skills, spinning a ball on his finger. Below, a referee finds himself on Jet Rivers' bucket list in a classic Globetrotters routine. This year's Globetrotters roster includes second-year player Cameron "Silk" Burrell, who came to the team after playing in the Ohio Valley Conference for Lindenwood University. The Globetrotters are kicking off their 100-Year Tour on Dec. 14. The team was founded in 1926.



## YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

**Dr. Cassie Burks**, assistant professor of nursing, and **Dr. Alissa Parrish**, associate professor of nursing, published “Helping Hands: Cost Effective Pediatric Simulation” Dec. 3 as part of the National League for Nursing (NLN) International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning’s (INACSL) HomeGrown Solutions (HGS).

This submission underwent a double-blind peer review and was posted on [the Home Grown](#)



**Burks**

[Solutions website](#).

The submission shows other faculty how to create a cost-



**Parrish**

effective pediatric hand for each student to practice IV insertion techniques.

**Dr. Saman Sargolzaei**, associate professor of engineering, was the guest speaker at the Union City Rotary Club at its Dec. 5 meeting.

The invited lecture entitled “AI for Main Street” focused on demystifying artificial intelligence for everyday businesses and community organizations.

Sargolzaei shared practical examples of how AI is already transforming local industries, helping small retailers optimize

inventory to enabling medical practices to streamline scheduling and improve patient outreach.

The goal of the talk was to show that AI isn’t a distant, high-tech concept but a set of accessible tools that can save time, improve decision-making and create real value for businesses of all sizes.

The Union City Rotary Club is a local chapter of the global service organization Rotary International. Its members are business, professional and



**Sargolzaei**

community leaders from the Union City area. For more information, [click on this link](#).

## Sustainability grants available

The UT Martin Campus Sustainability Grant Program is a new initiative to enable student groups to engage in meaningful contributions to our campus’s sustainability.

Applications for 2026 Campus Sustainability Grants and nominations for the 2026 Campus Sustainability Award are both being accepted through March 1.

A grant of up to \$5,000 will be awarded annually to the student group with the best proposal, as determined by the UT Martin Center for Sustainability Oversight Committee.

Eligibility is limited to any organization or group that includes at least one currently enrolled UT Martin student. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following attributes:

- Relative need of the proposed action and cost effective use of funds.

- Measurable ecological, economic and/or social benefit to the campus or a UTM center.

- Involvement and/or education of the campus and the greater community.

An individual must be designated as the project leader. This individual must be a student or UT Martin employee during the full duration during which the proposed project will be carried out.

Awarded funds can be used for materials and supplies to achieve the project goals. The fund cannot be used to pay employee or student worker salaries.

All university policies and procedures must be adhered to during implementation (e.g., procurement, health and safety, accounting). The oversight committee reserves the right to approve a portion of a proposal or to request additional

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

[Priest to speak at commencement](#)

[Book celebrates 125th anniversary of university](#)

[UTM, Gibson County form partnership](#)

**UT MARTIN | NEWS**

### Upcoming Skyhawk Home Events

**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.

**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.

\* - conference competition.  
Full athletics schedules can be found at [utmsports.com](https://utmsports.com).

Dates and times are subject to change.

# Santa's Village to be held Dec. 11-14

Children of all ages will have the opportunity to tell Santa their Christmas wishes at the 41st annual Santa's Village, hosted by the City of Martin Parks and Recreation Department on Dec. 11-14 in the University of Tennessee at Martin's Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex.

This free annual community tradition guides visitors through an enchanted forest of lights, carnival rides, a petting farm, a holiday market with more than 40 craft and gift vendors, and features meet-and-greets with

Santa Claus and Elsa and Anna from the movie "Frozen."

Santa's Village will be open from 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday and Friday, from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday.

There is no cost for admission, but there is a suggested donation of \$5 worth of nonperishable food items or new children's toys. These donations benefit WeCare Ministries of Martin.

With the generous donations from the 2024 Santa's Village, the City of Martin Parks and

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Santa's Village lights up the Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex each year with the fun and festivity of the holiday season.

# UT Grand Challenges Summit set for Feb. 10-11

The 2026 UT Grand Challenges Summit is set for Feb. 10-11 at Drury Hotel in Franklin, Tennessee.

The Grand Challenges Summit is a gathering of educators, leaders and innovators from across Tennessee with goals that include advancing K-12 education, building stronger rural communities, and addressing the impacts of addiction.

The summit helps those who attend to meet with colleagues, build new connections, and exchange ideas for producing real solutions.

The agenda for Tuesday, Feb. 10, will begin at 10 a.m. with opening remarks and a university address by UT President Randy Boyd along with chancellors from across the UT System. This will be followed by several leadership discussions, which will take place from 11 a.m. to noon, and include:

- "The Future of K-12 Education," led by Andrea Pasinetti, co-founder of Kira.
- "Rural Community Health," led by Dr. Wendy Likes, executive director, UT Center for Rural Health Excellence, and J.W. Randolph, Tennessee deputy commissioner of health.
- "Overcoming Addiction," led by Marie Williams, commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services; Dr. Stephen Lloyd, chief medical officer, Cedar Recovery Center; and Dr. Jennifer Tourville, director, UT Institute for Public Service SMART Initiative.

After a lunch from noon to 12:45 p.m.,



various breakout panel sessions will take place, including a session led by UT Martin's **Dr. Adnan Rasool**, director of the Center for Teaching and Learning.

Those sessions include:

- "Rural Community Development: Creating Capacity and Opportunities," led by Rasool; Brooxie Carlton, assistant commissioner for rural and community development, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development; Dr. Herb Byrd III, vice president of public service, UT Institute for Public Service; and Hannah Wright, director, stakeholder and community engagement, UT Institute of Agriculture.

Other session topics include:

- "Artificial Intelligence and Education,"
- "The Rural Health Landscape,"
- "From Opioid Crisis to Overdose Crisis: What's changed and what's next?"
- "Outreach and Engagement: Solving Grand Challenges – The Continuum of Outreach and Engagement" and

- "Neurodiversity in the Classroom and Beyond."

After a break from 1:45 to 2 p.m., more than 15 roundtable discussions will take place, including a range of topics, such as "AI in K-12 Education," "Neurodiversity in the Classroom" and "Mental Health Challenges in Communities."

These discussions will be concluded by an additional break from 3 to 3:20 p.m., before the 3:30 p.m. keynote address by Dr. Derek Cabrera and Dr. Laura Cabrera, Cornell University faculty members and co-founders of the Cabrera Research Lab.

In their presentation, titled "Connect the Dots: A Systems Thinking Approach to Tennessee's Grand Challenges," the Cabrerias will share the practical systems thinking tools that they developed at Cornell and have practically applied in communities across the nation.

The agenda for Wednesday, Feb. 11, is still being finalized, but includes talks by Dr. Jessi Gold, chief wellness officer for the UT System; John Carroll, executive director of City Leadership in Memphis and others.

The summit wrap-up will take place at 11:25 a.m.

The cost to register for the 2026 UT Grand Challenges Summit is \$25, and instructions for registration and room reservation can be found on the summit webpage [at this site](#).

For information, contact summit coordinator John Lacey at [jlacey2@tennessee.edu](mailto:jlacey2@tennessee.edu).

# Virtual Office Hours research assistance set for Dec. 10

The UT Research Foundation (UTRF) has launched new monthly Virtual Office Hours for faculty, staff and students at UT Martin, UT Health Science Center and UT Southern.

Virtual Office Hours launched Nov. 12, and these open, drop-in sessions are held on the second Wednesday of each month from 2 to 3 p.m. Central Time to provide quick, direct Q&A support for research and innovation projects with no advance topics or appointments required. The next session will be held Wednesday, Dec. 10.

People can access Virtual Office Hours through Virtual Drop-In via Microsoft Teams.

Topics may include research funding opportunities, intellectual property protection, commercialization pathways, startup support, guidance for grant applications, comprehensive support for launching and developing startups and


research collaboration opportunities.

These sessions will be informal and welcoming, with UTRF ready to support attendees who drop in at any point.

"We've structured these sessions to be informal and welcoming," said Tulika Rastogi, UTRF assistant technology manager. "We'll be online at the scheduled time, ready to support attendees who drop in at any point."

"Whether they have a quick question or need a longer discussion, they're welcome to stay as long as necessary to address their concerns. Feel free to ask about any of our services, and we especially welcome exploratory conversations when they're navigating unfamiliar territory or unsure of the next steps."

Virtual Office Hours is modeled after the in-person Commercialization Discussions for UT Health Science Center faculty and staff, where they explore similar topics.




## Virtual Office Hours


Drop In. Ask Questions. Get Answers.

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Open, virtual drop-in sessions for a quick, direct Q&A about your research and innovation projects. No pre-defined topics. No appointments required. Just bring your questions!



**When**  
December 10,  
2025




**Time**  
2:00 - 3:00 PM  
Central Time



**Format**  
Virtual Drop-In via  
Microsoft Teams

**Ready to Join?**

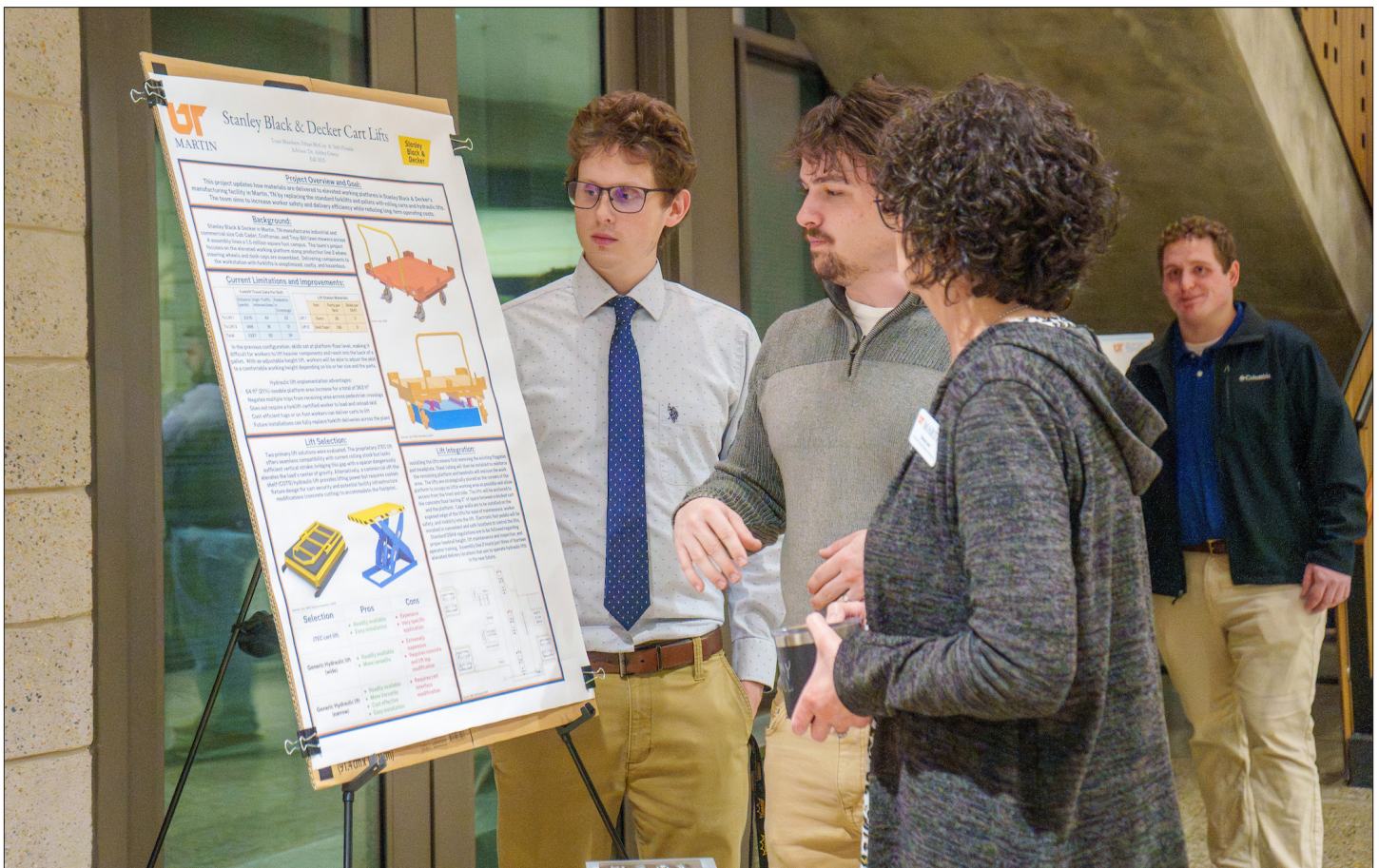


Scan the QR Code or email [@trastogi@utk.edu](mailto:trastogi@utk.edu)

FOR FACULTY, STAFF & STUDENTS AT  
UT Health Science Center | UT Martin | UT Southern

The Virtual Office Hours extend this same resource to faculty, staff and students at the UT Martin and UT Southern campuses.

## Students show projects at fall STEM event



Seth Hinson (left) and Ethan McCoy (center) discuss their project, "Stanley Black & Decker Cart Lifts," with an observer at the College of Engineering and Natural Sciences STEM Undergraduate and Research Project, held Dec. 4 in the Latimer-Smith Engineering and Science Building.

**SANTA'S VILLAGE from PAGE 3**

Recreation Department donated over 26,000 nonperishable food items and canned goods, along with 26 jumbo bags of toys, to WeCare Ministries in Martin.

Parking for this event is available beside UT Martin's Hardy M. Graham Stadium off University Street. The upper and lower levels of the

ag pavilion are only accessible inside the building by stairs.

There is a dropoff point at the lower level that grants access to rides, enchanted forest and Santa. The upper level is only the arts and craft vendors.

For more information about Santa's Village, [click on this link](#).



It's not Santa's Village without seeing Santa himself at the Ned McWhorter Agricultural Complex. Santa's Village takes place Dec. 11-14.

41<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL

# SANTA'S VILLAGE

DECEMBER 11-14, 2025  
MCWHERTER AG COMPLEX  
MARTIN, TN

**FREE ADMISSION**  
SUGGESTED DONATIONS OF \$5 WORTH  
OF CANNED GOODS OR NEW TOYS

**Operating Hours**  
**Thursday & Friday**  
6pm - 9pm  
**Saturday**  
11am - 9pm  
**Sunday**  
1pm - 5pm

**SANTA VISITING HOURS**  
THURSDAY & FRIDAY  
6PM-9PM  
SATURDAY  
11AM-1PM, 1:45PM-4:45PM,  
5:30PM-9PM  
SUNDAY  
1PM-3PM & 3:30PM-5PM

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## Campus Calendar

### Dec. 11-14

- Santa's Village, 6-9 p.m. Thursday and Friday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Saturday, 1-5 p.m. Sunday; Ned McWhorter Agricultural Complex.

### Saturday, Dec. 13

- Commencement, 10 a.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam

Center, students earning degrees from the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, College of Business and Global Affairs, and College of Engineering and Natural Sciences (graduate and undergraduate).

- Commencement, 2 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam

Center, students earning degrees from the College of Education, Health and Behavioral Sciences and College of Humanities and Fine Arts (graduate and undergraduate).

### Monday, Jan. 5

- Orientation for new students, 9 a.m., Boling

University Center.

### Thursday, Jan. 8

- First day of classes

*Events are subject to cancellation; dates, times and sites are subject to change. Send free-admission, on-campus events to Addenda at [addenda@utm.edu](mailto:addenda@utm.edu).*

## You Tell Me

• **Question** – Does the head of a university office have the authority to close an office early during regular business hours when the rest of the university is operating on a regular schedule?

• **Answer** – At times, it may be necessary for the chancellor or designee to declare specific hours as unscheduled administrative closing as the result of inclement weather or other emergency situations. This decision is officially communicated through the university's channels. The head of a university office may allow flexibility for workers; however, recording paid leave or unpaid leave for those hours missed would be the correct course of action. Leaving early does not mean it's paid leave; only the chancellor or vice chancellor of finance and administration has the ability to make that determination.

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

# Wind ensemble welcomes the holiday season



UT Martin hosted three musical events during the first week of December, including the UTM Choirs and Wind Ensemble concert (Dec. 2), featuring contemporary composers such as Eric Whitacre and Joan Szymko and movements from the Lord of the Rings Symphony, as well as historic music by composers Percy Grainger, Pavel Chesnokov and Bach; the Martin Community Orchestra (conducted by Dr. Doug Jones) and Community Choral Society (conducted by Dr. Jody Blake and Dr. Mark Statler) concert (Dec. 3) and the UTM Jazz Ensemble concert conducted by Dr. Kurt Gorman (Dec. 4). In the photo at left, senior Maggie Martiniez, a music major from Medina, sings with Dr. Elaine Harriss accompanying on piano. The photo below shows the Martin Community Orchestra and the Community Choral Society.



## GRANTS from PAGE 2

information or a rewritten or amended proposal.

Applicants are encouraged to discuss their proposal with the coordinator of the Center for Sustainability and other campus stakeholders prior to submission.

If projects require a scheduling or time commitment from one or more college departments or offices, there must be an agreement in writing before the project is approved.

The project must be completed during a single academic year; the proposal must provide reasonable evidence that this timeline is achievable.

Grantees are required to provide a formal report at the end of fall semester and upon completion of the project. Any funds not spent by the completion date will be retained by the Sustainability Center.

Upon request, grantees will share the results of their project with the campus community.

Applications are available from [the Center for Sustainability website](#) and will be due by March 1 of the academic year prior to the year of the proposed activity.

Grant winners will be contacted by April 1 and must accept or decline the award by April 15.

In the event that a grantee declines the award, other applicants may be contacted later in the semester.

All materials must be submitted via the Grant Proposal Form (also available from [epelren@utm.edu](mailto:epelren@utm.edu)).

Applicants should include all requested materials and will receive an e-mail confirmation of receipt of your application.

Questions regarding the Campus Sustainability Grant Program may be directed to Eric Pelren, coordinator of the UT Martin Center for Sustainability at [epelren@utm.edu](mailto:epelren@utm.edu).

# UTM takes part in regional Model United Nations

Four UT Martin students participated in Southern Regional Model United Nations (SRMUN) on Nov. 20-22 in Atlanta and became the most decorated team in UT Martin's history.

The annual conference involves three intense days of negotiations, public speaking, diplomacy and drafting resolutions.

The students represented the small island nation of Cabo Verde, off the West African coast.

Junior Ryan Lutes, a double-major in political science and global studies from Milan, and first-year student Brayden Smith, a music education major from Huron, represented the country in the General Assembly Plenary on the topics of the digital rights and privacy of children and sport as a path to sustainable development.

Senior Heaven Raymer-Holt, a political science major from Nashville, and junior Laura Stone, an accounting major from Springfield, represented the country in the World Health Organization Assembly on the topics of private sector health care and the opioid epidemic.

There were 476 delegates from 32 colleges and universities representing over 70 countries at this year's event.

UT Martin brought home five awards in total, making it the most winning team in UT Martin's history.

Lutes and Smith won two awards in their committee, Best Position Paper and Best Delegate. Their position paper scored a perfect 100, and there is only one award given per committee.



Shown at the Southern Regional Model United Nations event in Atlanta with awards earned by the UT Martin team (which represented the nation of Cabo Verde) are (l-r) Dr. Carrie Humphreys, associate professor of political science and chair of the Department of Political Science and Global Studies and UT Martin team members Ryan Lutes, Laura Stone, Brayden Smith and Heaven Raymer-Holt.

Raymer-Holt and Stone also won a Best Delegate award for their committee.

UT Martin students served on the largest committees, where all countries are represented and only six delegate awards were given out in each committee.

The Cabo Verde team was awarded an Outstanding Position Paper award, with a team average of all position papers of 92%, as well as an Outstanding Delegation award.

UTM was one of only six teams awarded the outstanding distinction, and this marked the first time UT Martin has achieved the highest level of honor.

UT Martin's Model UN team was established in 2016 and is led by Dr. Carrie Humphreys, associate professor of political science and chair of the Department of Political Science and Global Studies.

## 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.*

## addenda

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

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