

addenda

The University of Tennessee at Martin Faculty and Staff Newsletter | Feb. 16, 2026

UTM represented at Grand Challenges Summit



Shown in attendance at the Grand Challenges Summit held Feb. 10-11 at the Drury Hotel in Franklin are (l-r) Heather Coleman, UT Martin Parsons Center coordinator; Dr. Kelli Deere, UTM Parsons Center director; Erica Bell, executive director, UTM Regional Centers and Online Programs; and Melanie Parham, Healthcare Opportunities Powering Excellence (HOPE) program director for UTM Regional Centers and Online Programs. 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.

Two CNN journalists to speak at ENTICE Series

Two CNN journalists will be featured in UT Martin's ENTICE Series over the next week.

A keynote address and discussion with 1990 UT Martin alumnus, CNN commentator and political analyst Van Jones will take place at 6 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 17, in Watkins Auditorium in the Boling University Center.

CNN anchor and author Abby Phillip has been added to the ENTICE Series lineup. Her program at 6 p.m., Monday, Feb. 23, will feature a discussion on her recently published book, "A Dream Deferred: Jesse Jackson and the Fight for Black Political Power." The program will be presented in Watkins

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CNN political commentator and UTM alumnus Van Jones (left) will speak at the ENTICE Series on Tuesday, Feb. 17, while CNN anchor and author Abby Phillip will speak on Monday, Feb. 23. Both programs will begin at 6 p.m. in Watkins Auditorium of the Boling University Center.

YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

Merry Brown, UT Martin ombuds, has released a new book, "Winning the Generation Wars at Work: Making (Your) Age an Asset," which explores how colleagues of different ages can work together more effectively.

Drawing on her experience as a workplace mediator, ombuds and host of the international podcast "Conflict Managed," Brown examines

why generational tensions arise at work and how they are often driven by assumptions, communication gaps and unspoken expectations rather than age itself.

The book offers practical guidance for addressing conflict early, improving dialogue across differences and recognizing the value that experience at any stage of life brings to a team.



Brown

The news at news.utm.edu

[ELLI Conference set for April 9](#)

[CNN's Jones, Phillip to speak at UTM ENTICE Series](#)

UT MARTIN | NEWS

IT Symposium set for March 24-26

The University of Tennessee Innovative Technologies Symposium will be held March 24-26 at the Knoxville Convention Center.

The symposium is open to all higher-education institutions in Tennessee. Registration for the symposium is now open.

This three-day symposium will focus on our everyday IT challenges, shared interests, honed skills and newfound passions.

The symposium aims to foster innovative IT solutions and promote opportunities for interaction, collaboration and knowledge-sharing among Tennessee higher education IT

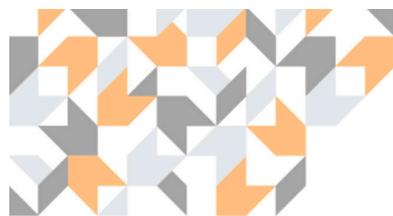
professionals.

The event will include keynote speakers, breakout sessions, and networking opportunities with peers, industry experts, and technology companies involved in higher education.

This is a statewide event. All full- or part-time staff, faculty and graduate students involved in information technology work, learning or research are eligible to attend.

Information about the symposium – including the schedule, keynote speakers and hotel information – can be found [at this site](#).

To register for this symposium, visit [this site](#).



DASH Research IRB goes live

DASH Research institutional review board (IRB) is the new electronic submission system that went live Feb. 16.

The DASH Research IRB will provide streamlined submission options and the use of Word documents for applications.

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) OneSpace site has a new [DASH Research IRB page](#) with protocol forms, job aids and other resources for the new

system.

[The UT System DASH Research IRB SharePoint site](#) has training and educational materials, including videos to walk people through each step of the process.

Access to DASH Research IRB system must be requested for individuals external to the university (affiliates) and students that participate in research and require access to

DASH Research modules.

[The Affiliate and Student Access Request job aid](#) is available on [the UT System DASH Research IRB SharePoint site](#).

For more information, contact the ORSP office to schedule a training session after the Feb. 16 go-live date.

To reach the ORSP office, call 731-881-7105 or email amelton6@utm.edu.

Upcoming Skyhawk Home Events

Tuesday, Feb. 17

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

Friday, Feb. 20

- Equestrian vs. Delaware State, tba, Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex.

Saturday, Feb. 21

- Equestrian vs. Minnesota-Crookston, tba, Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex.

Tuesday, Feb. 24

- Baseball vs. Murray State, 3 p.m., Skyhawk Baseball Field.

** - conference competition; dh - double-header (baseball and softball); full athletics schedules can be found at utmsports.com. Dates and times are subject to change.*

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Auditorium in the Boling University Center.

Other events featured over the next two weeks include a “Night of Dance” and a student pop-up art event.

ENTICE stands for “Evolving Narratives: Tennessee Initiative for Civic Engagement,” and the theme of this year’s conference is “Come Together.” **Dr. Henri Giles**, assistant professor of African American studies, is the coordinator for the ENTICE series.

“We are excited to welcome alumnus Van Jones back to campus,” she said. “This will be a wonderful opportunity for our students to engage with a legal professional, media personality and UTM graduate with a heart for social justice.”

Following his address, Jones – a Jackson, Tennessee, native and a graduate of Jackson Central-Merry High School – will participate in a discussion moderated by his former professor, **Dr. Jerald Ogg**, professor of mass media and strategic communication.

Other programs featured in the third and fourth week of the



Giles

ENTICE Series are:

- Thursday, Feb. 19, 6 p.m., Watkins Auditorium, Boling University Center: “Night of Dance,” UT Martin dance students present a choreographed overview of various African American dance eras and legends.

- Thursday, Feb. 26, 6 p.m., Nick and Cathy Dunagan Alumni Center, a student pop-up art event featuring artwork created by UTM students that embraces the “Come Together” theme of the series.

All programs are free and open to the public.

For more information about the 2026 ENTICE Series, visit [this site](#).



Members of the Discovery Park of America Choir perform at the “Community Celebration of Music,” a musical collaboration also featuring The New Pacer Singers and the UTM Gospel Choir, Feb. 5 in the Phillip W. Watkins Auditorium in the Dr. Edward J. and Carolyn P. Boling University Center. The program was part of the 2026 ENTICE Series.

Coffee and Conversation schedule resumes

The “Coffee and Conversation with the Chancellor” programs are returning for the spring 2026 semester.

There will be three programs this term. These programs provide faculty and staff an opportunity to speak with **Chancellor Yancy Freeman Sr.** about campus or building issues.

This semester’s program schedule is:

- Friday, Feb. 20, 10:30 a.m., Clement Hall lobby, for Clement Hall and Student Health Center employees.

- Tuesday, March 3, 10 a.m., Center for Student Engagement Suite, Dr. Edward J. and Carolyn P. Boling University Center, for Boling University Center and Student Recreation Center employees.

- Tuesday, March 17, 9 a.m., ITS Presentation Room, Crisp Hall, for Crisp Hall employees.

While the employees in the buildings hosting the Coffee and Conversations program are specifically invited, each program is open to anyone.

Freeman said the program is “in response to all the feedback we received with the Employee Engagement Survey.”

The programs are an informal hour of casual conversation over coffee and an opportunity to discuss current issues and to share achievements, ask questions, network, voice concerns, explore innovative ideas and incentives for moving forward in building up the university.

The University of Tennessee at Martin Department of Visual and Theater Arts Presents:

2026
The League of String Artists
Student Exhibition

Moving Away
From The
HUMAN INTELLIGENCE

Opening Reception:
February 10th
5:00pm - 6:30pm

Feb. 10th - 28th
Fine Arts Building
Gallery

ENTICE Series hosts 'Dreaming Out Loud' panel



The ENTICE Series hosted “Dreaming Out Loud: The American Dream Under Review,” a student panel exploring the attainment of the American dream today and an examination of America’s promises to its citizens. The program was held Feb. 9 in the Phillip W. Watkins Auditorium of the Dr. Edward J. and Carolyn P. Boling University Center.

Campus Calendar

Tuesday, Feb. 17

- Human resources, “Hiring and Onboarding,” 10-11 a.m., virtual via Teams.
- ENTICE Series, Van Jones, CNN commentator and political analyst, 6 p.m., Phillip W. Watkins Auditorium, Dr. Edward J. and Carolyn P. Boling University Center.

Thursday, Feb. 19

- Human resources, “Hiring and Onboarding,” 9-10 a.m., 101 Latimer-Smith Engineering and Science Building.

- ENTICE Series, “Night of Dance” dance and choreography program, 6 p.m., Phillip W. Watkins Auditorium, Dr. Edward J. and Carolyn P. Boling University Center.

Monday, Feb. 23

- ENTICE Series, Abby Phillip, CNN anchor and author, 6 p.m., Phillip W. Watkins Auditorium, Dr. Edward J. and Carolyn P. Boling University Center.

Tuesday, Feb. 24

- DASH training, “Compensation Actions,”

10-11 a.m., virtual program via Teams.

- UT Research Foundation, informational assistance with research growth, intellectual property commercialization, innovation disclosures, and tech transfer, walk-in sessions at 11:30 a.m. at 1 p.m.; presentation, Q&A and boxed lunches, noon; 101 Latimer-Smith Engineering and Science Building.

Wednesday, Feb. 25

- Human resources, “Progressive Discipline Procedures: Building a

Culture of Fairness and Responsibility,” 11 a.m.-noon, virtual program via Teams.

- Human resources, “Progressive Discipline Procedures: Building a Culture of Fairness and Responsibility,” 3-4 p.m., in-person program, 101 Latimer-Smith Engineering and Science Building.

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.

Robinson named Outstanding Educator at SEJC



Dr. Richard Robinson is shown with the Outstanding Educator Award at the Southeastern Journalism Conference in Cartersville, Georgia.

Student staff from the UT Martin campus newspaper The Pacer received two first-place awards and five top-five awards at the annual Southeast Journalism Conference (SEJC), held Feb. 5-7 at Georgia Highlands College in Cartersville, Georgia.

“I am beyond proud of this achievement,” said Pacer faculty adviser **Dr. Kayli Plotner**, assistant professor of mass media and strategic communication (MMSC). “We have had a significant transition this year, focusing on digital-first news content, publishing online daily and printing about once a month as well as stepping up our social media presence.

“These students amaze me every day with their dedication to this craft and desire to continually improve themselves and our news product.”

Dr. Richard Robinson, professor of MMSC and WUTM faculty adviser, received the Byron St. Dizier/David Sloan Award for the SEJC Outstanding Educator. Robinson has been a faculty member at UT Martin since 2001.

“I was truly honored to receive the award,” Robinson said. “It was humbling to be recognized by the conference. I’ve always said that great students make professors look good. I have been fortunate over the years to work with great students.”

Chyler Lee, a senior MMSC major with an emphasis in journalism from Jackson, received first place in the Sports Writer category, while Aubrey Abbott, a junior MMSC major with an emphasis in media design from Huntingdon, received first place in the Best Artist or Illustrator category.

Other awards received by UTM students included:

- Chloe Kent, a senior

mass media and strategic communication major with an emphasis in media design and digital content production from Cornersville, received second place in the Best Graphic Designer/Data Journalist category.

- Bryant Steele, a sophomore MMSC major with an emphasis in broadcast media from Bartlett, received fourth place in the Best Arts and Entertainment Writer category.

- The WUTM radio station (90.3 FM The Hawk) received fourth place in the Best Audio Program category.

- Bethany Collins, a senior MMSC major with an emphasis in broadcast journalism and multimedia production from Dresden, received fifth place in the Best Opinion/Editorial Writer category.

In the onsite competition, Steele received honorable mention in the Current Events category, while Darby Self, a sophomore MMSC major from Somerville, received honorable mention in the Infographic Design category.

Others attending the SEJC from UTM were Kaniya Anthony, a first-year MMSC major with an emphasis in media design from Memphis; Adrianna Carter, a junior health and human performance major with an emphasis in public health and athletic coaching from Jackson; Marques Rice, a junior MMSC major with an emphasis in journalism from Memphis; Will Stevens, a sophomore MMSC major with an emphasis in broadcast from Atoka; Nate Szarzynski, a senior MMSC major with an emphasis in journalism from New Lenox, Illinois; Ethan Tanner, a sophomore MMSC major with an emphasis in journalism

with an emphasis in journalism

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ORSP Presents:
GRANT WORKSHOP SERIES
SPRING 2026

FEB. 4TH MAR. 16TH APR. 13TH

3:00 PM

UC RM 229

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?
 EMAIL: ORSP@UTM.EDU

SEJC from PAGE 5

and digital communication from Dover; and Ryleigh Ulen, a junior MMSC major

with an emphasis in strategic communication and public relations from Union City.

Several UT Martin student

staff members of radio station WUTM 90.3 The Hawk have been nominated for awards at the annual Intercollegiate

Broadcasting System conference, to be held Feb. 20-21 at the Sheraton Times Square in New York.



Representing UT Martin at the Southeastern Journalism Conference Feb. 5-7 in Cartersville, Georgia, were (l-r) The Pacer faculty adviser Dr. Kayli Plotner, Ryleigh Ulen, Chyler Lee, Nate Szarzynski, Chloe Kent, Bryant Steele, Kaniya Anthony, Will Stevens, Adrianna Carter, Darby Self, Ethan Tanner and Bethany Collins.

You Tell Me

- **Question** – UT Martin has been a longtime supporter of Lifeline Blood Services of Jackson and the related blood drives. The most recent blood drive collected 84 units of blood, which could save up to 252 lives, according to Lifeline. How does Lifeline use the blood collected, and does that blood help area hospitals like West Tennessee Healthcare Volunteer Hospital in Martin?
- **Answer** – The blood donated is used for blood transfusions, platelet transfusions and blood cell transfusions, just to name a few. All blood donated through the Jackson Lifeline Blood Services drives stays local and serves 22 counties, their hospitals and AirEvac. This includes West Tennessee Healthcare Volunteer Hospital in Martin. Learn more at [the Lifeline Blood Services website](#).

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

addenda

Published weekly during the academic year and biweekly during the summer by UT Martin, Martin, TN 38238
Randy Boyd – President, University of Tennessee System • Dr. Yancy Freeman Sr. – UTM Chancellor • David Snow – Addenda Editor
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