

# addenda



The University of Tennessee at Martin Faculty and Staff Newsletter | Feb. 9, 2026

## WestStar Elevate Summit addresses leadership



Several people from across West Tennessee took part in the 28th annual WestStar Elevate Summit on Feb. 6 in the Boling University Center. The theme of the program was "For the Love of Leadership and Community." The emcees for this year's summit are Dr. Brock Martin and Dr. Krista Martin, the owners of Southern Chiropractic and Acupuncture in Huntingdon. The keynote speaker was Dave Bratcher, senior vice president of West Tennessee for YMCA and a 2012 graduate of the WestStar Leadership Program. Participants took part in two breakout sessions and chose from the topics of AI in the Workplace, Generational Leadership, Stress Management Tactics, and Servant Leadership. The summit was sponsored by UT Martin's WestStar Leadership Program.

## ENTICE Series features student panel, NPHC program

UT Martin's ENTICE Series continues this week with a student panel discussing the American dream and a presentation by the UT Martin National Panhellenic Council.

ENTICE stands for "Evolving Narratives: Tennessee Initiative for Civic Engagement." 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.

The programs in the second week of the

ENTICE Series are:

- Monday, Feb. 9, 6 p.m., Watkins Auditorium, Boling University Center: "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.

- Thursday, Feb. 12, 6 p.m., Watkins Auditorium, Boling University Center: "The Divine Nine: Legacy, Unity and Impact," a



CNN political analyst and UTM grad Van Jones will speak during the ENTICE Series on Feb. 17.

Continued on PAGE 5

# YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

**Dr. Saman Sargolzaei**, associate professor of engineering, had two peer-reviewed full articles accepted for presentation at the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers SoutheastCon 2026 conference, to be held March 13-15 in Huntsville, Alabama.

One article, titled “Assessment of Driver Cognitive Load in Autonomous Driving Using Extended Reality Simulation,” was co-authored by undergraduate students **Seth Hatchett**, **Connor Viana** and Dr. Arman Sargolzaei of the University of South Florida.

The study shows that advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) can meaningfully influence driver cognitive load and engagement.

The second article, titled “Autonomous Ground Vehicle for Precision Weed Detection and Targeted Pesticide Spraying Using Deep Learning,” was co-authored by undergraduate students **Justin Finn**, **Thomas Paxton**, **Jesse Warren**, **Arden Stanley** and **Dr. Barbara Darroch**, professor of plant and soil science.



**Sargolzaei**

The paper highlights the development of an AI- and deep learning-powered autonomous ground robot for precision weed management, showing



**Darroch**

how intelligent perception and targeted actuation can reduce pesticide use and promote more sustainable agricultural practices.

**Dr. Aaron Scott**, assistant professor of geosciences, and **Christian Bryson**, a junior geosciences major from Jackson, were featured in an article about the ongoing popularity of social media weather accounts.

The Department of Agriculture, Geosciences and Natural Resources is offering a digital meteorology class to teach students how to engage in an online audience.

Ava Beger of NPR wrote the



**Scott**

article, which can be found [at this site](#).



**Dr. Pamela Guerrero**, assistant professor of mathematics, presented a poster at the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics Central States Conference on Oct. 11-12 at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville.

Her poster, “A Study of Benjamin Bona Mahony Type Equations,” explored well-posedness questions for generalized BBM-type equations, which arise in models of wave phenomena such as water waves and plasma physics.

Guerrero is shown at Petit Jean State Park near Morrilton, Arkansas, where she stopped on the way back from the conference.

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

[UTM ENTICE Series continues with student panel, NPHC program](#)

[Future Skyhawk Receptions reset in Jackson, Dyersburg](#)

**UTM MARTIN | NEWS**

## Upcoming Skyhawk Home Events

**Friday, Feb. 13**

- Softball vs. Saint Louis, 9:30 a.m., Bettye Giles Softball Field (Skyhawk Invitational).
- Softball vs. Mississippi Valley State, noon, Bettye Giles Softball Field (Skyhawk Invitational).
- Baseball vs. Butler, 3 p.m., Skyhawk Baseball Field.

**Saturday, Feb. 14**

- Softball vs. Mississippi Valley State, 9:30 a.m., Bettye Giles Softball Field (Skyhawk Invitational).
- Softball vs. Valparaiso, noon, Bettye Giles Softball Field (Skyhawk Invitational).
- Baseball vs. Butler (dh), 1 p.m., Skyhawk Baseball Field.

**Sunday, Feb. 15**

- Softball vs. Saint Louis, 10 a.m., Bettye Giles Softball Field (Skyhawk Invitational).
  - Baseball vs Butler, 1 p.m., Skyhawk Baseball Field.
- \* - conference competition; dh - double-header; full athletics schedules can be found at [utmsports.com](https://utmsports.com). Dates and times are subject to change.

# Waterfield receives NCEA alumni award

WACO, Texas - The National Collegiate Equestrian Association announced its Distinguished Alumni Award recipients Jan. 26, and UT Martin's **Mykaela Waterfield** is one of nine members in the organization's Class of 2026 award winners.

Waterfield is the NCEA's Media and Communication honoree and becomes just the third Skyhawk recipient of this prestigious honor, which was first awarded in 2016.

She joins **Kelsy Abell** (Community Engagement) and **Brittany Kasprack** (Health Sciences and Services), who both brought home this accolade in 2017.

The NCEA Distinguished Alumni Award is presented to a woman who, at least six years after the completion of her undergraduate degree at any NCEA dues-paying institution, has made significant contributions in a professional field.

Nine categories are selected

each year, including Equine Industry Coaches or Trainers, Equine Industry Professional Riders, Equine Industry Medical or Pharmaceutical, Education, Business, Health Sciences and Services, Media and Communication, Community Engagement and Young Alumni.

Waterfield serves as the director of enrollment communications and operations at UT Martin, which powers the technology and communications that drive the student journey. The office manages the university's application and enrollment systems, ensuring smooth data integration, accurate processing and timely admissions decisions.

A Littleton, Colorado, native, Waterfield competed for the Skyhawk equestrian team from 2011 to 2015, chalking up All-American second team accolades in flat during her junior campaign.

She racked up 24 career head-to-head victories (third-most



**Waterfield**

in flat in school history and eighth-most overall across all events) and garnered five Most Outstanding Player awards over her storied career. She managed nine victories during both the 2013-14 and 2014-15 seasons, which are the fifth-most flat triumphs in UT Martin single-season history.

Waterfield was an interim assistant coach for the Skyhawk equestrian program for the 2020-21 season, stepping in to help keep the program stable during an incredibly challenging season due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

She also took part in the UT Promise Mentor program, Weakley County Young Professionals organization and was chair of the Blessed Expectations Outreach.

"Mykaela exemplifies every trait of a NCEA Distinguished Alumni," UT Martin head coach **Kim Leiter-Janes** said. "She is a true horsewoman, a servant leader, a talented and humble athlete and natural leader in every sense of the word."

"Her impact on Skyhawk equestrian is enduring; she has left a legacy for our student-athletes to continue to look up to."

A 2015 NCEA Academic All-American first-team selection, Waterfield earned her degree in agricultural business from UT Martin in 2015. She also graduated summa cum laude with a Master of Science in education in higher education leadership from UT Martin in the summer of 2020.

## SUMMER JOB & INTERNSHIP FAIR

WED, FEB 11  
12:00 PM - 3:00 PM  
UC BALLROOM

- Talk with employers
- Explore career options
- Build real connections

*You don't need a plan—just show up.*

UT MARTIN  
OFFICE OF CAREER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
731.881.7712 | [career@utm.edu](mailto:career@utm.edu)  
210 University Center  
[utm.edu/career](http://utm.edu/career)  
@utmcareer

COME CURIOUS  
LEAVE CONNECTED



# Crossing signs to aid pedestrian, motor traffic

UT Martin has installed new crosswalk lights and pedestrian signs on Mount Pelia Road to support safer and more predictable crossing behavior for pedestrians.

Mount Pelia Road provides access to multiple high-traffic campus buildings, including the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center and the Boling University Center.

Following a review of foot traffic and roadway conditions that impact visibility and driver awareness, the decision to enhance safety measures on Mount Pelia Road was made by university leadership.

**Dr. Michael O'Neill**, director of public safety, worked in collaboration with university officials during the development of these safety improvements.

"The location sees frequent pedestrian crossings, especially during peak campus activity, which made it a strong candidate for enhanced warning features," he said.

When using these crosswalks, pedestrians should press the activation button to ensure that signage lighting turns on to signal drivers of a pedestrian crossing. These lights are not motion-activated and require that pedestrians push the activation button.

To ensure safe crossing, pedestrians should wait until approaching traffic is



**A UT Martin student is shown making use of a crosswalk on Mount Pelia Road. New crosswalk signs along the street will have flashing lights when they are activated by pedestrians. Other crosswalks along the street are indicated by the yellow "Pedestrian Crossing" signs.**

stopped before stepping into the roadway.

"Put the phone down and keep earbuds low enough to hear traffic when crossing," O'Neill said. "Don't assume the driver sees you."

O'Neill added that drivers must watch for flashing lights and pedestrians, slow down as they approach the crosswalk, yield completely to any pedestrians in the crosswalk and never pass a vehicle stopped

for a pedestrian.

For more information about UT Martin public safety, visit [www.utm.edu/publicsafety](http://www.utm.edu/publicsafety).

For more information about UT Martin, visit [www.utm.edu](http://www.utm.edu) or call 1-800-829-UTM1 (-8861).

*This article was written by Maddy Kennedy, a student intern in the UTM Office of University Relations.*

## Campus Calendar

### Monday, Feb. 9

- ENTICE, 6 p.m., "Dreaming Out Loud: The American Dream Under Review," Phillip W. Watkins Auditorium, Dr. Edward J. and Carolyn P. Boling University Center.

### Tuesday, Feb. 10

- Human resources, "Recruiting Part 1: Requesting and Advertising Positions," 10-11:30 a.m., virtual via Teams.
- Blood drive, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Dr. Edward J. and Carolyn P. Boling University Center.
- Human resources, "Recruiting Part 2: Filling Vacant Positions," 2-3 p.m., virtual via Teams.

- UTM Research Series, "Sex, Gender and Procreation in Kafka," Dr. Charles Hammond, professor of German, 4 p.m., Paul Meek Library.

### Wednesday, Feb. 11

- Blood drive, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Dr. Edward J. and Carolyn P. Boling University Center.
- Summer job and internship fair, noon-3 p.m., Russell Duncan Ballroom, Dr. Edward J. and Carolyn P. Boling University Center.

### Thursday, Feb. 12

- Human resources, "Recruiting Part 1: Requesting and Advertising Positions," 9-10:30 a.m., 101 Latimer-Smith

Engineering and Science Building.

- Human resources, "Recruiting Part 2: Filling Vacant Positions," 1-2 p.m., 101 Latimer-Smith Engineering and Science Building.
- ENTICE Series, "The Divine Nine: Legacy, Unity and Impact," 6 p.m., Phillip W. Watkins Auditorium, Dr. Edward J. and Carolyn P. Boling University Center.

### Tuesday, Feb. 17

- Human resources, "Hiring and Outboarding," 10-11 a.m., virtual via Teams.
- ENTICE Series, Van Jones, CNN commentator and political analyst, 6 p.m., 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, "Night of Dance" dance and choreography program, 6 p.m., Phillip W. Watkins Auditorium, Dr. Edward J. and Carolyn P. Boling University Center.

*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).*

**Read more UT Martin news at [news.utm.edu](http://news.utm.edu)!**

# ORSP announces availability of grants

Several grant opportunities are available to staff and faculty are available, and information about them has been provided by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP).

Those wanting assistance in applying for these grants should contact ORSP at 731-881-7015. All grants and sponsored programs proposals must receive approval through the ORSP before submission to a sponsor.

Grants available for application include:

- **2026-27 Community Impact Grant, Community Foundation of West Tennessee.**

The Community Foundation of West Tennessee awards community impact grants annually to programs and projects that serve the people of West Tennessee.

The project or program must benefit the residents of West Tennessee. Eligible counties include Benton, Carroll, Chester, Crockett, Decatur, Dyer, Fayette, Gibson, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Henry, Lake, Lauderdale, Madison, McNairy, Obion, Tipton and Weakley.

While not required, projects or programs that are a collaboration between two or more organizations are eligible to receive

additional points during the evaluation process.

Grants are for a one-year term: July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027.

Application deadline is March 20.

Additional information is available [at this site](#).

- **Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Strengthening Agricultural Systems, USDA NIFA.**

The long-term goal of the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Strengthening Agricultural Systems Notice of Funding Opportunity is to help transform the U.S. food and agricultural system to increase agricultural production while enhancing farmer prosperity.

Achieving this goal will require transdisciplinary approaches to address current and future food and agricultural challenges within the context of the economic viability of farm operations, quality of life for farmers and society, and the most efficient use of resources.

NIFA is soliciting applications under two program area priorities: strengthening agricultural systems – which includes new uses and expanding markets for agriculture and forestry products, solutions to pests and

diseases of plants or animals and combating food and diet-related chronic diseases – and artificial intelligence for K-12 food and agricultural sciences.

Letters of intent are due Feb. 26. Applications are due March 26.

Additional information is available [at this site](#).

- **Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER), NSF.**

The Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Program is a foundation-wide activity that offers the National Science Foundation’s most prestigious awards in support of early-career faculty who have the potential to serve as academic role models in research and education and to lead advances in the mission of their department or organization.

Activities pursued by early-career faculty should build a firm foundation for a lifetime of leadership in integrating education and research.

The CAREER award, including indirect costs, is expected to total a minimum of \$400,000 for the five-year duration.

CAREER submissions are due July 22.

More information is available [at this site](#).

**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

## ENTICE from PAGE 1

presentation by members of the UTM National Panhellenic Council highlighting historical and cultural contributions of Black Greek organizations.

The keynote speaker of the ENTICE Series is Van Jones, a UT Martin alumnus and CNN

commentator and political analyst. Jones will be featured in a Feb. 17 discussion navigating journalism and news cycles.

All programs are free and open to the public.

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



Mental health advocate Jay Michael Martin Jr. and UTM students whip up “Jay’s chopped sandwiches” at his ENTICE program Feb. 3.

# Writing center continues serving university

The Hortense Parrish Writing Center has serviced students for over 45 years. Throughout its time, the center has faced challenges head-on and adapted accordingly, even in the face of technological advancement and a global pandemic – all while prioritizing students.

The center’s adaptability will be especially important as it begins to integrate into the Library Learning Commons, which officially opened last September under the coordination of **Dr. Amanda Mansfield**.

The ultimate goal of the Library Learning Commons is to incorporate all academic assistance programs into one main resource where students can go to get various kinds of help.

**Dr. Kelle Alden**, director of the Hortense Parrish Writing Center since 2017, has high hopes for the integration.

“What I think everybody’s general goal is, is that we become a very convenient location where a student can come and receive help with anything, and kind of all in one place,” Alden said.

“I’m also hoping that we’ll be there to support each other, that...we can basically operate as a unit when we are trying to determine what the future of academic support at UT Martin looks like.”

Today’s writing center began when Hortense Cate Parrish, who was a freshman English instructor at the time, began offering students one-on-one help with their writing on her lunch breaks.

The center was named in her honor in 1981, a year after she retired from UT Martin, and is now serving in its fifth



**The faces that you will see in the Hortense Parrish Writing Center include (front row, l-r) student workers Adrianna Staley, Ethan Tanner and Elle Edwards and (back row, l-r) staff members Steve Flowers, Beth Walker, Dr. Kelle Alden, Klara Nichter and Julie Everage.**

decade. The foundation that Parrish built for the writing center has withstood the test of time and will continue to do so as the writing center further adapts to students’ needs.

The writing center, located in Room 209 of the Holt Humanities Building, is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Friday. The center also has evening hours, located on the first floor of the Paul Meek Library in the Library Learning Commons, and is open from 6 to 9 p.m. Monday

through Thursday and Sunday.

For students looking to make an appointment at the Hortense Parrish Writing Center, visit the Writing Center Online website at [utm.mywconline.net](http://utm.mywconline.net).

Students and professors are welcome to come to the center with questions or concerns, or they can email the writing center at [owl@utm.edu](mailto:owl@utm.edu).

*This article was written by Elle Edwards, a student intern in the UTM Office of University Relations.*

## You Tell Me

• **Question** – Is there a central point on the main campus for turning in lost items? If so, what’s the process for turning in an item and checking to see if a lost item has been turned in. Also, how long are lost items kept?

• **Answer** – Most found items are brought to the Department of Public Safety. If an item has a name on it, the dispatcher will try to contact the owner. To know if public safety has an item, stop by Department of Public Safety in Crisp Hall or call ext. 7777. If public safety doesn’t have the item, you can leave your name and contact information, and someone will let you know if it has been turned in. Skyhawk Cards are usually kept for just a couple of days, then they are sent back to the One Stop Shop to get the card back to the owner before the person pays for another. All other items are stored for a minimum of 60 days before disposal.

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

## addenda

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