

# addenda

The University of Tennessee at Martin Faculty and Staff Newsletter | April 13, 2026

## Heroes Breakfast honors first responders



The Center for Student Engagement and the Office of Alumni Relations hosted The Heart of UTM Community Heroes Breakfast. This community service project was an opportunity to honor the first responders who serve Weakley County and show appreciation for all they do. In the top photo, members of UTM Public Safety are being served by Vanessa Murrey (in the blue shirt) and Anna Worley (with the tongs). In the bottom photo, members of the Martin Fire Department are getting a hearty breakfast from (l-r) Jami Jordan of the Student Alumni Council, Jillian Brigrance of Alpha Omicron Pi and Student Government Association President Bailey Parker. Twenty-three area first-responder organizations were invited to the special breakfast.



# YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

Dr. Carrie Humphreys and Dr. Adnan Rasool, both associate professors of political science, have published their latest peer-reviewed article, “Strong Foundations: A Holistic Approach to Political Science Career Preparation,” in the [Journal of Political Science Education](#).

The article presents a skill-oriented scaffolding model developed at UTM over the last three years that intentionally sequences the development of writing, public speaking, research methodology and professional skills across all four undergraduate years.

Students advance from collaborative experiences like Model UN and Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature, through study abroad and internships with the Center for Rural Innovation, to a redesigned Senior Seminar featuring curriculum vitae workshops, mock interviews

**Bud Grimes**, vice chancellor for communications and marketing, was the guest on Thunderbolt Radio’s “30 Minutes” public affairs show that aired April 4-5.

Paul Tinkle, Thunderbolt Radio’s president and longtime air personality, was host as Grimes and Tinkle covered a variety of information about UT



Humphries

and capstone research poster presentations.

The research was supported by a Faculty Development Grant from the Office of Research and Sponsored Program.

■ Humphreys and Rasool have also been awarded \$7,500 from the Alliance of Women Philanthropists Giving Circle to launch the Skyhawk Model UN Academy, a new high school Model UN program serving Weakley and Obion counties.

The academy will bring 30 to 50 high school students

Martin.

The interview is archived on the [Thunderbolt Broadcasting website](#).

Tinkle is a 1976 UTM graduate and has earned numerous recognitions during his radio career. Thunderbolt Broadcasting is the longtime flagship station for Skyhawk athletics.



Rasool

to campus for a day-long simulation of international diplomacy, building research, writing, public speaking and negotiation skills.

UTM’s award-winning collegiate Model UN team will serve as committee chairs and mentors, creating a pipeline that channels their recent success, including the Outstanding Delegation award at the 2025 Southern Regional Model United Nations, directly back into the communities UTM serves.



Grimes

A feature appearing Jan. 13 in Coworking Cafe that included **Dr. Sean Walker**, professor of management, was published in The New York Times on March 19.

[The Coworking Cafe feature](#) was titled “Expert Perspectives on Thriving in Smaller Cities,” while the Times feature was called “The Best Small Cities for Big Careers.”

Walker answered the question “What types of infrastructure – such as reliable fiber internet, efficient transit, and strong business density – most directly influence whether a city can support sustained career growth? And where does coworking fit into that picture, if at all?”

Walker was one of three professionals selected to answer the question.

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

[UT Martin to hold 125th anniversary state tour](#)

[Noted Gee’s Bend quilter becomes UTM artist-in-residence](#)

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## Upcoming Skyhawk Home Events

**Tuesday, April 14**

- Baseball vs. North Alabama, 5 p.m., Skyhawk Baseball Field.

**Wednesday, April 15**

- Soccer vs. Memphis, 7:45 p.m., Skyhawk Soccer Field (exhibition).

**Friday, April 17**

- Football, Navy and White Spring Game, 6 p.m., Hardy M. Graham Stadium (exhibition).

**Saturday, April 18**

- \*Softball vs. Morehead State, noon (dh), Bettye Giles Softball Field.

**Sunday, April 19**

- \*Softball vs. Morehead State, noon, Bettye Giles Softball Field.

**Tuesday, April 21**

- Baseball vs. Belmont, 5 p.m., Skyhawk Baseball Field.

\* - conference competition; dh - double-header (baseball and softball); full athletics schedules can be found at [utmsports.com](https://utmsports.com).

Dates and times are subject to change.



Walker

# YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

**Ben Ort**, assistant director of First-Year Experience, and **Tammy Stanford**, assistant director of Student Success Counseling, represented UT Martin at the 2026 NACADA Region 3 and Region 4 Conference held March 16-18 in Louisville.

The conference, held under the theme “Adventure Awaits,” brought together academic advisers, administrators and faculty from across two NACADA regions for networking and professional development.

NACADA - the National Academic Advising Association - is the leading national organization dedicated to promoting quality academic advising in higher education, serving as a forum for the exchange of ideas and best practices that enhance student

success.

Ort and Stanford led a session titled “Name that Solution: A Student Success Game Show,” a crowd favorite that brought laughs and meaningful professional reflection to the room.

In the interactive session, participants shared some of the most creative excuses students have offered for not meeting their responsibilities, while fellow attendees took on the challenge of digging deeper to uncover underlying issues and offer reasonable, practical solutions.

The lighthearted game-show format proved to be a highly engaging way to spark conversation about the real complexities advisers face every day and the creative problem-solving skills it takes to support students effectively.



Tammy Stanford and Ben Ort are shown at the National Academic Advising Association Regions 3 and 4 Conference last month in Louisville.


The Office of Human Resources will host “Afternoon Tea: Leading with Purpose” from 3 to 4 p.m., Thursday, April 16, in Room 230 of the Boling University Center.

The event provides the campus community with an opportunity to learn from and be inspired by the experiences

of UT Martin leaders.

While there will be no actual tea served, the spirit of the event is about “spilling the tea”: fostering an open, candid and meaningful conversation around leadership journeys, professional development and self-awareness.

THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES PRESENTS



# Afternoon Tea:

## Leading with Purpose

This engaging event creates space for our campus community to learn from and be inspired by the experiences of leaders at our institution. While there will be no actual tea served, the spirit of the event is all about “spilling the tea”—fostering an open, candid, and meaningful conversation around leadership journeys, professional development, lessons learned, and self-awareness.

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<p><b>EVENT DETAILS</b></p> <p>THURSDAY, APRIL 16 3:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M. ROOM 230, BOLING UNIVERSITY CENTER</p>	<p><b>GUEST PANELISTS</b></p> <p>ASHLEY BYNUM DEBBIE STAIRS PETRA MCPHEARSON</p>
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We hope you will join us for this opportunity to connect, learn, and engage with colleagues across campus.

**Dr. David Barber**, professor of history, gave a Zoom presentation April 10 to the national conference of the Popular Culture Association, held April 8-11 in Atlanta.

The presentation was called “Make America Great Again and the Erasure of Black History.”

The presentation was part of the “Pushing the Envelope in the History Classroom” section.



Barber

**Dr. Robert DeYeso**, assistant professor of mathematics, has been elected as director of Section NExT (New Experiences in Teaching) for the Mathematical Association of America Southeastern Section, with his three-year term beginning in fall 2026.

DeYeso will support initiatives focused on mentoring, professional development, and community-building for early-career mathematicians across



DeYeso

the southeastern region.

# You should be dancing – with the Skyhawks

“Dancing with the Skyhawks,” a food collection event for The Captain’s Pantry, was held April 7 in Watkins Auditorium in the Boling University Center.

The event collected 1,156 food items for The Captain’s Pantry.

The event was hosted by the Student Government Association and the UT Martin dance education program.

Faculty, staff and student contestants competed for the championship and the disco ball trophy.

**Colton Burress** and Reyna Joyner won the Skyhawks Service Award for collecting the most donations.

Donations to the pantry were also accepted in the Boling University Center lobby before the program.

The winners of the 2026 Dancing with the Skyhawks program were:

- **First Place:** **Kameron Echols**, director of Student Leadership and Campus Culture, and **Emma Harris**, junior social work major.

- **Second Place:** **Colton Burress**, client services technician with Information Technology Services, and **Reyna Joyner**, junior economics major.

- **Third Place:** **Mary Elise Laman**, marching band color guard coordinator, and **Emma McGregor**, sophomore veterinary science major.

- **Crowd Favorite Award:** **Solomon Watkins**, admissions counselor, and **Hallie Abernathy**, junior marketing major.

- **Service Award:** **Colton Burress** and **Reyna Joyner**.

Other competing couples included:

- **Ava Abad**, assistant director of alumni programming, and **Jami Jordan**, junior agricultural engineering technology major.

- **Dr. Cayce Batts**, assistant professor of social work, and **Myra Beers**, sophomore integrated studies K-5 major.

- **Casey Bohr**, admissions counselor, and **Allana Barrow**, sophomore pre-health

science major.

- **Lauren Johnson**, student success counselor, and **Preston Pooler**, senior agribusiness major.

- **Catherine Jones**, academic records specialist, and **Rush Cox**, sophomore mechanical engineering major.

- **Kaylee Nance**, administrative specialist, UTM Jackson Center, and **Rick Butler**, senior sociology major.

- **Kim Olive-Milligan**, assistant director of Campus Recreation, and **Wyatt Lacasse**, first-year wildlife science major.

- **Dr. Saman Sargolzaei**, associate professor of engineering, and **Dajah Smith**, sophomore veterinary science major.

- **Eryn Turner**, senior financial aid counselor, and **Lauren Webb**, junior instrumental music K-12 major.



Emma Harris and Kameron Echols won the first-place disco ball trophy in the Dancing with the Skyhawks competition.



Colton Burress and Reyna Joyner took second place but won the Skyhawks Service Award for collecting the most food donations.



Mary Elise Laman (left) and Emma McGregor took third place in the Dancing with the Skyhawks program.



Solomon Watkins and Hallie Abernathy won the Crowd Favorite Award in the Dancing with the Skyhawks food-raising event.

# Inventory verification training sessions offered

The Office of Business Services will offer training for the 2026 annual verification of departmental movable equipment inventory and assets.

This session is designed to support departments in accurately completing the annual inventory verification process. The training will cover key procedures, expectations and best practices to ensure compliance and efficiency.

This training is recommended for administrative assistants, department managers and any employees responsible for conducting or overseeing the inventory verification process. Participants are encouraged to bring a laptop, as lab computer availability is limited.

Registration for the training can be done [at this site](#). The instructor for the training

will be **Keith Lawrence** of the Office of Business Services.

There is one virtual session, to be held via Microsoft Teams from 9:30 to 11 a.m., Friday, April 17. This virtual session is intended for UT Martin's regional centers and will be offered upon request for those who are unable to attend in person.

The times and sites for the in-person trainings are:

- 9:30-11 a.m., Tuesday, April 14, 300 Latimer-Smith Engineering and Science Building.
- 1:30-3 p.m., Tuesday, April 14, 300



Lawrence

Latimer-Smith Engineering and Science Building.

- 9:30-11 a.m., Wednesday, April 15, 118 Paul Meek Library.
- 1:30-3 p.m., Wednesday, April 15, 118 Paul Meek Library.
- 9:30-11 a.m., Thursday, April 16, 118 Paul Meek Library.
- 1:30-3 p.m., Thursday, April 16, 118 Paul Meek

Library.

Questions, requests or concerns should be sent to **Emily Crider**, human resources associate, at [emily@utm.edu](mailto:emily@utm.edu) or Keith Lawrence at [klawren9@utm.edu](mailto:klawren9@utm.edu).

# UTM students of Japanese earn recognition



UT Martin second-semester Japanese students were among 70 students from eight universities taking part in the sixth annual Tennessee Video Skit and Presentation Contest. The winners were announced April 11 at the Nashville Cherry Blossom Festival. UT Martin second-semester Japanese groups won the second and third places at the first-year college level. Japanese Consul-General Shinji Watanabe presented the awards to the contest winners on the main stage. Erina Toyama, UT Martin JOI coordinator, also hosted a booth to promote Japanese programs in Tennessee and her own role and activities at the festival. This contest received support from the Middle Tennessee Japan Society. UT Martin students shown at the festival are (l-r) Arden Stanley, Delila Luciano, Isabella Horton and Johntavia Cross.

## Campus Calendar

### Tuesday, April 14

- DASH Research, town hall series, 9-10 a.m., "Agreements"; join session [here](#).

### Wednesday, April 15

- DASH Research, central office users webinar series, 9-10 a.m., "Agreements in HGA"; join session [here](#).

### Thursday, April 16

- DASH Research, principal

investigators and departmental users webinar series, 9-10 a.m., "Agreements"; join session [here](#).

- "Afternoon Tea: Leading with Purpose," 3-4 p.m., 230 Boling University Center.
- Spring 2026 Dance Ensemble, "Flight Patterns," 7 p.m., Harriet Fulton Theatre. Tickets can be purchased [here](#) or at the box

office.

### Friday, April 17

- Spring 2026 Dance Ensemble, "Flight Patterns," 7 p.m., Harriet Fulton Theatre. Tickets can be purchased [here](#) or at the box office.

### Tuesday, April 21

- DASH Research, town hall series, 9-10 a.m., "Lifecycle Actions and Integrations";

join session [here](#).

- "DISC in Action: Practical Tools for Supervisors and Leaders" training session, 10-11:30 a.m., 230 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).*

# Math Craft Lab presented at Union City Kiwanis



Faculty and staff from the UT Martin Department of Mathematics and Statistics who gave a Math Craft Lab presentation at a Kiwanis Club of Union City meeting included (l-r) Dr. Amanda Niedzialowski, assistant professor of mathematics; Dana Gatewood, lecturer of mathematics and statistics; Barbara Kunkel, lecturer of mathematics and statistics; Shelly Long, department administrative assistant; Carlin Bush, lab instructor of mathematics; and Dr. Steve Elliott, department chair. Also shown is Tyler Bolton (far right), president-elect of the Kiwanis Club of Union City.

## Spring dance ensemble to be held April 16-17

The UT Martin Department of Visual and Theatre Arts invites the campus community to the Spring 2026 Dance Ensemble production entitled

“Flight Patterns,” at 7 p.m. nightly, Thursday and Friday, April 16-17, in the Harriet Fulton Theatre.

Tickets are free for all UT

Martin students with a valid ID or event pass, \$15 for adults and \$10 for students from all other institutions.

Tickets can be purchased

through [this link](#) or at the box office, which will open one hour prior to the performance.

The doors will open each night at 6:30.

### You Tell Me

• **Question** – Spring commencement will be held during 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. ceremonies Saturday, May 2. Spring commencement is a longtime tradition. When did fall and summer commencements begin and end, respectively?

• **Answer** – Based on readily available records, December commencements began at UT Martin in 1989, and the final commencement held in the summer was held in 2008. There are no current plans to bring back a summer commencement ceremony. Fall and spring commencements are held on single days in December and May that feature morning and afternoon ceremonies. As enrollment grows, a two-day commencement in May is a possibility and would add a Friday night ceremony to the two Saturday ceremonies. This would help to accommodate more spring graduates and commencement attendees. The honors and ceremonies committee oversees commencement and would bring such a proposal to the chancellor’s cabinet for final consideration and possible approval.

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

### addenda

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