

# addenda

The University of Tennessee at Martin Faculty and Staff Newsletter | May 18, 2026



UT Martin Advisory Board Chair Hal Bynum (left) and Chancellor Yancy Freeman Sr. are pictured at the UT Martin Advisory Board meeting held May 15 in the Boling University Center. The board approved a 3% across-the-board tuition increase.

## Advisory board approves 3% increase in tuition

The UT Martin Advisory Board approved a 3% increase in in-state tuition at its meeting May 15 in the Boling University Center.

The budget now goes to the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees for final review and approval at the board's annual meeting June 29-30 at UT Southern.

Petra McPhearson, senior vice chancellor for finance and administration, told the board prior to the vote that the increase would raise the yearly tuition cost to \$9,338 and add an estimated \$1.6 million for distribution to support the university priorities, assuming the enrollment remains at current enrollment levels. The tuition and fee revenue would be revisited when the fall 2026 enrollment becomes official.

The 3% in-state increase would

affect undergraduate maintenance fees and mandatory fees and the graduate maintenance fee and mandatory fees. The dual enrollment rate will equal the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC) Grant amount.

If approved by the UT Board of Trustees, the increases would be effective for the 2026-27 academic year.

Out-of-state increases for undergraduate maintenance fee and non-resident tuition are 1.8% and 1.9%, respectively, including mandatory fees. The graduate maintenance fee and non-resident tuition increase is 1.9% and is 2% overall with mandatory fees. There is no increase proposed to the non-resident tuition rate.

Other increases include a 5% increase in housing in the multi-year plan and a 3.8%

increase in dining.

The total unrestricted projected budget for fiscal year 2026-27 is \$149.9 million. The areas that get the most funding from that are instruction, which receives \$54.4 million of the expenditures; auxiliary services, which receive \$17.2 million; scholarships, which receive \$17.1 million; and student services, which receive \$17 million.

McPhearson also requested an increase in some mandatory fees for the 2026-27 budget.

"We would like to propose a \$40 increase in the facilities fee to address the non-academic facilities and spaces," she said. "The second portion of that is a \$12 increase in the athletics fee to help address the rising costs to support the teams."

Continued on PAGE 6

# YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff



Hayes

The Department of Political Science and Global Studies was well represented at the Midwest Political Science Association annual meeting April 23-26 in Chicago.

Three faculty members and one undergraduate student all presented their research at the conference.

Dr. Carrie Humphreys, associate professor of political science and department chair,



Humphreys

presented her paper "Classroom Diplomacy: Exploring Student Traits and Their Impact on Simulation Outcomes" to the Active and Collaborative Learning Techniques and Outcomes panel.

Dr. Liam Hayes, assistant professor of political science, presented his co-authored paper "RIP Harambe: The Impact of Meme Culture on Conspiratorial Thinking and its



Koehnlein

Impact on Political Attributes" to the Government Driven Misinformation panel.

Dr. Britt Koehnlein, assistant professor of political science, presented her paper "From Service Provision to Conflict Termination: How Fragile and Conflict-Affected States Leverage Vaccinations to increase State Legitimacy and End Civil War" to the



Lain

Peacemaking and Peacekeeping panel.

Anthony Lain of Nashville, a graduating senior political science major, presented his poster "Does the Electoral College Continue to Fulfill its Original Purpose?" during the undergraduate poster session Elections: Money and Rules for his last undergraduate experience before graduation.

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

**[UT Martin Memorial Day commemoration set for May 22](#)**

**[Mass media and strategic communication awards presented](#)**

**[UT Martin computer science graduate wants to become computer professor](#)**

**UT MARTIN | NEWS**

Dr. Robert DeYeso III, assistant professor of mathematics and statistics, published a single-author research paper titled "Thin knots and the cabling conjecture" in [Algebraic & Geometric Topology international journal](#).

The paper was published in November 2025 in Volume 25 of the journal.

The paper studies when Dehn surgery along knots is reducible. This is analogous to a sense of "primeness" for three-dimensional shapes and is known as the Cabling Conjecture.

Using techniques from Heegaard Floer homology and immersed curve theory, DeYeso proved that almost all thin knots satisfy the conjecture, providing new evidence supporting a long-standing question in geometric topology.

Published by Mathematical Sciences Publishers, Algebraic & Geometric Topology is a highly selective, peer-reviewed international research journal specializing in topology and geometry.

The journal is ranked in the Q1 quartile in geometry and



DeYeso

topology, according to SCImago rankings, and is recognized for its rigorous editorial standards and highly selective review process.

**Submit a YoUTM or question to [addenda@utm.edu](mailto:addenda@utm.edu)!**

## YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff



**Tammy Jo Stanford**, director of the UT Martin CommUnity Center and assistant director of Success Counseling, organized a period product donation drive, inviting faculty, staff, students and community members to contribute essential supplies.

The CommUnity Center, located in the Paul Meek Library, provides free feminine hygiene products to students in high-traffic women's restrooms across campus. Additional supplies are also available outside the center's doors, ensuring easy and discreet access.

As part of a new initiative, the CommUnity Center is expanding its outreach by providing care packages to the six regional UT Martin regional centers in Jackson, Parsons,

Ripley, Selmer, Somerville and Springfield. This effort aims to broaden access to necessary items beyond the main campus.

Feminine hygiene poverty remains a significant concern, particularly in Tennessee, where taxes on these products are among the highest in the nation. In response, the CommUnity Center distributed more than 11,000 individual items during the academic year to help meet student needs.

Thirty-five supporters donated products to the cause.

Donations can be dropped off at the CommUnity Center in Room 255 of the Paul Meek Library or Room 261 of Clement Hall.

For more information, contact Stanford at [tstanfo1@utm.edu](mailto:tstanfo1@utm.edu).



**Dr. Mark Statler**, professor of music, traveled to Budapest, Hungary, on March 18-21 to be the guest conductor for the International Honors Music Festival, an annual gathering of students and teachers from various countries around the world to participate in a five-day honor choir. This was the 20th anniversary, and there were 110 students in the high school choir from eight different countries, including Hungary, Germany, Spain and Albania. Statler is shown conducting a concert in St. Istvan's Cathedral in Budapest.

# Student interns meet Gordon Center namesakes

J. Houston Gordon and Debbie Gordon met six student interns from the J. Houston and Debbie Gordon Center for Rural Innovation on April 21 as part of a campus visit organized by the Division of University Advancement.

Those interns were Tristen Bough, a global studies major; Joshua Hopkins a political science major; Zundyl Luciano, a graphic design major; Ryan Lutes, a political science and global studies major; Ella Self, a graphic design major; and Robbie Winner, a psychology major.

Because of the generous support of the Gordons – for whom the Center for Rural Innovation is named – 10 interns were placed during the spring 2026 semester, with organizations, including the cities of Alamo and Paris, the Weakley County mayor’s office and the Obion County Chamber of Commerce.

The student interns shared



Shown at the J. Houston and Debbie Gordon Center for Rural Innovation are (front row, L-R) Zundyl Luciano, Debbie Gordon, Ella Self, (back row, l-r) Tristen Bough, J. Houston Gordon, Ryan Lutes, Robbie Winner and Joshua Hopkins.

the impact of their internships with the Gordons: what they’ve been learning and the types of skills they’ve been building.

The J. Houston and Debbie Gordon Center for Rural Innovation was founded in August 2025 under the leadership of Dr. Allan Sterbinsky, lecturer of political

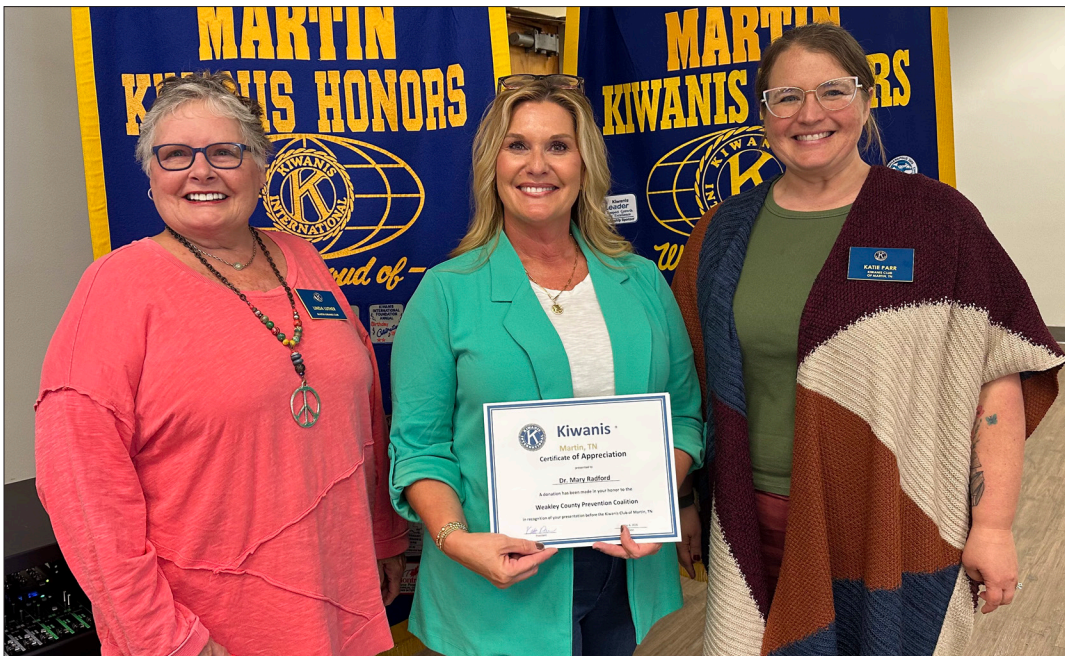
science with the support of the Department of Political Science and Global Studies, the Office of Research Sponsored Programs and the College of Humanities and Fine Arts.

It has been working to build internship opportunities for students across majors and lend technical support to local

governments and organizations.

J. Houston Gordon is a 1968 alumnus of UT Martin who completed law school at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He gained national prominence for representing Lt. William Calley in the appeal of his conviction of his part in the My Lai massacre.

# Radford speaks at Kiwanis Club of Martin



Dr. Mary Radford (center), professor and chair of the Department of Nursing, was the featured speaker at the May 6 meeting of the Kiwanis Club of Martin. She presented details about the Mobile Health Education Unit van that is making an impact in West Tennessee. It is a specialized health program designed to serve rural Tennessee communities, enhance nursing education and facilitate community outreach. Radford was introduced by Linda Luther (left), Kiwanis program chair for May and a retired faculty member from the Department of Nursing. Kiwanis president Katie Parr (right) presented Radford a certificate of appreciation showing that a donation will be made in her honor to the Weakley County Prevention Coalition.

# Travel study group visits New Mexico sites



Dr. Margaret Lewis (second from right), professor of history, and Dr. Angie Van Boening (holding the UT Martin sign at left), professor of geology, led a travel study May 4-9 to New Mexico. This travel study highlighted places in the region of geologic and historical importance, such as Mesa Verde National Park, Chaco Canyon and Chaco Culture National Historic Park, and the Petrified Forest National Park. The travel study followed a course the professors co-taught in the spring semester on the intersection of geology and history. Seven students from that class joined the travel study, where they each presented site talks at significant locations. Students shown are (front row, l-r) Carlton Willis, Amelia Casey, Hailey Russell (standing on sign), Janie Roberts, Charity Giles, Tiffany Doyle (standing on sign) and Audrey Conger.

# Watkins Outstanding Service Award winners named

Each year at the UT Martin Student Affairs end-of-year luncheon, Dr. Andy Lewter, vice chancellor for student affairs; Gina McClure, assistant vice chancellor for student and residential life; and John Abel, assistant vice chancellor for student affairs and the dean of students, recognize three outstanding employees with the Dr. Phillip Watkins Outstanding Service Award. This award is given annually to Division of Student Affairs staff who have gone above and beyond in their service to the division and UT Martin students. This year's recipients – shown with Lewter (first from right) – are (l-r) Peyton Wolfe of Campus Rec, Patricia Floyd of Student Health and Counseling and Darnesha Currie of Career Planning and Development.



# Mathematics instructors speak at Union City Rotary



Representatives from the UT Martin Math Craft Lab recently presented at the Union City Rotary Club, sharing information about the year-long program for local high school juniors and seniors. The presentation highlighted hands-on mathematical activities and student engagement opportunities offered through the Math Craft Lab. Attendees also participated in interactive activities, including constructing Möbius strips and demonstrating creative approaches to exploring mathematical ideas. Pictured are (l-r) Dr. Robert DeYeso III, assistant professor of mathematics; Shelly Long, administrative assistant for the Department of Mathematics and Statistics; Barbara Kunkel, lecturer of mathematics; Dana Gatewood, lecturer of mathematics; TaLee Howard, mathematics laboratory assistant; and Dr. Steve Elliott, professor of mathematics and department chair.

## BOARD from PAGE 1

McPhearson said the athletics fee has not had an increase in more than 12 years.

The board approved the budget requests by a 5-0 vote.

The board heard update reports on the new Business Administration Building, which is scheduled to be open in 2029 and located along Lovelace Avenue between University Street and Hurt Street. Demolition for the current Business Administration

Building is tentatively scheduled for this November, with construction tentatively set to last through the spring of 2029.

The board also heard update reports for construction of a new residence facility to be located where Browning Hall is along Mount Pelia Road across from the Student Recreation Center. The three-story facility is planned to have 406 beds, community spaces, a community kitchen, a courtyard and meeting space.

Construction on the residence facility is scheduled to begin in late May or early June and open at the start of the fall 2028 semester.

The advisory board also heard the results of a University of Tennessee brand awareness and perception survey, conducted last year.

Other actions taken by the UT Martin Advisory Board include:

- The board voted 5-0 to accept Leah Repp, an upcoming

senior cell and molecular biology major from Henderson, as the student representative, succeeding Darby Self, an upcoming senior mass media and strategic communication major from Oakland.

- The board voted 5-0 to accept meeting date changes for 2026 and 2027. Future UT Martin Advisory Board meetings will be held Sept. 25; Jan. 22, 2027; May 14, 2027; and Sept. 24, 2027.

## You Tell Me

• **Question** – Is the “overgrown” grassy area on the corner of University Street and Skyhawk Parkway a designated pollination area? I have noticed that there are signs posted; however, they are not legible from the road.

• **Answer** – Yes, this is a project sponsored by the university’s Center for Sustainability. This area and a new one on the quad side of Gooch Hall are native pollinator gardens that are maintained to help ensure biodiversity and healthy ecosystems by providing homes for bees, butterflies and other pollinators. These two plantings of native vegetation, along with two others – one southeast of Pacer Pond and one behind the Dunagan Alumni Center – were planted as part of the certification process for UT Martin to be a Bee Campus USA (Xerces Society). The sustainability center is partnering with campus grounds on these initiatives. New signage is planned to better identify these spaces and their purpose.

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

# RAs, hall directors honored at appreciation event



Residence assistants and hall directors were recognized at the annual appreciation event held April 21 at the Dunagan Alumni Center by Chancellor Yancy Freeman Sr. Shown in the group picture are (front row, l-r) Director of the Office of Housing Ryan Martin, Tiana Martin, JeNyah Ralston, Lynetta Stampley, Bethany Mayers, Grayce Shaver, Charley Crawford, Addison Williams, Kayla Street, Ava King, Destiny Hensley, Arnold Pryor Place Hall Director Sidney Church, Conner Community Hall Director Cecilia Alden, Alexis Deinlein, Michael Bedsole, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student and Residential Life Gina McClure, Assistant Director for Residence Life Laura Larkins, (back row, l-r) Assistant Director of Operations for the Office of Housing Allen Farmer, Tallia Boyland, Evani Parker, Donald Rodgers, Allen Dumas, Logan Banaszak, Luke Hopkins, Isaiah Smith, Aidan Young, CJ Goers, Ben Therrell, Bailey Gartman, Olivia Woolard, Maggie Archibald, Ellington Hall Director Kate Pilcher, Harley Huber, Chancellor Yancy Freeman Sr. and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Dr. Andy Lewter.

## Kindergarten-5th UT MARTIN SUMMER CAMPS

May 26-29	Jr. Kid College K-2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	June 15-17	Women's Basketball Kids Camp K-5 <sup>th</sup> grade
May 30	UTM Softball Kids Camp K-5 <sup>th</sup> grade	June 15-18	Minecraft Camp 3 <sup>rd</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> grade
June 1-5	Kid College 3 <sup>rd</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> grade	June 22-24	Future Skyhawks Cheer Clinic K-5 <sup>th</sup> grade
June 2	Softball All Skills Camp K-5 <sup>th</sup> grade	July 13-16	Men's Basketball Kids Camp K-8 <sup>th</sup> grade
June 3	Softball Pitching Skills Camp K-5 <sup>th</sup> grade	August 8	Softball Pitching Skills K-8 <sup>th</sup> grade
June 8-12	Lego Robotics Camp K-5 <sup>th</sup> grade	Register at <a href="http://www.utmcamps.com">www.utmcamps.com</a>	

## 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade UT MARTIN SUMMER CAMPS

May 26-29	Women's Basketball Middle School Camp (teams & individuals)	June 22-24	Cheer & STUNT Middle School Camp
June 5-6	Men's Basketball High School Team Camp	June 22-25	Skyhawk Discovery Camp 6th-8th
June 7-9	UTM Piano Camp 7 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade	June 22-24	Cheer & STUNT Recruitment Camp 9th+
June 9-10	Women's Basketball High School Team Camp	June 27	Aviators Color Guard & Majorettes 7th-12th
June 10-12	Summer Vocal Camp 7 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade	July 27-28	UTM Volleyball Camp 9th-12th
June 10	Softball Recruiting Camp I 9 <sup>th</sup> -Jr. College	August 8	Softball Pitching Skills Clinic K-8th
June 17	Softball Recruiting Camp II 9 <sup>th</sup> -Jr. College	Register at <a href="http://www.utmcamps.com">www.utmcamps.com</a>	

# Three staff members earn April Skyhawk Spirit Awards

The winners of the Skyhawk Spirit Awards for the month of April are **Kim Fisher**, nursing administrative specialist at the UT Martin Parsons Center; **Will Gibson**, manager of disability and testing services in the Accessibility Resource Center; and **Ryan Lewis**, who works in the College of Education, Health and Behavioral Services graduate programs.



**Fisher**



**Gibson**



**Lewis**

For being named to the Skyhawk Spirit Award, each person will receive a \$50 cash award and a commemorative plaque.

Fisher was praised in her award letter for her dedication and performance at the UT Martin Parsons Center.

“In addition to your regular responsibilities, you have taken on new initiatives to ensure students have access to food, resources and support through the blessing box, student lounges and the UTM Parsons Food Pantry,” the letter stated. “Your partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank and willingness to assist with nursing student applications further reflect your compassion and leadership.”

Gibson was praised in his award letter for his student-first approach to providing a welcoming and supportive environment for students.

“Through your leadership of the Accessibility Resource Center and Testing Center, you have expanded services for students while developing

impactful programs that promote inclusion and student success,” the letter stated. “Your work in securing funding for the SAIL program and creating the Launch Program demonstrates your compassion, innovation and commitment to ensuring students with disabilities feel supported and connected from the moment they arrive and leave our campus.

“Your dedication, leadership and compassionate mindset contributes greatly to making a lasting difference in the lives of students and the university community.”

Lewis was praised in his award letter for his work to strengthen and expand the presence of the College of Education, Health and Behavioral Services graduate programs.

“Establishing and building relationships across campus, improving advising communication and leading the creation of the CEHBS graduate programs handbook, you have helped increase awareness and accessibility for current and incoming students across the

university,” the letter stated. “Your willingness to engage with students, faculty and campus organizations demonstrates your passion for service and continuous improvement.

“Your professionalism, initiative and positive attitude make a lasting impact on everyone you interact with, and your dedication continues to strengthen the success of these programs.”

The Skyhawk Spirit Award recognizes a faculty or staff member who goes above and beyond in creating positive, supportive, uplifting environments for students and colleagues. It also rewards performance substantially beyond expectation on a specific assignment, task or goal as well as:

- Contributions that have significant impact department university objectives.
- Extraordinary efforts above and the normal responsibilities of position.
- For an employee who uses initiative and creativity to solve challenging organizational

problem.

The Skyhawk Innovation Award honors individuals who demonstrate creativity, forward thinking and problem-solving that positively impacts the campus or student experience. The Skyhawk Innovation Award rewards those who:

- Introduced a new and innovative idea or process that significantly improves campus operations.
- Demonstrated measurable success in improving efficiency, engagement or student experience.
- Had an idea that is sustainable and will benefit UT Martin long-term.

• Effectively worked with teams or departments to bring the innovation life.

Those who receive the Skyhawk Innovation Award also receive a \$250 cash award and a commemorative plaque.

Nomination forms for both awards can be found at [www.utm.edu/skyhawk-spirit-award](http://www.utm.edu/skyhawk-spirit-award) and should be submitted by the first Friday of the month for that month’s nomination.

## addenda

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