

UT Martin receives \$400,000 federal direct appropriation for Reelfoot Lake Project

The University of Tennessee at Martin received its first federal direct appropriation as part of a \$388 billion spending package for 2005 recently approved by Congress. The \$400,000 appropriation will be used to expand and enhance the existing UT Martin Reelfoot Lake Research and Teaching Center at Reelfoot Lake. The site and project will be managed by the College of Engineering and Natural Sciences and the Department of Biological Sciences of UT Martin. The goal is to have volunteer participation of science teachers and students of Northwest Tennessee's 23 school districts and to generate and maintain interest in the science careers beginning with K-12 students with activities such as Governor's Schools, school field trips, workshops and collaborations with professional scientific and teacher organizations. The long-term objective is to create a group of volunteers who will work with the university faculty at the Reelfoot Lake Research and Teaching Center to obtain baseline data that will guide public policy concerning management decisions about the lake and its watershed. In addition, the appropriation will stimulate the local economy through expanded tourism as the related industries of hotels, restaurants, shops, fishing and hunting are impacted. Dr. David Sammons serves as project director. (Excerpts from December 1, 2004, UT Martin University Relations News)

UT Martin receives Tennessee math and science partnership grant

Over the next three years, the College of Engineering and Natural Sciences and the College of Education at the University of Tennessee at Martin will partner with 11 school districts in West Tennessee to offer the Institutes for Middle Grade Science Education in West Tennessee (IMEGS). The total cost of the program is \$1,095,769 and is funded through the Tennessee Department of Education. Dr. Mike Gibson will serve as project director. IMEGS will offer two-week summer institutes with supporting follow-up throughout the following year. A potential total of 108 teachers will receive instruction from eight science faculty and two education faculty spanning life sciences, earth and planetary science and physical science designed to help teachers reach content proficiency in all of these areas. Teachers also will participate in at least one follow-up content workshop at the annual Tennessee Science Teachers Association (TSTA) meeting as part of the program and will receive Teaching kits for their classrooms. Field and laboratory learning is stressed using facilities associated with the UT Martin campus, the Reelfoot Biological Station and Coon Creek Science Center. (Excerpts from December 13, 2004, UT Martin University Relations News)

UT Martin awarded three grants for improving teacher quality programs

The University of Tennessee at Martin was recently awarded three Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) grants in physics, mathematics and technology and special education, totaling \$231, 292. The ITQ grant program is the former Eisenhower Teacher Professional Development program, offered through the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. Dr. Cahit Erkal, associate professor of physics, will serve as project director for the "Activity-based Physics and Astronomy Summer Institute for Middle and Junior High School Teachers: Year Three: Technology Version." It will provide a series of workshops over a five-day period in the summer for 22 middle school and junior high school science teachers of West Tennessee. The focus of the institute is on selected topics from the participating teachers' curriculum in the areas of physics, astronomy and earth science. The institute is based on the success of the summer science institutes of the past two years, but includes a new feature, the addition of technology in the classroom and laboratory with an introduction of a data acquisition system. The ITQ state grants represent the largest federal initiative for using professional development to improve teaching and learning. As a federal program, it operates under legislation known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. (Excerpts from December 13, 2004, UT Martin University Relations News)