Dr. Paula Gale, professor of soil science in the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, will be dearly missed during her 6 month Reagan Leave of Absence.

The UT Martin Hal and Alma Reagan Leave allows faculty to take up to a year off for research and development. The program is designed to enable participants to become more effective teachers and scholars by engaging in a variety of academic/renewal experiences. Beginning in January, Dr. Gale will be working in a wheat genetics lab at Kansas State University. She will return to UTM in the summer of 2015.

“I want to be a student and just learn,” says Dr. Gale. While there, Dr. Gale hopes to develop a biochemistry skill set that she can bring back to UTM and work with students. She says that skill set is imperative if students want to do soil research.

Dr. Gale began teaching at UTM in the fall of 1994 and just completed her 20th year on campus. She was drawn to UTM because of the small town and small school atmosphere.

“Technology has gone in directions we’ve never dreamed of. We have computers driving tractors. Also, the farm has become more of a teaching lab and students are able to use it more directly. That is definitely a strength,” says Dr. Gale.

Some accomplishments Dr. Gale boasts are: coaching the Soils Judging team, going to Japan with the Hirosaki Exchange Program, and research with students. Dr. Gale says she really enjoys helping the students show themselves off.

During Dr. Gale’s 20 years at UTM, she says some things have changed.

The College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences would like to wish the best of luck to Dr. Gale on this endeavor. We look forward to seeing you again this summer.
Recently eight UT Martin students went to Ecuador and worked in the Andes Mountains at the Milpe Bird Sanctuary to make a difference in the lives of families in the area and help the environment.

Students planted trees as part of a forest restoration project in an area that had previously been clear cut for pasture land. They also assisted in teaching the women in the area to sew and make bracelets so they can sell products to supplement their income. They worked with the children, teaching English as well as learning games from the children.

The group, led by 3 faculty from UT Martin, including Dawn Wilkins, Biology Professor, Craig Darroch, Animal Science Professor, and Sue Byrd, Family and Consumer Sciences Professor, also visited the small town of Mindo to interact with individuals who recently opened a health care clinic in the area.

During a trip to the area a year ago, Byrd became acquainted with the efforts of Volunteer Med Partners, a U.S. based NGO, who had identified this region as badly in need of a health care facility. The clinic project director was interested in providing nutrition education but had little resources. Byrd organized graduate students who researched and developed a brochure specific to foods eaten in the area, promoting good eating habits.

Copies of this brochure were delivered to the Clinic during this visit. The response was overwhelming. Undergraduate students at UT Martin will continue to work on this project to develop additional brochures with a possible return visit within the next 2 years.

Making a difference- Women from the Mindo, Ecuador area show off the Tote bags they made, surrounded by students, faculty, and Karen and Gary Schlitz (back left), who live in the area and help organize similar projects.
Reforestation- Students plant trees as part of a reforestation project at Milpe Bird Sanctuary.

Delivering good news- Nutrition brochures being delivered to the Health Care Clinic in Mindo, Ecuador.

Teaching life skills- Sue Byrd, Professor at UT Martin, teaches a local Ecuadorian mother how to sew in order to supplement her income.
Beef science students tour Middle Tennessee

Students from Dr. Emalee Buttrey’s Beef Science class recently visited Middle Tennessee beef producers and their operations.

The group spent two days putting their classroom learning into action. The tour started with the CO-OP feed mill in La Vergne. Students saw the entire process from the grain to the bagging.

From there, they visited Middle Tennessee State University’s dairy barn to learn about feed rations and essential nutrients for cattle.

Lunch was provided by Mr. Fred Adams and the afternoon was spent touring his farm and learning about his beef cattle operation.

Saturday morning the group toured five Moore County beef operations with Mr. Larry Moorehead, Moore County Extension Agent. One high point of the tour was seeing wet distillers grains being from the nearby distillery in Lynchburg being utilized by beef producers.

Before coming home, students visited Deer Valley Farms in Fayetteville to learn about the genetics side of the beef industry. Overall, the students had a great experience.