Santa’s Village runs Dec. 8-11 at ag complex

Christmas is coming soon and that means Santa’s Village is, too.

The 32nd annual event is scheduled for Dec. 8-11 at the Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex on the University of Tennessee at Martin campus.

The doors will be open Dec. 8-9 from 6-9 p.m., Dec. 10 from 11 a.m.-9 p.m. and Dec. 11 from 1-5 p.m.

Admission to the event is free, but attendees are asked to bring $5 worth of nonperishable food and/or toys.

The purpose of the event is to provide an inside winter wonderland, which will also help meet the needs of the less fortunate in the area.

The annual holiday event has drawn more than 323,728 visitors and collected more than $1,145,136 in food and toy donations over the past three decades.

This year’s event will feature the traditional “enchanted forest” display with thousands of lights.

Some other features of the event include visits with Santa, a petting farm, amusement rides and arts and crafts and vendor booths. WLJT’s Jet from “Ready, Jet, Go!” will be a special guest Dec. 10 from 1-4 p.m.

Co-sponsors for the event are UT Martin and the City of Martin, along with many other community partners. Additional sponsors include Zaxby’s, Casey’s General Store, Simmons Bank, MTD Products and Savant Learning Systems, among others.

For more information, contact Martin Parks and Recreation at (731) 587-6784.

THE LAUDERDALE COUNTY ENTERPRISE

DECEMBER 1, 2016

Guest Speaker

DR. SIMPFRONIA TAYLOR, center, director at the UT Martin Center, was the guest speaker November 17th for the bi-monthly meeting of the Lauderdale County Exchange Club at the Carl Perkins Center. Dr. Taylor spoke about the direction the center is taking to increase class sizes, by offering a more diverse array of options for students. She has worked for over seven years for the University of Tennessee and has a doctor of education degree from the University of Georgia. She is a 6-12 educator and middle school educator in the State of Georgia, working as a principal at a private school and training educators in Georgia and Tennessee. Dr. Taylor spoke about all the classes offered at the center for traditional and non-traditional students. She has authored a book, Teacher Efficacy: Overcoming Barriers to Computer Instruction. For more information, call the center at 221-8778. She is pictured with Exchangeite Annette Sanders Long, left, and Patrick Cayson, club president.
UTM online program ranked seventh in Tennessee

The University of Tennessee at Martin’s online course offerings have recently received attention at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. AffordableCollegeCommunity.org ranked UT Martin’s online programs number seven on the website’s list of the “Best Online Colleges in Tennessee for 2016-17.” UT Martin comes in above the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, ranked 13th and 14th respectively.

Institutions must be fully-accredited and offer at least three online degree programs to be considered for this listing. The ranking considered a variety of factors, including tuition and fees at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, types of available programs, graduate rates, scholarship availability and job-placement services.

UT Martin offers six undergraduate programs completely online, as well as an online degree-completion program for veterinary technicians. Four master’s degrees are also available to distance learners, including three Master of Science degrees and the Master of Business Administration with either a business or an agricultural focus.

UT Martin’s online master’s degree in agriculture and natural resources, focusing on agribusiness and risk management, was recently named one of the “Top 20 Most Affordable Online Master’s in Agriculture Business/Agribusiness” for 2016-17 by GradSchoolHub.com. The program is ranked number eight on the list, making it the highest-ranked Tennessee school in the listing.

Placements in this ranking were determined by comparing information on graduate tuition and fees from the National Center for Education Statistics College Navigator for accredited colleges and universities offering online master’s degrees in agricultural business or related fields.

For more information on online programs, contact UT Martin Online at 731-881-7080.

UTM broadcaster inducted into HOF

MURFREESBORO — (AP) — Five current and former broadcasters will be inducted into the Tennessee Journalism Hall of Fame Dec. 8 in Murfreesboro.

Inductees include Skyhawk broadcaster Tom Britt, a 40-year broadcast veteran, the past 19 years with WBBJ-TV in Jackson; Hudley Crockett, who served as news director at WSIX-TV, now WKRN-TV, in Nashville and was press secretary for Tennessee Gov. Buford Ellington in the 1960s; John D. Hood, who worked in radio in Murfreesboro in the 1940s and 1950s and is a former state representative; and Darrell Patterson, an Athens native who worked in radio and TV, and was sports director at WTVC-TV in Chattanooga.

Also to be inducted is the late Monte Hale, who worked at WGNR radio in Murfreesboro and was the voice of the Middle Tennessee State University Blue Raiders from 1961-1980. He died from cancer at age 42 in 1982. The Hall of Fame is housed at MTSU.
Locals attend workshop on entrepreneurship

Recently the six-week Skyhawk Entrepreneurial Vision Workshop series concluded. The series was sponsored by the Northwest Tennessee Entrepreneur Center, and its collaborative partners, Launch Tennessee, the Northwest Tennessee Angel Fund, University of Tennessee Martin Gil Parker Chair of Excellence from the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, and the UT Martin Tom E. Hendrix Chair of Excellence in Free Enterprise from the College of Global Affairs and Business Administration.

Over 80 entrepreneurial minded people participated in the series of workshops. Each workshop was designed to provide a workable solution about how a business concept could grow into a sustainable company. Workshops included subjects such as how to define the purpose of your business; defining yourself and your market; how to form your business for investors; what is intellectual property; how an investor might look at your business; and how to tell and sell your story.

Frank Holbrook, president of the Northwest Tennessee Angel Fund, said, "This series brought together true subject matter experts and created valuable regional resource that equipped entrepreneurs with the building blocks for a successful start-up."

Participant Julie Smith commented that, "The speaker's presentation (William Donnell) was very valuable and made me think about if I really wanted to start a business."

Each high-energy, inspirational and informative session was led by Mid-South business experts including William Donnell - UTM graduate and founder of Sodium Halogen; Chuck Doss - UTM graduate and owner of Inco Ag Irrigation; Frank Holbrook - president of the NWTN Angel Fund; UTM graduate David Hart from Alexander, Thompson & Arnold; David Reed, Clifford Ragsdale Lamar II - Attorney for Butler Snow; Richard Magid from the Memphis UT Research Foundation; Jim Cochran - the CEO/Principal from Valley View Agri-Systems; Mike Craft - the CFO from Valley View Agri-Systems; and Carol Reed - executive director of the Northwest TN Entrepreneur Center.

A surprise guest speaker was Tom E. Hendrix, benefactor of the Tom E. Hendrix Chair of Excellence in Free Enterprise position at UTM.

Participant Tamara Beard, commented that "the information was very valuable and the speakers broke down complex information into easier to understand language."

Another six-week session will begin in February 2017. For more information, please visit nteconnect.com or contact Carol Reed, Executive Director, Northwest Tennessee Entrepreneur Center, carol.reed@nwtd.org or call 731.587.4213 ext. 275. This project is funded under an agreement with Launch Tennessee and/or the State of Tennessee.
Retired professor provides a new perspective on Nathan B. Forrest

By LINDA THURSTON
Press Editor

To some, he is the embodiment of racism in the South in the 19th century; a slave trader who became one of the founders of the Ku Klux Klan.

To others, he was a brilliant military strategist.

In fact, he was both.

A Martin retired professor was chosen to focus on the military career of Nathan Bedford Forrest. Dr. Lonnie Maness, professor emeritus at the University of Tennessee at Martin, said he felt Forrest had been unfairly depicted by many historians, and his goal was to bring a new perspective.

"Forrest: On the Way To Fort Pillow" follows the Tennessean’s path from Chickamauga to the capture of Fort Pillow, just north of Memphis. Often referred to as the Fort Pillow Massacre, Forrest’s final victory remains shrouded in controversy. Historians have charged him with taking black Union soldiers captive and then executing them.

An estimated 230 Federal troops were killed, but Confederate soldiers’ eyewitness accounts are muddy about Forrest’s involvement in the deaths.

In his book Maness brings forth new ideas and interpretations on some aspects of Forrest’s career. Forrest was considered by most historians and military figures to be an untutored military genius. Maness details the general’s path skirmish by battle, through the delta region of Mississippi and throughout western Tennessee.

"Forrest’s deep penetration movements were masterpieces of strategy and tactics,” Maness writes. “This was true of his Middle Tennessee raid during the summer of 1862, which helped pave the way for Bragg’s invasion of Kentucky, the West Tennessee raid during December 1862, the recruiting raid from March to May of 1864, his Middle Tennessee raid that occurred after the fall of Atlanta, and his Johnsonville raid. These

PROFESSOR,
FROM PAGE 1

deep penetrations behind enemy lines may be characterized as the dawn of lightning warfare, a type of warfare that was used on a large scale and with great success during World War II.

In fact, Forrest scoffed at leaders who studied war more than they practiced it with success.

"Whenever I met one of them fellers that fit by note, I generally whipped hell out of him before he got his tune pitched,” Maness quotes Forrest, citing another author’s work.

Historians say General William T. Sherman called him “that devil Forrest,” but also acknowledged, “After all, I think Forrest

was the most remarkable man our civil war produced on either side.”

Maness manages to provide a new perspective on this man of many faces.

And as historian Jac Weller has said, “Professional soldiers will do well to continue to study Forrest; military historians yet unborn will consider and reconsider his place in fame; and Americans of yesterday, today and tomorrow can take pride in a great native hero.”

Nathan Bedford Forrest was born in Chapel Hill in Bedford County, and is buried in Memphis, although his remains are slated to be removed from his eponymous park in Midtown to Elmwood Cemetery, amid much controversy.
UT-Martin Professor to Perform With Mannheim Steamroller

Posted on December 1, 2016 by Charles Choate in Local News

One of the longest running tours in the music industry will feature a UT-Martin professor during a local stop.

The Mannheim Steamroller Christmas Tour will perform next Wednesday in Paducah, and Dr. Doug Owens will be on stage with the group.

Dr. Owens is the associate professor of music at UT-Martin, and made a previous appearance with the group during a tour in 2014.

Mannheim Steamroller’s 32nd Christmas tour includes more than 70 stops, and features a collection of musicians working under the founder, Chip Davis.

The local concert will take place at the Carson Center starting at 7:15.
Santa's Village returns to Martin Dec. 8-11

Twinkling lights and reindeer bells will soon return to Martin for the 32nd annual Santa's Village celebration Dec. 8-11 in the Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex on the main campus of UT at Martin.

The doors will be open from 6-9 p.m., Dec. 8-9; 11 a.m.-9 p.m., Dec. 10; and 1-5 p.m., Dec. 11. Admission to the event is free, but attendees are asked to bring $5 worth of nonperishable food and/or toys to be distributed to needy area families.

Over the past three decades, the annual holiday event has drawn more than 323,728 visitors and collected more than $1,145,136 in food and toy donations. This year's event will feature the traditional "enchanted forest" display, as well as a petting farm, amusement rides, vendor booths and visits with Santa Claus himself. "Jet" from WLIT's "Ready, Jet, Go!" will be a special guest from 1-4 p.m., Dec. 10.

UTM and the city of Martin co-sponsor the event each year, along with many other community partners. Additional sponsors to date include Zaxby's, Casey's General Store, Simmons Bank, MTD Products, and Savant Learning Systems, among others.

For more information, contact the Martin Office of Parks and Recreation at 731-387-6784.

http://www.robertsoncountyconnection.com/

Local residents attend UT Martin Fall Preview Day

Friday, December 2, 2016 12:08 am

Jack Smithson (center), a senior at Davidson Academy, attended the University of Tennessee at Martin's Fall Preview Day on Nov. 12. This event is held to inform prospective students about academic programs, financial aid, scholarships, housing and student life at UT Martin. Smithson is pictured with his parents, Jeff (UT Martin '93) and Susan (UT Martin '90) Smithson. For more information about UT Martin or to schedule a campus tour, visit utm.edu/advantage.
"Miss UT-Martin" Helps Chimes for Charity

Posted on December 6, 2016 by Charles Choate in Local News

'Miss UT-Martin' Brenna Wilkins was in her hometown of Union City last week to assist the collection of food and toys for Chimes for Charity.

Miss Wilkins is a junior at UT-Martin and is majoring in social work.

During her volunteer work at the courthouse last Friday, she told Thunderbolt News that she was excited to help in the community, and was already preparing for the 'Miss Tennessee Pageant' next year.

Miss Wilkins said she was shocked at winning the UT-Martin crown, which came after persuasion from another pageant contestant.

As "Miss UT-Martin" for the next year, Miss Wilkins said she will use the opportunities to promote her platform of depression and suicide on college campuses.

UT Martin no longer on accreditation probation


Published: Tuesday, December 6th 2016, 1:24 pm CST
Updated: Tuesday, December 6th 2016, 1:24 pm CST
Written by Alycia Dobrinick, Digital Content Executive Producer CONNECT

MARTIN, TN (KFVS) - The University of Tennessee at Martin is no longer on accreditation probation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

UT Martin was placed on a 12-month academic probation in December 2015 because the university did not comply with five of the 92 accreditation standards, according to a release from the university.

"While I must congratulate UT Martin on successfully addressing the matters raised by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, I never for a moment doubted that success would be the outcome," said Dr. Joe DiPietro, University of Tennessee president. "The UT Martin faculty, staff, students and administration, under the exceptional leadership of interim Chancellor Bob Smith, committed themselves tirelessly with a Herculean effort and an incredible sense of teamwork to ensure all concerns were resolved, and their hard work has paid off with the return of their full accreditation status. No doubt, I am very proud of their accomplishment."

A team from SACSCOC was on campus Oct. 4-6 for a follow up and made no recommendations for further action.

School leaders have put together a long-term plan to ensure something like this doesn't happen again.
UT Martin removed from accreditation probation status

December 6, 2016 by WBBJ 7 Eyewitness News Staff

MARTIN, Tenn. — The University of Tennessee at Martin is now officially removed from probationary status.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges has officially removed the school from probationary status, according to a release from UTM.

The announcement came during the final day of the 2016 SACSCOC annual meeting held Dec. 3-6 in Atlanta, according to the release.

UT Martin was notified in December 2015 of the commission's decision to place the school on a 12-month academic probation based on the university's failure to comply with five of the 92 accreditation standards, according to the release.

The UTM faculty members, administrators and support staff have made changes in the campus atmosphere and documentation surrounding assessment and student outcomes, the release states.

The school also has a long-term plan in place to ensure the issue doesn't happen again, according to the release.
Buschhaus named Faculty Scholar

Dr. Nancy Buschhaus, professor of biology at the University of Tennessee at Martin, has been selected as the university’s Featured Faculty Scholar for the fall 2016 semester. She is pictured with (from right) Dr. Richard Helgeson, dean, UT Martin College of Engineering and Natural Sciences; Dr. Jerald Ogg, vice chancellor for academic affairs; and Dr. Jennifer Greenwood, interim chair, UT Martin Department of Biological Sciences.

Campus Life

FACULTY SCHOLAR — Dr. Nancy Buschhaus (second from left), professor of biology at the University of Tennessee at Martin, has been selected as the university’s Featured Faculty Scholar for the fall 2016 semester. A selection of Buschhaus’s professional work is on display in the Paul Meek Library and open for public viewing.

The Featured Faculty Scholar award, instituted during the 1996-97 academic year by the UT Martin Academic Council, is designed to recognize faculty members whose research and creative works are judged to be among the most prestigious of those produced by individuals at UT Martin.

Buschhaus started her career with UT Martin in 1997 as an assistant professor in the department of biological sciences. She is now a full professor with tenure status and has given more than 25 professional presentations since 2007, a majority of those with the assistance of undergraduate research students. Buschhaus received both bachelor’s and master’s degrees in zoology from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and a doctoral degree from Ohio State University.

Her current research primarily focuses on bat populations and variations, and she is a member of Bat Conservation International, the Southeast Bat Working Group and the Midwest Bat Working Group. The UT Martin Department of Biological Sciences recently received a grant from Bat Conservation International to study wildlife usage of livestock troughs, and Buschhaus will serve as project director.

This grant, totaling more than $64,000, will be used to examine whether wildlife, including small non-game wildlife such as birds, bats and other small mammals, are using steep-sided livestock water troughs as water sources. The study will include farms across several states east of the Mississippi River and involves gathering data through field observations, and surveys of agency personnel and livestock producers.

For more information on the Buschhaus’s work, contact her directly as 731-881-7177 or by email at nbuschhha@utm.edu.

OWENS TO PERFORM — The Mannheim Steamroller Christmas Tour, one of the longest-running tours in the music industry, comes to the Carson Center in Paducah, Ky., on Wednesday and Dr. Doug Owens, associate professor of music at the University of Tennessee at Martin, will be on stage with the group. Mannheim Steamroller’s 32nd Christmas tour includes more than 70 stops across the country from Nov. 15-Dec. 30. As a collective of musicians working under the direction of founder Chip Davis, the group calls independent musicians as needed to complete their ensemble.

Owens performed with the group once before in 2014. The concert will begin at 7:15 p.m., and tickets can be purchased at thecarsoncenter.org beginning at $45.
Munford resident receives Carl Seale Student Teaching Award through UT Martin

Lisa DeLancey ldelancey@covingtonleader.com
December 6, 2016

From left to right are the dean of UT Martin College of Education, Health and Behavioral Sciences Cindy West; award winner Emory Clark; UT Martin Department of Educational Studies interim chancellor Dr. Bob Smith and coordinator Kim Castleman.

Emory Clark, of Munford, recently received the Carl Seale Student Teaching Award from the University of Tennessee at Martin Department of Educational Studies.

The award, established by Seale's wife and children, recognizes students nominated and selected for outstanding achievement during their supervised student teaching rotations. Clark will receive her degree during UT Martin commencement exercises Dec. 10.
Milan grad takes top honor at UT Martin programming competition

MARTIN, Tenn. — The University of Tennessee at Martin Department of Computer Science recently hosted a local branch of the Association for Computing Machinery International Collegiate Programming Contest. This is the first time in competition history that UT Martin has hosted the event.

“We are pleased to be able to provide this experience both for our students and for others in the region,” said Dr. Joshua Guerin, associate professor of computer science. “The feedback we received from our students and the other teams confirmed that our facilities provided a better competition environment than they had experienced in the past.”

The local UT Martin competition was one of eight sites in the association’s mid-central region and one more than 480 around the world. Seven teams from UT Martin, Murray State University and Tennessee State University competed in the five-hour programming competition simultaneously with other mid-central region participants.

Brooks Becton, of Milan; Jeremy Greenburg, of Cordova; and Cody Robertson, of Connersville, claimed first-place honors in the local event.

UT Martin students Charles Clayton, of Henry, and Carter Crews and Micheal Singleton, both of Dyersburg, were awarded third place locally. Alex Molbert, of Jackson; Chloe Walker, of Bartlett; and Garrett Walker, of Newbern, earned fourth place during the UT Martin competition.

“Many in our discipline would agree that competitive programming is a specialized skill-set somewhat distinct from other areas of computing and software engineering. In our program, we focus on a wide range of computing tools and techniques that serve as a necessary foundation for building a competitive programming skill-set,” said Dr. Kathleen Ericson, assistant professor of computer science. “We have the opportunity to focus on advanced applications of numerous problem-solving techniques, and we are happy to see our students reflect the strength of the program.”

The three UT Martin competition teams were coached by Guerin, Ericson, and Dr. Xiangdong An, assistant professor of computer science.

The UT Martin Department of Computer Science is housed within the College of Engineering and Natural Sciences. For more information, contact Guerin at 731-881-7246 or email jguerin@utm.edu.
CALL ME MISTER - Faculty and students from the University of Tennessee at Martin’s Call Me MiSTER (Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role models) program visited with MHS seniors last Wednesday to help foster interest in pursuing careers in K-8 education, particularly in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) instruction. Faculty advisor Dr. Lewis C. Glover and student assistants Clifford Jones and Alliyah Allen met with African-American male students, an under-represented demographic among teachers, to encourage them to enter the field of education by using hands-on activities to make science and other STEM fields more interesting. The Call Me MiSTER program, which originated at Clemson University in 2000, is in its first semester at UTM and is currently the only program of its kind in the state. Photo courtesy of Principal Greg Scott.

http://www.thunderboltradio.com/

UT Martin Finals/Graduation

Posted on December 7, 2016 by Derek Kelley in Local News

This is a big week for UT Martin since students are not only finishing up with finals, they’re also finishing college.

Summer and Fall graduation begins Saturday at 11 in the Elam Center with J. Houston Gordon giving the commencement speech.

645 graduates plan to attend this weekend’s commencement ceremony, which is a non-ticked event.

Final exams began Monday at the university and will conclude Friday on the final day of the semester.
UT-Martin gets removed from probation

'Failure to comply' with standards caused issue in 2015

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges has officially removed the University of Tennessee at Martin from probationary status. According to a news release, the announcement came during the final day of the 2016 SACSCOC annual meeting held Dec. 3-6 in Atlanta.

UT Martin received notice of the commission's decision to place the university on a 12-month academic probation in December 2015. The decision was based on the university's "failure to comply" with five of the 92 accreditation standards. The university remained fully accredited by the commission throughout the probation period, and program-specific accreditations also remained in place and continue.

"While I must congratulate UT Martin on successfully addressing the matters raised by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, I never for a moment doubted that success would be the outcome," said Dr. Joe DiPietro, University of Tennessee president. "The UT Martin faculty, staff, students and administration, under the exceptional leadership of Interim Chancellor Bob Smith, committed themselves tirelessly with a Herculean effort to resolve the issues at hand."
Martin

Continued from Page 3A

effort and an incredible sense of teamwork to ensure all concerns were resolved, and their hard work has paid off with the return of their full accreditation status. No doubt, I am very proud of their accomplishment.

Since the commission’s decision, UT Martin faculty members, administrators and support staff have made significant changes in the campus atmosphere and documentation surrounding assessment and student outcomes. A long-term plan is in place to ensure the issue does not recur.

A SACSCOC team made a site visit to the UT Martin main campus Oct. 4-6, which included a series of meetings and the team’s follow-up report to the commission. The visiting team made no recommendations for further action.

“I’m grateful to our UT Martin faculty and staff for their hard work and persistence in successfully addressing this critical challenge,” said Dr. Bob Smith, who guided the university through the yearlong process leading to SACSCOC’s decision. “Our students, alumni and friends showed tremendous confidence in us during the past year, and I’m especially pleased that they are rewarded for standing behind their university.”

Dr. Keith Carver was elected the university’s 10th chancellor in October by the UT Board of Trustees and will begin his duties Jan. 3. He said the accreditation news offers the university a positive foundation for the year ahead.

“This news reflects the great work of the UT Martin team over the past year. This was a tremendous effort by the entire campus community,” said Carver. “I’m excited by the momentum this has created, and I look forward to our continued work to educate the region’s best and brightest students.”

UT Martin is a primary campus in the University of Tennessee System and offers 17 undergraduate degrees with more than 100 specialized concentrations and five graduate degrees with 17 specialized concentrations.

The Messenger, Union City, Tennessee, Wednesday, December 7, 2016

University’s online programs receive national attention

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UT Martin comes in above the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, ranked 13th and 14th, respectively.

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Placements in this ranking were determined by comparing information on graduate tuition and fees from the National Center for Education Statistics College Navigator for accredited colleges and universities offering online master’s degrees in agricultural business or related fields.

For more detailed information on online programs which are available at the university, contact UT Martin Online at (731) 881-7080.
UT Martin officially removed from accreditation probation

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges has officially removed the University of Tennessee at Martin from probationary status.

The announcement was made during the final day of the 2016 SACSCOC Annual Meeting held Saturday through Tuesday in Atlanta.

UT Martin received notice of the commission’s decision to remove the university on a 12-month academic probation in December 2015. The decision was based on the university’s “failure to comply” with five of the 92 accreditation standards.

The university remained fully accredited by the commission throughout the probation period and program-specific accreditations also remained in place and continue.

“While I must congratulate UT Martin on successfully addressing the matters raised by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, I never for a moment doubted that success would be the outcome,” said Dr. Joe DiPietro, University of Tennessee president.

“The UT Martin faculty, staff, students and administration, under the exceptional leadership of Interim Chancellor Bob Smith, committed themselves tirelessly with a Herculean effort and an incredible sense of teamwork to ensure all concerns were resolved, and their hard work has paid off with the return of their full accreditation status. No doubt, I am very proud of their accomplishment.”

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The visiting team made no recommendations for further action.

“I’m grateful to our UT Martin faculty and staff for their hard work and persistence in successfully addressing this critical challenge,” said Dr. Bob Smith, who guided the university through the year-long process leading to SACSCOC’s decision.

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LaunchTN chooses UTM as partner to encourage entrepreneurship

The University of Tennessee at Martin, in partnership with the Northwest Tennessee Entrepreneur Center, has received a $4,000 grant from LaunchTN to encourage student entrepreneurship.

This is the second year for the university to be chosen as a LaunchTN University Venture Challenge Partner.

The grant will be used to support the Skyhawk Venture Challenge, previously known as the UT Martin Business Innovation Pitch Contest.

The fourth annual contest, scheduled for March 30, 2017, will allow UT Martin students from all academic areas to pitch business concepts and product ideas to a panel of judges. Winners will receive cash prizes to fund their business ideas and have an opportunity to advance to the statewide University Venture Challenge, sponsored by LaunchTN.

The university expanded the competition program during the fall 2016 semester to include an optional six-week entrepreneurial workshop, which covered a broad range of topics related to new business start-ups. Special topics courses stemming from these workshops will soon be taught by Dr. Joey Mehlhorn, UT Martin Gil Parker Chair of Excellence, and Dr. Tommy Cates, UT Martin Tom E. Hendrix Chair of Excellence in Free Enterprise.

The Skyhawk Venture Challenge is sponsored by the UT Martin College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, UT Martin’s Parker and Hendrix chairs of excellence, the Northwest Tennessee Entrepreneur Center and the Northwest Tennessee Angle Investment Group.

For more information, contact Dr. Todd Winters, dean, UT Martin College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, at (731) 881-7251 or by email at winters@utm.edu.
UT Martin Interim Chancellor Bob Smith addresses a university-wide meeting of faculty and staff Jan. 13, 2016, to discuss the university's accreditation. The university took major steps to address accreditation issues, and today the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges has officially removed the university from probationary status. The announcement came during the final day of the 2016 SACSCOC Annual Meeting held Dec. 3-6 in Atlanta, Ga.

UTM Removed From Accreditation Probation Status

MARTIN, Tenn. - The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges has officially removed the University of Tennessee at Martin from probationary status. The announcement came during the final day of the 2016 SACSCOC Annual Meeting held Dec. 3-6 in Atlanta, Ga.

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UT Martin is a primary campus in the University of Tennessee System and offers 17 undergraduate degrees with more than 100 specialized concentrations and five graduate degrees with 17 specialized concentrations.
Local receives award from UTM

Christina Buckner, second from left, of Ripley, recently received the Jodi Woods Teaching Award from the University of Tennessee at Martin Department of Educational Studies. This award was established by the late Dr. Crystal Whitlow, a department faculty member, in honor of Jodi Woods, a special education student who passed away while attending UT Martin. The honor is given to an outstanding student teacher each semester who has excelled in the area of special education. Buckner will receive her degree during UT Martin commencement exercises Dec. 10. She is pictured with, from left, Dr. Bob Smith, UT Martin interim chancellor, Cindy West, Dean, UT Martin College of Education, Health and Behavioral Sciences, and Kim Castleman, Coordinator, UT Martin Department of Educational Studies.

UTM moves off probation

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges has officially removed the University of Tennessee at Martin from probationary status. The announcement came during the final day of the 2016 SACSCOC annual meeting held Dec. 3-6 in Atlanta, Ga.

UT Martin received notice of the commission’s decision to place the university on a 12-month academic probation in December 2015. The decision was based on the university’s “failure to comply” with five of the 92 accreditation standards. The university remained fully accredited by the commission throughout the probation period, and program-specific accreditations also remained in place and continue.

Since the commission’s decision, UT Martin faculty members, administrators and support staff have made significant changes in the campus atmosphere.

Gates resident earns degree

Eunice Louise Delph of Gates will be graduating on Saturday, Dec. 10, from the University of Tennessee at Martin with a 3.51 grade point average. Mrs. Delph has earned her bachelor’s degree in criminal justice.
Local colleges schedule commencements Dec. 10

J. Houston Gordon, of Covington, will serve as keynote speaker at the University of Tennessee at Martin's fall commencement, slated to begin at 11 a.m., December 10, in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center. University of Tennessee System President Joe DiPietro will confer degrees.

Gordon graduated from UT Martin with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1968 and later received a juris doctorate degree from the University of Tennessee College of Law in 1970 and an L.L.M. master of law degree in taxation from the George Washington University National Law Center in 1973.

He served the University of Tennessee System on the Board of Trustees from 1989-95 and was vice-chair of the board from 1994-95. A UT Martin supporter, Gordon received UT Martin's Outstanding Alumni Award in 1997 and the Chancellor's Award for Outstanding Service in 2008. The J. Houston Gordon Museum, located in the special collections area of UT Martin's Paul Meek Library, is named in his honor.

Gordon spent four years representing soldiers charged with crimes as a captain in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General Corps before returning home to Covington in 1974. He has been named one of the "Best Lawyers in America" by his peers every year since 1984 and is listed as one of the top-100 trial lawyers in America.

Gordon is licensed to practice law in Tennessee and the District of Columbia and has appeared as lead counsel before federal and state appellate courts in multiple jurisdictions. He has also been admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States, the Tennessee Supreme Court and all lesser state courts, and multiple United States District Courts in seven additional states.

He and his wife, Debbie, have three grown sons and nine grandchildren.

Those who are unable to attend UT Martin's fall commencement ceremony can tune in to a live webcast available at ovcdigitalnetwork.com/watch/?Live=4952.

For more information, contact the UT Martin Office of University Relations at 731-881-7615.

TRENTON GAZETTE

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

SANTA'S VILLAGE - Previous Santa's Village events have included a model train display constructed by MTD Products. A portion of a previous display is shown.

Santa's Village returns to Martin Dec. 8-11

Twinkling lights and reindeer bells will soon return to Martin for the 32nd annual Santa's Village celebration December 8-11 in the Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex on the main campus of the University of Tennessee at Martin.

The doors will be open from 6-9 p.m., December 8-9; 11 a.m.-9 p.m., December 10; and 1-5 p.m., December 11. Admission to the event is free, but attendees are asked to bring $5 worth of nonperishable food and/or toys to be distributed to needy area families.

The annual holiday event has drawn more than 323,728 visitors and collected more than $1,145,136 in food and toy donations over the past three decades. This year's event will feature the traditional "enchanted forest" display, as well as a petting farm, amusement rides, vendor booths and visits with Santa Claus himself. "Jet" from WLJT's "Ready, Jet, Go!" will be a special guest from 1-4 p.m., December 10.

UT Martin and the city of Martin co-sponsor the event each year, along with many other community partners. Additional sponsors to date include Zaxby's, Casey's General Store, Simmons Bank, MTD Products and Savant Learning Systems, among others.

For more information, contact city of Martin Office of Parks and Recreation at 731-387-6784.
ATTENDS WESTSTAR RISINGSTAR SUMMIT

Jada Roberson (right), a student in Gibson County, attended the WestStar Leadership Program’s Rising-Star Leadership Summit, November 18, on the campus of the University of Tennessee at Martin. The two-day summit is designed for high school students who demonstrate leadership potential. Roberson is pictured with Charley Deal, director, WestStar Leadership Program. For more information on the West-Star Leadership Program or its youth events, contact Virginia Grimes, program coordinator, at 731-881-7298 or email vgrimes@utm.edu.

UTM, Bethel graduates to walk the line Dec. 10

On Saturday, Dec. 10, the University of Tennessee at Martin will hold its 2016 fall commencement ceremony, slated to begin at 11 a.m. in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center. University of Tennessee System President Joe DiPietro will confer degrees for bachelors and masters candidates.

Prominent attorney and former UT law professor J. Houston Gordon, of Covington, a 1968 UTM graduate, will serve as keynote speaker.

Those who are unable to attend UTM’s fall commencement ceremony can tune in to a live webcast available at ovcdigitalnetwork.com/watch/?Live=4952. For more information, contact UTM at 731-881-7615.

Bethel University’s Fall 2016 Commencement also will be held Saturday, Dec. 10. The ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. in the Rosemary and Harry Crisp II Arena, which is located in the Vera Low Center for Student Enrichment at 101 Wildcat Lane on the school’s McKenzie campus.

There will be one service for both undergraduate and graduate degree candidates. Guest seating for commencement will begin one hour prior to the ceremony, and line up of graduates will begin at that time as well.

Dr. Logan Hampton, President of Lane College since 2014, will be the commencement speaker.

For questions regarding Bethel Commencement, prospective graduates should contact the registrars within their specific colleges. For more information, please contact Myra Carlock at 731-352-4090 or carlockm@bethelu.edu.
University's accreditation probation is lifted

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges has officially removed the University of Tennessee at Martin from probationary status. The announcement came during the final day of the 2016 SACSCOC Annual Meeting held last week in Atlanta.

UT Martin received notice of the commission's decision to place the university on a 12-month academic probation in December 2015. The decision was based on the university's "failure to comply" with five of the 92 accreditation standards. The university remained fully accredited by the commission throughout the probation period, and program-specific accreditations also remained in place and continue.

"While I must congratulate UT Martin on successfully addressing the matters raised by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, I never for a moment doubted that success would be the outcome," said Dr. Joe DiPietro, University of Tennessee president. "The UT Martin faculty, staff, students and administration, under the exceptional leadership of Interim Chancellor Bob Smith, committed themselves tirelessly with a Herculean effort and an incredible sense of teamwork to ensure all concerns were resolved, and their hard work has paid off with the return of their full accreditation status. No doubt, I am very proud of their accomplishment."

Since the commission's decision, UT Martin faculty, staff, and support staff have made significant changes in the campus atmosphere and documentation surrounding assessment and student outcomes. A long-term plan is in place to ensure the issue does not recur.

A SACSCOC team made a site visit to the UT Martin main campus Oct. 4-6, which included a series of meetings and the team's follow-up report to the commission. The visiting team made no recommendations for further action.

"I'm grateful to our UT Martin faculty and staff for their hard work and persistence in successfully addressing this critical challenge," said Dr. Bob Smith, who guided the university through the yearlong process leading to SACSCOC's decision. "Our students, alumni and friends showed tremendous confidence in UT Martin during this challenging time."

"This news reflects the great work of the UT Martin team over the past year. This was a tremendous effort by the entire campus community," said Carver. "I'm excited by the momentum this has created, and I look forward to our continued work to educate the region's best and brightest students."

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UTM, PAGE 1

FROM PAGE 1

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LEWIS RETIRES — Terry Lewis (center), former interim chief information officer for the University of Tennessee at Martin's Office of Information Technology Services, is pictured during a retirement reception held Nov. 29 in his honor. Lewis' retirement became effective Nov. 30 after 32 years of service. He is pictured with his father-in-law Thomas Erwin (right) and wife Susie Lewis, director of the UT Martin Computer Store.

SMITH HONORED — The University of Tennessee at Martin Student Government Association has recommended that Room 111 in the Boling University Center be named the "Robert M. Smith Legislative Chamber" in honor of Interim Chancellor Bob Smith. Pictured after the announcement Dec. 1 are (from left) Ryan Leatherbarrow, SGA vice president; Josh Diltz, SGA president; Dr. Bob Smith, interim chancellor; Jordan Long, SGA chief of staff; and Marabeth Kennedy, SGA secretary general.
UT-Martin has academic probation lifted

MARTIN, Tenn. — The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges has officially removed the University of Tennessee at Martin from probationary status. The announcement came during the final day of the 2016 SACSCOC Annual Meeting held Dec. 3-6 in Atlanta, Ga.

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"I am grateful to our UT Martin faculty and staff for their hard work and persistence in successfully addressing this critical challenge," said Dr. Bob Smith, who guided the university through the yearlong process leading to SACSCOC’s decision. "Our students, alumni and friends showed tremendous confidence in us during the past year, and I’m especially pleased that they are rewarded for standing behind their university."

Dr. Keith Carver was elected the university’s 10th chancellor in October by the UT Board of Trustees and will begin his duties Jan. 3. He said the accreditation news offers the university a positive foundation for the year ahead.

"This news reflects the great work of the UT Martin team over the past year. This was a tremendous effort by the entire campus community," said Carver. "I’m excited by the momentum this has created, and I look forward to our continued work to educate the region’s best and brightest students."

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UT Martin Now Off Probation

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges has officially removed the University of Tennessee at Martin from probationary status. The announcement came during the final day of the 2016 SACSCOC annual meeting held Dec. 3rd through the 6th in Atlanta, Ga.

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Scholar

EUNICE LOUISE DELPH will graduate Saturday, December 10th from the University of Tennessee at Martin with a 3.51 grade point average. Mrs. Delph earned her bachelor's degree in criminal justice.
UT Martin Finals/Graduation this weekend

Some UT Martin students are finishing up with finals this week, while others are finishing school.

Today is the last day for final exams and is also the final day of the semester.

Summer and Fall graduation begins tomorrow at 11 in the Elam Center with J. Houston Gordon giving the commencement speech.

647 graduates plan to attend this weekend's commencement ceremony, which is a non-ticketed event.

Interim UTM Chancellor Dr. Bob Smith

Interim Chancellor Dr. Bob Smith has served UT Martin since May 2015 in his current position, which he will be stepping down from January 3rd when Chancellor-elect Dr. Keith Carver begins his first day on the job.

Dr. Bob Smith played a pivotal role in helping UTM reach re-accreditation status this week after the university was placed on probation last December.

Dr. Smith spoke to Thunderbolt Radio about the lasting impact he hopes will come from his time as interim chancellor.

The interim chancellor still has some regrets from his time at UT Martin.
First woman chancellor has UT Knoxville abuzz

MEGAN BOEHNKE
USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

KNOXVILLE — If University of Tennessee trustees vote to make Beverly Davenport the next Knoxville chancellor, as they appear poised to do this coming week, it will be a historic moment for the system’s flagship campus.

Not only will a female chancellor be a first for UT Knoxville, it will also mark a rare appointment across all colleges nationwide. Though women now earn the majority of college degrees in this country, only about a quarter of college presidents and chancellors are female, according to a report by the American Association of University Women.

Davenport, 62, who is interim president of the University of Cincinnati, will be the only woman to lead a school in the Southeastern Conference. She will be one of eight among the 64 schools in the Power Five conferences.

“It signals our university is looking past gender and looking at qualifications,” said Angela Batey, associate dean for the UT College of Arts and Sciences. “It signals that it’s not business as usual, and it’s not necessarily the good ol’ boys network. I think the choice of a woman says that our university is looking for who indeed is the best candidate for these positions.”

Davenport’s selection has been energizing for women across the campus and the state, drawing praise from faculty members, former UT trustees and the only other woman to hold a chancellor post in the UT system, former Martin Chancellor Margaret Perry.

“I had my fingers crossed,” Perry said last week. “I thought she was, to me, the best of the candidates.”

Davenport declined to comment for this story or grant any media interviews before the Dec. 15 Board of Trustees meeting when the group is expected to formally approve her hire.

Ann Baker Furrow, the first woman appointed to UT’s Board of Trustees and a golfer who was the first woman to play a men’s varsity sport at the school, said she was thrilled to see Davenport named chancellor.

“I’m certainly excited by it, and it sounds like she will be an exceptional leader and I’m ready to get behind her and help,” Furrow said. “My instincts, when I saw her picture and saw her work, is that this is someone who looks like she would fit into our culture very well.”

UT President Joe DiPietro insisted shortly after her selection that Davenport was the most experienced and qualified candidate for the job, regardless of her gender.

“I think it’s great,” he said of the Davenport’s history-making selection. “I think it’s a great opportunity, whether it’s a man or a woman. We picked the first person, and a talented person, who could do the job...”
UT choice may be historic

MEGAN BOEHNKE
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The best candidate

UT President Joe DiPietro insisted shortly after her selection that Davenport was the most experienced and qualified candidate for the job, regardless of her gender.

"I think it's great," he said of the Davenport's history-making selection. "I think it's a great opportunity, whether it's a man or a woman. We picked the first person, and a talented person, who could do the job."

He pointed to the pool of finalists as a sign that he and the rest of the university value diversity. Davenport beat out a female provost from the University of Georgia and a provost for the State University of New York system who was an immigrant from the Bahamas.

"I was so thrilled to see there was a very diverse pool — it says a lot about the university's commitment to finding the best candidates and making sure we have rich diversity," said Hillary Fouts, chair for the chancellor's Commission for Women and a professor in child and family studies.

"I've heard from students, particularly women students, who connected to (Davenport) so well and I've had several of them tell me how much it means to them to have a woman chancellor named."

Davenport's most immediate tasks, even before she takes office on March 1, will include launching searches for two of the most high-profile jobs on campus: an athletics director and a provost. As the legislative session begins in Nashville in January, she will also have to navigate the tension between a campus that champions diversity and state lawmakers who have rebuked UT for featuring guidelines on its website on inclusive holiday parties and use of transgender pronouns.

Then there's the aftermath of a Title IX lawsuit the university settled over the summer that alleged the school had fostered a "hostile sexual environment" for women. A commission put together by DiPietro is underway examining each campus' prevention, education and response to sexual assault.

For some, these are the very issues that could benefit from a fresh face in the university's top office.

"Certainly she will bring a different perspective on things like sexual assault, and how we deal with that, how to put programs in place," said Batey. "As women, there are different things we have to think about as we walk alone at night and things like that. The nature of the beast is the fact that someone of a different gender is in that office and that particularly brings a whole different perspective."

Andrea Loughry, former vice chair of the Board of Trustees, agreed.

"I feel having strong female prospective on the leadership team will be an asset in those areas," she said.

'We all miss out'

In 1980, about 10 percent of college presidents and chancellors were women. By 2005, that had more than doubled to 23 percent.

But the growth has slowed significantly, said Catherine Hill, vice president of research for the American Association of University Women. In the decade between 2006 and 2016, the figure has grown to 26 percent.

"The change in growth rate is very telling, and what's interesting is that in other respects, women have made much faster gains," she said. "Part of the point is that women have made so many gains in so many fields — medicine, law, business — but when it comes to the top levels of leadership, we don't see the women."

Not only are men holding long-tenured positions, but they are also outpacing the number of newly-appointed deans, provosts and presidents, Hill said.

"There's somewhat of a disconnect between women's achievements and leadership. There's something specific about leadership and gender that's at play."
Alum tells grads: You can prosper in turbulent times

MARTIN — A University of Tennessee alum returned to the university's graduation Saturday and reminded the students to expect the unexpected, embrace change and demand truth.

J. Houston Gordon, of Covington, graduated from the university in 1968. During his commencement address Saturday, Gordon encouraged the graduating class by assuring them that their grade point averages do not determine or guarantee success. Gordon challenged the students to use future difficulties as opportunities for improvement, according to a news release from the university.

"Some of you worked hard to get here. Others, not so much. Some of you struggled; others, not so much. Some of you were encouraged; others, not so much. But guess what? You're all here. Today is your day, and you're excited about beginning the next stage of your life," he said.

Gordon shared stories of his work as a lawyer, including personal experiences from one of his first high-profile cases as a trial lawyer, the release says.

Gordon represented Lt. William Calley, the only soldier convicted of crimes during the 1968 My Lai Massacre in Vietnam, the release says. He told the students that he often spent time at the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C., seeking personal direction.

"As I sat there, worrying and meditating, I looked up and read what was carved in the marble around the rotunda: the words, 'I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility toward every form of tyranny over the minds of men,'" Gordon said. "The deep truths found in Jefferson's words changed my life."

On Saturday, UT-Martin graduated 680 students from both summer and fall courses, the release says.

Gordon ended his speech by assuring graduates that they would be prepared for upcoming challenges.

"I am convinced beyond any shadow of a doubt that you, every last one of you ... can not only live through your turbulent times, but you can prosper during them," he said.

Joe DiPietro, president of the University of Tennessee system, conferred degrees to the 680 students during the ceremony.

"We're proud of your accomplishments and your attainment of this milestone, and we're excited about the opportunities that will be afforded to you as a graduate to use the knowledge you've gained here at UT Martin for the betterment of your families and all of humanity," DiPietro said.

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UT Martin breaks ground on Somerville Center

Published: Monday, December 12th 2016, 10:32 am CST
Updated: Monday, December 12th 2016, 10:32 am CST

Written by Steve Pobst, Director

(KFVS) - Danielle Ables was determined to attend college after earning her GED certificate from Fayette Literacy.

The 20-year-old Somerville resident found the educational opportunity she needed close to home at the University of Tennessee at Martin Somerville Center.

Ables joined fellow students Courtney Burns and Elizabeth Wilburn and other officials for a groundbreaking ceremony Dec. 7 that marked the beginning of major renovations to the center's new home at the former Methodist Fayette Hospital.

The new facility is expected to open in fall 2017.

"It's just amazing how we can actually go to school and get a better education here in our hometown," Ables said. "It means a lot."

She also sees the center's future location benefiting both students and the area. "I think it's going to bring more people to Somerville, hopefully more students," she said.

Discussions about a possible Fayette County higher education center began in 2004.

The University of Tennessee and UT Martin became involved in 2012 when a new building for the center was initially proposed, but the project was cost-prohibitive.

Methodist Fayette Hospital closed in March 2015, and Fayette County officials suggested Methodist Healthcare give the facility to the town.

The facility was transferred to the town in July 2015, and Methodist Healthcare gave the city $250,000 to assist with the facility's renovation.

On July 25, the State Building Commission approved a lease between the University of Tennessee and the city of Somerville to house the UT Martin Somerville Center in the former hospital building.

Earlier this year, the Tennessee General Assembly approved $250,000 in recurring funding for the center in the state's 2016-17 budget.

Also approved was $875,000 in one-time funding to support the hospital's renovation.

Gov. Bill Haslam visited Somerville on July 26 to formally present UT Martin with the total $1,125 million in funding from the state to establish the new center.

Also participating in the ceremony were Martin Mosby, higher education committee member and donor; Bob Turner, administrator for the town of Somerville; Kara Tapp, UT Martin Somerville Center director; Dr. Bob Smith, UT Martin interim chancellor; Dr. Brian Donavan, interim executive director, UT Martin Office of Educational Outreach; Skip Taylor, Fayette County mayor; Ronnie Nell, Somerville mayor; Ellen Wadley, architect; Fleming Architects; state Sen. Dolores Gresham (R-District 26); and Charley Deal, UT Martin associate vice chancellor for alumni relations and annual giving.

Learn more about the UT Martin Somerville Center at utm.edu/departments/somerville/ or call the center at 901-465-7313.
Alumni Pleased With UT-Martin

Posted on December 13, 2016 by Charles Choate in Local News

A recent study conducted by the partnership of UT-Martin and Gallup Incorporated, shows that the school's alumni are pleased with their college experience.

Gallup received 2,623 survey responses, with UT-Martin consistently scoring higher than the national average for alumni with a high attachment to their school.

The report showed half of the respondents strongly agreeing with the statement that "UTM was the perfect school for me" which was 16 percentage points higher than the national average.

In the poll, Gallup focused on six factors that affect the college experience, with three of those being relationships with students and professors, and three addressing experiential learning opportunities.

The survey also showed that UT-Martin students had a higher than average participation in extracurricular activities and organizations during their college years.

UT MARTIN STUDENTS COMPLETE TVA INVESTMENT CHALLENGE – A group of seniors from the University of Tennessee at Martin's College of Business and Global Affairs has completed the annual Tennessee Valley Authority's Investment Challenge. TVA's Investment Challenge is a partnership between TVA and 25 universities in its service territory that provides a real-world learning experience in portfolio management by allowing students to manage actual stock portfolios. Participating students also select classmates to receive the Kelly W. Murray Excellence in Portfolio Management Award. This award, created in honor of the late son of Dr. Sandra and Bill Murray, recognizes outstanding effort and dedication in managing the UT Martin TVA stock portfolio in conjunction with the investment challenge. This year's recipients are Andrew Terrell, of Union City, and Emily McCartney, of Glencoe, Ala. Pictured after the TVA presentations are (l-r) Dr. Mahmoud Haddad, professor of finance; Terrell; Morgan Grisham, of Union City; Dallas Hunter, of Milan; Bill Murray, father of the late Kelly Murray; Tyler Stephenson, of Medina; Ryan Stevenson, of Milan; Reagan Brock, of Martin; Chris Hutcherson, of Martin; McCartney; McKenzie Bonetti, of Martin; Dr. Ross Dickens, dean, UT Martin College of Business and Global Affairs; and Mohammed Alamro, an international student living in Martin.
The University of Tennessee at Martin Department of Computer Science recently hosted a local branch of the Association for Computing Machinery International Collegiate Programming Contest. This is the first time in competition history that UT Martin has hosted the event.

"We are pleased to be able to provide this experience both for our students and for others in the region," said Dr. Joshua Guerin, associate professor of computer science. "The feedback we received from our students and the other teams confirmed that our facilities provided a better competition environment than they had experienced in the past."

The local UT Martin competition was one of eight sites in the association's mid-central region and one more than 480 around the world. Seven teams from UT Martin, Murray State University and Tennessee State University competed in the five-hour programming competition simultaneously with other mid-central region participants. Brooks Becton of Milan, Jeremy Greenburg of Cordova and Cody Robertson of Cornersville claimed first-place honors in the local event.

UT Martin students Charles Clayton, of Henry, and Carter Crews and Michelle Singleton, both of Dyersburg, were awarded third place locally. Alex Molbert, of Jackson; Chloe Walker, of Bartlett; and Garrett Walker, of Newbern, earned fourth place during the UT Martin competition.

"Many in our discipline would agree that competitive programming is a specialized skill-set somewhat distinct from other areas of computing and software engineering. In our program, we focus on a wide range of computing tools and techniques that serve as a necessary foundation for building a competitive programming skill-set," said Dr. Kathleen Ericson, assistant professor of computer science.

"We have the opportunity to focus on advanced applications of numerous problem-solving techniques, and we are happy to see our students reflect the strength of the program."

The three UT Martin competition teams were coached by Guerin, Ericson, and Dr. Xiangdong An, assistant professor of computer science.

The UT Martin Department of Computer Science is housed within the College of Engineering and Natural Sciences.

For more information, contact Guerin at 731-881-7246 or email jguerin@utm.edu.
Graduates receive Meek leadership award

Habiba "Bibi" Soliman and Carra Smith, both of Nashville, received Paul and Martha Meek Leadership Awards during the University of Tennessee at Martin's fall commencement exercises Dec. 10.

Dr. Paul Meek served the UT Martin campus as executive officer, dean, UT vice president or chancellor from 1934 to 1967. This award is given to two graduating seniors each semester who have demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities during their time at UT Martin, and was originally established and funded by the three Meek children to honor their parents.

Soliman transferred to UT Martin after two years at Nashville State Community College. During her time at UT Martin, she was active as a student ambassador and orientation leader for the UT Martin Office of Undergraduate Admissions and as a resident assistant for the Office of Housing. She was an active member of the Zeta Tau Alpha sorority and held positions as both risk manager, and new member educator and coordinator for the organization. Soliman is also the founding president of the UT Martin chapter of the National Society of Leadership and Success.

"I was extremely impressed with Habiba from the moment she transferred to UT Martin. She embraced all that it means to be a Skyhawk. She immediately wanted to be involved in everything there was to offer here and, not only that, she wanted to be active in leadership roles in those organizations," said Ryan Martin, assistant director of housing, in Soliman's nomination letter. "She has a drive and ambition that you do not see in many students."

Soliman walked the UT Martin commencement stage Dec. 10 and received a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in communications.

Smith was an active member of the Peer Enabling Program for incoming freshman students and helped counsel students in the nursing, biology and pre-health science areas. She was also a member of the Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society, Tri Beta National Honor Society, Mu Epsilon Delta Fraternity for Pre-Health Students and the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society.

She has spent several years volunteering at St. Thomas Hospital and Second Harvest Food Bank in Nashville and participated in a variety of community service activities through campus organizations throughout her time at UT Martin.

"Carra is an excellent PEP Leader and role model for entering students and PEP Leaders," said Dr. George Daniel, coordinator for the First Year Initiative Program, in Smith's nomination letter. "She has an excellent heart for helping students."

Smith received a bachelor of science degree with a major in biology during commencement exercises Dec. 10. She intends to become a physician's assistant.

UT Martin is a four-year university within the University of Tennessee System, located in upper Northwest Tennessee. For more information, visit utm.edu/advantage.
'Expect the unexpected,' Gordon tells UTM graduates

J. Houston Gordon of Covington urged graduates of the University of Tennessee at Martin to expect the unexpected, embrace change and demand truth during his commencement address Dec. 10 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

Gordon, a 1968 UT Martin alum, encouraged the graduating class by assuring them that their grade point averages do not determine or guarantee success in the future, and he challenged them to use future difficulties as opportunities to improve themselves and their society.

"Some of you worked hard to get here. Others, not so much. Some of you struggled; others, not so much. Some of you were encouraged; others, not so much. But guess what? You're all here. Today is your day, and you're excited about beginning the next stage of your life," he said.

"Some of you may be uncertain about your future, concerned about student debt, careers, employment, and even where and how you will live. Let me suggest, however, that such challenges present opportunities for you to grow, to overcome, to develop self-discipline and tenacity, (and) to learn to stand when others fall."

He then shared a personal experience from one of his first high-profile cases as a trial lawyer. Gordon represented Lt. William Calley, the only soldier convicted of crimes during the 1968 My Lai Massacre in Vietnam. The experience changed his life and shaped his career of more than four decades as a trial lawyer. While representing Calley, Gordon would often spend time at the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C., seeking personal direction. Jefferson, himself, offered words of wisdom.

"As I sat there, worrying and meditating, I looked up and read what was carved in the marble around the rotunda: the words, 'I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility toward every form of tyranny over the minds of men.' The deep truths found in Jefferson's words changed my life," said Gordon.

"I urge you (graduates) to reject tyranny over your minds ... When we allow others to control what we think, when we condone and participate in anger and division, when we refuse to be accountable for our own lives and our own destinies, when we refuse to accept others, when we refuse to be accountable for our mistakes, when we allow ourselves to be seduced by false claims of easy fixes, we accept the lie and succumb to tyranny," he continued.

Gordon acknowledged that the current graduating class is entering an uncertain world beyond the commencement stage, and assured them the challenges they will face are not unknown to our society.

"When I graduated in 1968, America was deeply divided along racial lines and about the Vietnam War. We were incurring a huge national debt: $500,000 American soldiers were fighting in Vietnam; and there were protests and flag burnings at home," he said. Martin Luther King Jr. and Sen. Robert Kennedy were both assassinated that year, while the Cold War, Middle Eastern tension and the threat of nuclear annihilation prevailed.

"Today, in this new season, America is deeply divided as well. There are flag burnings, protests and riots in the streets. [There are] racial and economic divisions, frustrations and anger. American troops are still fighting on foreign soils," he added. "The similarities between your time [now] and our time then are obvious. ... I urge you, graduates, to demand the truth first from yourself and then in every facet of your lives. Expect the unexpected, embrace change, demand truth."

Gordon concluded his remarks by assuring graduates they are well-prepared for the challenges that may lie ahead.

"Congratulations. I am convinced beyond any shadow of a doubt that you, every last one of you ... can not only live through your turbulent times, but you can prosper during them," he said.

"I pray that you will bring about change that is good. I pray that you will seek and demand truth, and as you do, the world will be all the better for it."

Dr. Joe DiPietro, UT System President, was present to confer degrees during the ceremony and also congratulated the assembled graduates on behalf of the UT System.

"We're proud of your accomplishments and your attainment of this milestone, and we're excited about the opportunities that will be afforded to you as a graduate to use the knowledge you've gained here at UT Martin for the betterment of your families and all of humanity," he said. "You've made sacrifices. Loved ones have believed in you. Be sure you enjoy this day; take a moment to savor it because you deserve it."

DiPietro also took a moment to thank UT Martin Interim Chancellor Bob Smith and his wife, Ramona, for their dedication during the university's transition period over the past 20 months. "We have definitely benefited from (Smith's) gifted leadership, and during his tenure many things have changed here at UT Martin," he said. "We wish Bob and Ramona well, and we want to thank them for all they've done to improve this place. ... We owe them a thanks we can never, ever truly repay."

Approximately 680 students from the summer and fall 2016 classes were eligible to receive degrees during the commencement ceremony.
"TODAY IS YOUR DAY" — J. Houston Gordon, a nationally-acclaimed trial lawyer from Covington and 1968 graduate of the University of Tennessee at Martin, is shown addressing the fall 2016 graduating class during the university's commencement exercises Dec. 10.

History Channel now offers UTM grad episode

Marine Capt. Brent Morel, a 1999 graduate of the University of Tennessee at Martin, was killed in combat near Fallujah, Iraq, on April 7, 2004. The History Channel launched a series called "The Warfighters" on Nov. 11 in honor of Veterans Day, an episode of which featured the insurgent attack in which Morel died defending his fellow Marines.

Those who were unable to view the episode as it aired can download a copy of the footage for a limited time. All eight episodes of "The Warfighters" shown to date are available for viewing at http://bit.ly/2gyC5bM for a few weeks. Those interested are encouraged to save a copy before the website becomes inactive.

Morel's story is featured in episode 112: "The Ambush of April 7th." The series is composed of first-person accounts combined with cinematic sequences and real images and footage from actual Middle Eastern operations.

"The Warfighters," directed by Peter Berg, aims to give viewers an inside look at the global war on terror by chronicling recent U.S. Special Operations Forces missions. Each hour-long episode highlights the courage, dedication and sacrifice of the Army Rangers, Green Berets, Marines and Navy SEALs in what is now the longest ongoing conflict in American history.

Four additional episodes are scheduled to air on The History Channel in January 2017.
Martin commits to providing fiber optic broadband service

By LINDA THURSTON
Press Editor

The City of Martin's aldermen and mayor voted unanimously Monday night to provide fiber optic Internet connectivity to every business and resident that wants it.

In Martin, West Kentucky-Tennessee Telecommunications Cooperative will lay about 150 miles of fiber optic line during the planned 12- to 18-month buildout. The new fiber optic system will provide an immediate benefit to the city by allowing the municipal water department to obtain more accurate readings more efficiently by transmitting signals directly from the meters back to the office, according to company officials.

As the fiber network is being built for the metering system, WK&T will be able to connect local residents and businesses to high-bandwidth Internet access.

"The city will see immediate benefits from a much more efficient way to read meters," said WK&T CEO Trevor Bonnstetter. "But the most visible benefit to residents and small businesses will be the possibility of bring reliable broadband to their neighborhoods. Increasingly, communities like Martin need broadband to avoid being left behind in economic development, education, healthcare and improvements in the overall quality of life."

Because WK&T is a cooperative, every customer who signs on to the service will become a member of the cooperative and share its potential growth.

The service is expected to cost the city $338,000 a year, plus $150,000 in tax credits and the cost of television franchise fees, which are unknown at this point. Payments will be made for 30 years.

Alderman Rex Pate described the decision as a "win/win situation." He said it would provide an avenue for more businesses and jobs to come into the city, and that he knew several businesses had been waiting for fiber optic to be available before locating in Martin.

City officials also bade a formal farewell to Bob Martin.

See MARTIN, PAGE 4

MARTIN, FROM PAGE 1

Smith, interim chancellor at the University of Tennessee at Martin,

Smith commended the city for all its efforts to improve the quality of life in Martin, including a new fire station, a new library, and a new convention center which he described as "not only ambitious, but bold."

He said his opportunity to return to Martin allowed him to learn that many of his old acquaintances were "friends for life."

He also thanked Mayor Randy Brundige for being a friend during his tenure.

"You trusted me, and you had my back," Smith said.

Newly elected Aldermen Danney Nanney, Marvin Platt and Randy Edwards were also sworn in by Judge Lang Unger.

In other business the board:

•Accepted the low bidder of NSite for the multimodal project at the university at a cost of $400,732.

•Passed ordinances annexing and providing services to property at the intersection of Courtright Road and Highway 43 for the construction of a recreational facility for UTM and eventually a convention center.

•Appointed committee members and elected Dan- ny Nanney vice mayor.
RECENT GRADUATE — Kory Green of Dresden is pictured with his wife, Laurie, and children, (from left) Abbie, Emma and Jonathan. He graduated from UT Martin on Saturday with his bachelor's degree.
Dresden firefighter achieves his career goal with degree

Kory Green of Dresden became a firefighter to contribute to his community and teach those around him how to prevent fire-related catastrophes. Now, as a new college graduate, he can move closer to his goal to become a leading professional within the field.

"I wanted to help and educate others about the dangers and safety precautions related to fire. I have always been intrigued by the dynamics of fire, which is why I enjoy teaching safety measures and fire prevention," said Green. "I love my job, and I feel that I am blessed to be able to make a difference within our community while working alongside a great group of firefighters."

In the fall of 2013, Green began coursework for a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies at the University of Tennessee at Martin. He completed his classes this past summer and officially crossed the UT Martin commencement stage Saturday with his fellow summer- and fall-semester graduates.

Green chose the UT Martin program because he could use previous academic credits in fire science from John Woods Community College and combine them with other course choices to create a program to suit his career needs.

"I feel that a well-rounded leader within the fire service needs to be educated in fire science, business and teaching subjects. The interdisciplinary degree allowed me to focus on all of these areas, which I feel makes me a stronger leader," he said.

Green is currently a training and safety officer with the Martin Fire Department, where he develops training programs and coordinates state certifications for his fellow firefighters. He is also a part-time deputy chief with the Dresden Fire Department. Both positions involve assisting at the scene of a fire and helping to ensure fire personnel remain safe during the event.

While he knew a bachelor's degree would be required to further his career, returning to school wasn't always an easy option. However, Green pushed through his own doubts and encourages other non-traditional students to do the same.

"My advice is to push through the initial discouragement and self-doubt when starting something new and choose not to give up when times get tough. You will then be able to see your own self-worth and unlock your full potential," he said.

Green and his wife, Laurie, have three children: Abbie, Emma and Jonathan.

For more information about the bachelor of interdisciplinary studies degree program, contact the Beth Edwards, program coordinator, at 731-881-7701.
Ground is broken on Somerville Center

Danielle Ables was determined to attend college after earning her GED certificate from Fayette Literacy. The 20-year-old Somerville resident found the educational opportunity she needed close to home at the University of Tennessee at Martin Somerville Center. Ables joined fellow students Courtney Burns and Elizabeth Wilburn and other officials for a ground-breaking ceremony Dec. 7 that marked the beginning of major renovations to the center's new home at the former Methodist Fayette Hospital. The new facility is expected to open in fall 2017.

Ables works part-time at night for FedEx and is a full-time student as she pursues academic interests in both agriculture and business. Earning a college degree without the expense of leaving home is within reach, thanks to the center. “It’s just amazing how we can actually go to school and get a better education here in our hometown,” she said. “It means a lot.”

She also sees the center’s future location benefiting both students and the area.

“I think it’s going to bring more people to Somerville, hopefully more students,” she said. “Hopefully, it’s going to bring the community together, just the building itself, because everybody has come together to work so hard on it.”

Discussions about a possible Fayette County higher education center began in 2004. The University of Tennessee and UT Martin became involved in 2012 when a new building for the center was initially proposed, but the project was cost-prohibitive. Methodist Fayette Hospital then closed in March 2015, and Fayette County officials suggested Methodist Healthcare give the facility to the town. The facility was transferred to the town in July 2015, and Methodist Healthcare gave the city $250,000 to assist with the facility’s renovation. On July 25, the State Building Commission approved a lease between the University of Tennessee and the city of Somerville to house the UT Martin Somerville Center in the former hospital building.

Earlier this year, the Tennessee General Assembly approved $250,000 in recurring funding for the center in the state’s 2016-17 budget. Also approved was $875,000 in one-time funding to support the hospital’s renovation. Gov. Bill Haslam visited Somerville on July 26 to formally present UT Martin with the total $1.125 million in funding from the state to establish the new center.

Attendees were greeted last week by overcast, cold and windy conditions as they arrived at the ground-breaking event held at the facility’s main entrance. Construction workers were already on site, and renovation work was imminent.

“Two steps forward, one step back – I think we finally made the final leap here,” said Bob Turner, Somerville city administrator, as he opened the event.

Skip Taylor, Fayette County mayor, said the project took many turns through the years, and he credited retired UT Extension agent and former state Rep. Jamie Jenkins, state Sen. Dolores Gresham (R-District 26) and others for giving the project direction. “We tried a bunch of different ways [to create the center], and everybody here today, and a lot folks who aren’t here today … my thanks go out to them, because there’s no way any of us could have done this by ourselves,” he told the audience.

Gresham followed Taylor on the program and acknowledged the work that made the center a reality for Somerville, Fayette County and the region. “I am so happy that this will begin today. And, as I had said before, this is truly a game-changing event,” she said. “It’s a game-changer for each of us who are here personally, and it’s a game-changer for the students who will attend school here. Thank you, Jesus, for this great day.”

Newly elected Somerville Mayor Ronnie Neill added his thanks to the Somerville board of alderman, the higher education committee, the county commission, city mayors and others who supported the center. “This center will be much more than a place to obtain college credit. It will be a place that will change people’s lives. It will be a local opportunity to improve yourself for the workforce,” Neill said. “We will be supporting the mega-site just 13 miles north of here, and we’ll be supporting the governor’s Drive to 55. So all of those things will occur on this site.”

UT Martin Interim Chancellor Bob Smith helped create the University of Tennessee’s first higher education center in McNairy County, which opened in 1998. He sees UT Martin’s fifth off-campus center well positioned to succeed. “I think you’re going to look back five years from now, 10 years for sure, and say, ‘My word, what have we accomplished here?’ because it will be extraordinary,” he said. “The best days are ahead for this center.” Smith added on behalf of incoming UT Martin Chancellor
Keith Carver, Smith’s interim chancellor’s appointment will end in early January, and Carver will begin his role as the university’s 10th chancellor Jan. 3.

Ronnie Neill once again took the podium to announce that the building’s future community room will be named the Chickasaw Electric Community Room in honor of a recent donation by the Chickasaw Electric Cooperative. He also presented a plaque of appreciation to Smith from the town of Somerville and the citizens of Fayette County for his support of the center.

Kara Tapp, center director, closed the event by thanking both the Oakland and Fayette County chambers for their support. She also recognized the three center students who helped with the event.

“I’m proud of them, and they wouldn’t have had the opportunity to go off to college, because they might not have had the means to go,” she said. “And this gives them the opportunity to drive 10, 15 minutes from their home and come here.”

Danielle Ables already has career options in mind after she earns her degree. In the meantime, she is taking advantage of educational opportunities at the Somerville Center that will benefit future generations.

“It’s great what everybody’s doing, coming together as a community to better everything,” she said. “It’s just really amazing.”

Learn more about the UT Martin Somerville Center at utm.edu/departments/somerville/ or call the center at 901-465-7313.

BREAKING GROUND — A groundbreaking ceremony Dec. 7 at the former Methodist Fayette Hospital in Somerville signaled the start of renovations that will create a new home for the University of Tennessee at Martin Somerville Center. The Tennessee General Assembly approved $250,000 in recurring funding for the center in the state’s 2016-17 budget. Also approved was $875,000 in one-time funding to support the hospital facility’s renovation. The building is expected to open in fall 2017. Participating in the ceremony were (from left) Marlin Mosby, higher education committee member and donor; Bob Turner, administrator for the town of Somerville; Kara Tapp, UT Martin Somerville Center director; Dr. Bob Smith, UT Martin interim chancellor; Dr. Brian Donavant, interim executive director; UT Martin Office of Educational Outreach; Skip Taylor, Fayette County mayor; Ronnie Neill, Somerville mayor; Ellen Wadley, architect, Fleming Architects; state Sen. Dolores Gresham (R-District 26); and Charley Deal, UT Martin associate vice chancellor for alumni relations and annual giving.
Grove students attend writer’s conference

A group of students from E.W. Grove School attended the University of Tennessee at Martin’s Young Writers’ Conference, Nov. 18, hosted by the Department of English and Modern Foreign Languages. Pictured are, from left (front row) Carson Nelson, Paige King, Tiffany Mead, Jack Foster, M. Nelson Denman, (middle row) Jordan Counts, Abby Webb, Rebecka Fields, Abigail Littrell, Clayton Caudill, (top row) Ema Bomar, Makiela Webb, Abigail Wynn, Maddie Parks, Kylee LaGrange and Xylan Harris. Tiana Clark (not pictured), winner of the 2016 Academy of American Poets Prize and author of the poetry chapbook “Equilibrium,” served as conference keynote speaker.
Ground Breaking Signals Start of Somerville Center Renovations

By: Bud Grimes
UT Office of University Relations

Danielle Ables was determined to attend college after earning her GED certificate from Fayette Literacy. The 20-year-old Somerville resident found the educational opportunity she needed close to home at the UT Martin Somerville Center. Ables joined fellow students Courtney Burns and Elizabeth Wilburn and other officials for a ground-breaking ceremony Dec. 7 that marked the beginning of major renovations to the center's new home at the former Methodist hospital building.

UT Groundbreaking- Continued from Page 1A

dist Fayette Hospital. The new facility is expected to open in fall 2017. Ables works part-time at night for FedEx and is a full-time student as she pursues academic interests in both agriculture and business. Earning a college degree without the expense of leaving home is within reach, thanks to the center. "It's just amazing how we can actually go to school and get a better education here in our hometown," she said. "... It means a lot."

She also sees the center's future location benefitting both students and the area. "I think it's going to bring more people to Somerville, hopefully more students," she said. "Hopefully, it's going to bring the community together, just the building itself, because everybody has come together to work so hard on it."

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Attendees were greeted Dec. 7 by overcast, cold and windy conditions as they arrived at the ground-breaking event held at the facility's main entrance. Construction workers were already on site, and a neat pile of dirt placed in front of the podium and shovels bearing a UT Martin logo signaled that renovation work was imminent. "Two steps forward, one step back - I think we finally made the final leap here," said Bob Turner, Somerville city administrator, as he opened the event.

Skip Taylor, Fayette County Mayor, said the project took many turns through the years, and he credited retired UT Extension agent and former state Rep. Jamie Jenkins, state Sen. Dolores Gresham (R-District 26) and others for giving the project direction. "We tried a bunch of different ways (to create the center), and everybody here today, and a lot folks who aren't here today ... my thanks go out to them, because there's no way any of us could have done this by ourselves," he told the audience. "And we've definitely taken some lemon and made a whole bunch of lemonade here with the hospital."

Gresham followed Taylor on the program and acknowledged the work that made the center a reality for Somerville, Fayette County and the region. "I am so happy that this will begin today. And, as I had said before, this is truly a game-changing event," she said. "It's a game-changer for each of us who are here personally, and it's a game-changer for the students who will attend school here. Thank you, Jesus, for this great day."

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Somerville board officials participating in the groundbreaking were, left to right, City Administrator Robert Turner, Alderpersons Sandra Myers and Judy Accardi, Mayor Ronnie Neill, and Aldermen Mike French and Jason Hamilton. (Photos by Jim Larkin)
Groundbreaking Held December 7th for the UT Martin Somerville Center

A Groundbreaking ceremony was held on Wednesday, December 7, 2016, for the UT Martin Somerville center located at the former Methodist Hospital. Among those participating were, left to right, Higher Education Committee Member/Donor- Martin Mosby, Town of Somerville Administrator- Robert Turner, UT Martin Somerville Center Director Kara Tapp, UT Martin Interim Chancellor Robert M. Smith, UT Martin Interim Executive Director of Educational Outreach Dr. Brian Donavant, Fayette County Mayor Skip Taylor, Somerville Mayor Ronnie Hall, Fleming Architects Architect Ellen Wadley, Tennessee State Senator Dolores Gresman, and UT Martin Associate Vice Chancellor for Alumni Relations and Annual Giving and Executive Director of WestStar Leadership- Charity Deal.

UTM online programs receive honors

AffordableCollegeCommunity.org ranked UT Martin’s online programs number seven on the website’s list of the “Best Online Colleges in Tennessee for 2016-17.”

UT Martin comes in above the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, ranked 13th and 14th respectively.

UT Martin offers six undergraduate programs completely online, as well as an online degree-completion program for veterinary technicians.

Four master’s degrees are also available to distance learners, including three Master of Science degrees and the Master of Business Administration with either a business or an agricultural focus.

UT Martin’s online master’s degree in agriculture and natural resources, focusing on agribusiness and risk management, was recently named one of the “Top 20 Most Affordable Online Master’s in Agriculture Business/Agribusiness” for 2016-17 by GradSchool-Hub.com.

The program is ranked number eight on the list, making it the highest-ranked Tennessee school in the listing.

Placements in this ranking were determined by comparing information on graduate tuition and fees from the National Center for Education Statistics College Navigator for accredited colleges and universities offering online master’s degrees in agricultural business or related fields.

For more information on online programs, contact UT Martin Online at 731-881-7080.
Local Fireman Crosses UTM Commencement Stage

Kory Green, of Dresden, became a firefighter to contribute to his community and teach those around him how to prevent fire-related catastrophes. Now, as a new college graduate, he can move closer to his goal to become a leading professional within the field.

"I wanted to help and educate others about the dangers and safety precautions related to fire. I have always been intrigued by the dynamics of fire, which is why I enjoy teaching safety measures and fire prevention," said Green. "I love my job, and I feel that I am blessed to be able to make a difference within our community while working alongside a great group of firefighters."

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"My advice is to push through the initial discouragement and self-doubt when starting something new and choose not to give up when times get tough. You will then be able to see your own self-worth and unlock your full potential," he said.

Green and his wife, Laurie, have three children: Abbie, Emma and Jonathan.

Martin Board Approves Broadband Service

DAVID FISHER
Writer

Martin City fathers unanimously approved a broadband service agreement to provide remote reading of City water and gas meters, during Monday night's Martin Board meeting.

The cost to the City of Martin is approximately $328,000 annually for the next 30 years. However, according to Mayor Randy Brundige, there are sufficient funds in the budget to cover the cost of installing the high-speed fiber optics without borrowing any money. He added that Martin will receive $150,000 annually in lieu of taxes, as well as a 5.0 percent franchise fee from users who subscribe to the high-speed Internet service.

Trevor Bonnsteller, CEO of West Kentucky and Tennessee Telephone Cooperative (WKY Telephone), says, upon completion of an engineering study, it will be spring or early summer before installation to residential and business customers can begin. He noted approximately 150 miles of fiber optic lines will be installed during the next 12-18 months. Bonnsteller said the fiber optic system will allow the municipal water department to obtain more accurate readings more efficiently by transmitting it remotely from the meters back to the office. It will also reduce the City's labor expenses, encourage conservation by allowing customers to monitor usage and detect leaks and theft, and increase the City's revenue from utility services by reducing the amount of unbilled usage.

Mayor Brundige stated the City has been retrofitting water and gas meters with radio-monitored units for the past four years and will continue installing them until the entire City has the new meters that can be read remotely. He notes approximately 40-50 percent of the meters have been replaced, thus far, at a cost of approximately $130-$140 each.

"We'll have to install about five to seven land gate-
After reviewing the bids submitted by three construction companies for a multi-modal construction project, the Martin Board awarded the contract to Nsite, Inc. of Milan, which submitted the lowest bid totaling $400,731. The scope of work includes constructing a multi-purpose sidewalk and a bicycle lane on Skyhawk Parkway from the Hampton Inn to the University Street, and then, west to the Wal-Mart red light on University Street. According to Mayor Brundidge, TDOT is covering 95 percent per cent of the cost of the project through a state grant, while the city's portion is approximately $30,000 with engineering and other fees.

Under new business, Martin board members unanimously approved the second and final reading of an ordinance to provide a municipal zoning designation of "U" (University) for 72 acres adjacent to at the intersection of Courtwright Road and Highway 43, to be used as an agricultural center. The annexation request came from UT Martin interim chancellor Dr. Bob Smith and includes plans to construct a new $32 million agriculture convention center and stalling barns. The project on University property and inside the city is fully funded by the non-profit 501-C-3. The University will now move forward with its plan for construction which may begin in the Spring.

The first reading of a resolution to annex certain territory and to incorporate the same within the corporate boundaries of the City of Martin, located on Courtwright Road and Highway 43, passed unanimously. The property is adjacent to the corporate limits and which can be further described as the entirety of parcel 52.00, Weakley County Tax Map 57 and a Portion of Parcel 55.00, Weakley County Tax Map 57.

A Resolution adopting a plan of service for the annexation of the above-mentioned property was also approved on first reading.

Additionally, board members approved the second and final reading of amendments to the Cross Connection Ordinance for the City of Martin to bring it up to date with all state and federal regulations. The ordinance sets forth uniform requirements for the protection of the public water system for the City of Martin from possible contamination, and enable the City of Martin Water Department to comply with all applicable local, State and Federal laws, regulations, standards or requirements, including the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1996, TCA 68-221-701 to 68-221-720 and the Rules and Regulations for Public Water Systems and Drinking Water Quality issued by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Division of Water Supply.

There was no discussion concerning any of these resolutions during a public hearing.

As the meeting opened, Judge Lang Unger swore in three newly elected Martin aldermen, including: incumbents - Randy Edwards and Danny Nanney, and newcomer - Marvin Flatt, who defeated David Sudberry in the November 8th General and Municipal Elections to win the post.

UT Martin Interim Chancellor Robert Smith addressed the Board, saying that he was surprised how quickly he was accepted back into the Martin community after being gone for 16 years. He expressed his appreciation to the board for the support they have given the University and its students. He described fiber optics as the new information highway of the future, which is essential for businesses to compete in the 21st Century.

Mayor Brundidge gave Dr. Smith a wooden plaque engraved with Martin's zip code, which was symbolic of him being accepted back into the community and that Martin is his home now.

In announcements, Mayor Brundidge stated the next informal City Board meeting is Tuesday, January 3, and the next formal meeting is Monday, January 9, with both meetings starting at 5:15 p.m. in the City Courtroom.
The University of Tennessee at Martin partnered with Gallup Inc. in recent months to survey university alumni to discover how their UT Martin experiences impacted their lives after graduation. The results of an online survey, distributed in August and September of this year, show intense alumni pride, as well as areas that need improvement.

Gallup Inc. received 2,623 survey responses, and UT Martin consistently scored higher than the national average for percentage of alumni respondents who indicate a high attachment to their alma mater. Questions such as "UTM was the perfect school for people like me" scored well, with half of respondents strongly agreeing with that statement. This result is 16 percentage points higher than the national average for college graduates who answered the same statement about their own institution.

According to Gallup Inc., there are six factors that deeply affect the quality of a college experience and the preparedness of a college graduate to enter the workforce. Three of these deal with relationships between students and professors, and three address experiential learning opportunities as they relate to post-graduation careers.

UT Martin alumni strongly agreed with statements such as "My professors at UTM cared about me as a person" and "While attending UTM, I had a mentor who encouraged me to pursue my goals and dreams." These results reaffirm UT Martin's longstanding reputation of caring faculty and a student-centered approach. Surveyed alumni can attest that UT Martin faculty and staff care about the long-term accomplishments of their students and want to help them succeed however possible.

UT Martin respondents also showed higher-than-average participation in extracurricular activities and organizations during their college years, although responses regarding long-term project experiences and internships or jobs related to post-graduate career goals were low.

UTM-P can drive
The students of UTM Parsons Center conducted a can food drive during the week of finals to benefit The Decatur County Backpack Program. The backpack program currently provides food for the weekend for around 90 students per week. The backpack program operates solely off of local donations like the donation made by UTM Parsons students, as well as many Decatur County churches, businesses, and individuals.
Survey shows UTM alumni highly satisfied with college

The University of Tennessee at Martin partnered with Gallup Inc. in recent months to survey university alumni and discover how their UT Martin experiences impacted their lives after graduation. The results of an online survey, distributed in August and September of this year, show intense alumni pride, as well as areas that need improvement.

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The university seeks to address this area with the recent establishment of the UT Martin Office of Career Planning and Development, funded through the Soar in Four program, which encourages students to graduate in four years. This office is designed to help students make educated career decisions, gain relevant experience through internships and learn skills such as interview tactics, salary negotiation and job-search strategies.

Gallup Inc. maintains that these college experience and preparedness factors influence workplace engagement and overall well-being later in life, and UT Martin alumni responses are positive in these areas.

UT Martin alumni indicated higher-than-average engagement with their careers, which includes a sense of teamwork, clear expectations in the workplace, growth opportunities and individual recognition and sense of accomplishment on the job.

UT Martin respondents also consider themselves to be thriving in all five of Gallup Inc.’s well-being areas, with all categories scoring higher than the national average for college graduates. These areas focus on a sense of personal purpose and community belonging, social and physical health and financial management.
Dr. Nancy Buschhaus, professor of biology at the University of Tennessee at Martin, has been selected as the university’s Featured Faculty Scholar for the fall 2016 semester.

A selection of her professional work is on display in the Paul Meek Library.

The Featured Faculty Scholar award, instituted during the 1996-97 academic year by the UT Martin Academic Council, is designed to recognize faculty members whose research and creative works are judged to be among the most prestigious of those produced by individuals at UT Martin.

Dr. Buschhaus started her career with UT Martin in 1997 as an assistant professor in the Department of Biological Sciences. She is now a full professor with tenure status and has given more than 25 professional presentations since 2007, a majority of those with the assistance of undergraduate research students.

She received both bachelor’s and master’s degrees in zoology from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and a doctoral degree from Ohio State University.

Her current research primarily focuses on bat populations and variations and she is a member of Bat Conservation International, the Southeast Bat Working Group and the Midwest Bat Working Group.

The Department of Biological Sciences recently received a grant from Bat Conservation International to study wildlife usage of livestock troughs and Dr. Buschhaus will serve as project director.

The grant will be used to examine whether wildlife, including small non-game wildlife such as birds, bats and other small mammals, are using steep-sided livestock water troughs as water sources.

The study will include farms across several states east of the Mississippi River and involves gathering data through field observations and surveys of agency personnel and livestock producers.

STUDENTS CHALLENGED — A group of seniors from the University of Tennessee at Martin’s College of Business and Global Affairs completed the annual Tennessee Valley Authority’s Investment Challenge, which provides a real-world learning experience in portfolio management by allowing students to manage actual stock portfolios. Gathering after the TVA presentations were (from left) finance professor Dr. Mahmoud Haddad; Andrew Terrell of Union City; Morgan Grisham of Union City; Dallas Hunter of Milan; Bill Murray, father of the late Kelly Murray, namesake for an award for excellence; Tyler Stephenson of Medina; Ryan Stevenson of Milan; Reagan Brock of Martin; Chris Hutcherson of Martin; Emily McCartney of Glencoe, Ala.; McKenzie Bonetti of Martin; Dr. Ross Dickens, dean of the UT Martin College of Business and Global Affairs; and Mohammed Alamro, an international student living in Martin. Participating students also selected classmates to receive the Kelly W. Murray Excellence in Portfolio Management Award, which recognizes outstanding effort and dedication in managing the UT Martin TVA stock portfolio in conjunction with the investment challenge. This year’s recipients were Terrell and Ms. McCartney.
Local residents receive degrees from UT Martin

Several McNairy County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during fall commencement held Dec. 10 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:
- Adamsville - Heather Renee Bryant, Kamala O’Neal, Dalton, David Dwayne Grisham, Jacob Aaron Kee, Madison B. Pickens, Benjamin J. Sinclair, Brandy Nicole Willingham;
- Bethel Springs - Courtney Lobb Barnes, Elizabeth P. Beene, Bryan
- Massengill, Jeffery Dee Mitchell Jr.;
- Finger - Drew Dylan Hemby;
- Michie - China Lynn Horton;
- Ramer - Bradley M. Chism, Julie Renee Smith;
- Selmer - Bryanna Mae Huggins, Christopher Allen Lambert, Carianna Steely Morris.

Local resident graduates from UT Martin

Bradley Chism, of Ramer, graduated from the University of Tennessee at Martin during commencement exercises Dec. 10 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center. Dr. Bob Smith, UT Martin interim chancellor, introduced him to his classmates as the newest member of the United States Army after Chism was commissioned as a second lieutenant earlier in the week. Chism received a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice. Approximately 680 students from the summer and fall 2016 classes were eligible to receive degrees during the ceremony. Dr. Joe DiPietro, UT System President, was present to confer degrees.
KEY TO THE CITY — The University of Tennessee at Martin Town and Gown Association met in the UT Martin Dunagan Alumni Center on Friday. During the event, City of Martin Mayor Randy Brundige (left) presented UT Martin Interim Chancellor Bob Smith with a ceremonial key to the city of Martin in appreciation for his service to the city and the university during his time as interim chancellor. Smith began his tenure as interim chancellor in June 2015 and will end his time in that position Dec. 31. He leaves behind a legacy of accomplishments, including the navigation of a 12-month academic probation period from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, the funding of the Latimer Engineering and Science Building, and the completion of an extensive economic impact study showing the university’s financial impact on West Tennessee.
FOND FAREWELL — Martin Mayor Randy Brundige (left) made a special presentation to Bob Smith, outgoing UTM Interim Chancellor, Monday night. Smith was given a ceramic plate with the Martin zip-code inscribed to remind him of his roots.

Photo by Linda Thurston
Locals graduate from UT Martin

Several Weakley County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during fall commencement held Saturday in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:
• Dresden - Monica Raven Bell, Jaquelynn Diane Blackmon, Crystal Elise Browning, Melissa Taylor Burken, Wynter Lacon Crowell, Danielle Nicole Gällimore, Kory Jay Green, Jason A. Hansen, Matthew T. Henderson, Sydney B. Kinser, Elizabeth Anne McCauley, Holly Michelle Morris, Cayce Drew Wainstock, Sherry A. Whaley, Amber Nicole Woods;
• Dukedom - Zackary Shane Roberts;
• Gleason - Ryan Marshall Bomar, Nicole Morgan Garrett, Jonathan Russell Riley;
• Greenfield - Karsen Nicole Cook, Jonathan Michael Crawford, Angie Johnnien Land, Adam Paul Mitchell, Andrea Shannon Smith;
• Martin - Ava Maureen Abad, Zackary Paul Austin, William Andrew Austin, Mark Logan Bane, Andrew Blake Barnes, Dinah Christie Batchelor, Maggie Elaine Blackwell, Chantia Breon Brown, Brooklyn E. Burress, Abigail Rae Butler, Stephanie Lee Butler, Amelia Sue Coalter, Thomas B. Davis, Tevin Evans, Yvannah Mae Garcia, Jeff A. Gearin, Tranequa Shantal Harrell, Kala Marie Hayes, Terri M. Hernon, Christopher Drake Hutcherson, Max Andrew Johnson, Brenta Marie Jones, Julia C. Kelley, Kevin Kelley, Sydney Elaine McClure, Jeffery Dylan McDaniel, Zachary Samuel Merwin, Kristy Marie Milan, Matt Scott Milhorn, Mary Elizabeth Parish, Sarah M. Rogers, Stephen Cooper Ross, LaTessia LouCenda Shane, Megan Brooke Spellings.

The students receiving graduate degrees were:
• Dresden - Laurie Lynn Green;
• Gleason - Preston D. Frazier;
• Greenfield - Jonathan Cole Shepherd;
• Martin - Derek Riley Barner, William Patrick Bishop, Lauren B. Dowdy, Martha Nicole Harrell.

GRADUATES, FROM PAGE 1
Drew H. Stigall, Amber G. Taylor, Dixie L. Timmons, Jonathan Michael Travis, Dawn Turner, Katelyn Nicole Veteto, Aaron Matthew White, Abigail Elizabeth Williams, Rachel Elizabeth Womack;
• Sharon - Andrew William Allen, Cody D. Hogan, Alexander Gray Roberts.

Houston G. Taylor.

The students receiving graduate degrees were:
• Dresden - Laurie Lynn Green;
• Gleason - Preston D. Frazier;
• Greenfield - Jonathan Cole Shepherd;
• Martin - Derek Riley Barner, William Patrick Bishop, Lauren B. Dowdy, Martha Nicole Harrell.
The University of Tennessee at Martin presented J. Houston Gordon (left), of Covington, with a personalized lamppost plaque Dec. 10 in appreciation of his longtime support of the university. Dr. Bob Smith, UT Martin interim chancellor, made the presentation before the fall 2016 commencement ceremony, during which Gordon appeared as the keynote speaker. The named lamppost will be commemorated in honor of Gordon and his wife, Debbie, later in the spring semester.
DiPietro inducted into fraternity

Dr. Joe DiPietro, president of the University of Tennessee System, accepted an honorary bid to become a member of the University of Tennessee at Martin chapter of Alpha Gamma Rho national fraternity before UT Martin commencement exercises Dec. 10. UT Martin’s Alpha Upsilon chapter will be considered his home chapter after he is initiated during the fraternity’s national leadership conference in February 2017.

DiPietro joins other honorary members such as Dr. Jim Byford, dean emeritus of the UT Martin College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences; former Tennessee governor Ned Ray McWherter; former congressman Ed Jones; former state representative Larry Bates; and Dr. Harold Smith, professor emeritus of animal science and dean emeritus of the UT Martin College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences.

“I am very pleased to accept this bid,” said DiPietro. “It makes good sense for me because, and I’ve said this over and over, my hometown [in Illinois] is a lot like Martin. They don’t have an agriculture program at Eastern Illinois University, so this is the next best thing.”

DiPietro expressed interest in becoming an honorary member of the chapter earlier this year, and the brothers of Alpha Gamma Rho were happy to accept him. “It shows that what we’ve been doing is right, and it stands out on campus,” said Austin Brewer of Rutherford. “I take it as an honor that somebody of Dr. DiPietro’s status would want to join [our chapter],” added Chase Kizer of Sweetwater.

Both members were on hand to present DiPietro with his official bid card.

Marvin Flatt (UT Martin, ’76), director of career education for Weakley County Schools, and Dr. Todd Winters, dean of the UT Martin College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, serve as co-advisers for the Alpha Upsilon chapter.

International students graduate from UT Martin

Several international residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during fall commencement held Dec. 10 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:

- Beijing, China - Qiyue An, Marlin Li, Ran Li, Xiang Li, Zesheng Wen, Lu Yang, Yao Yu, Fanyi Zeng;
- Xi'an, China - Wenfei Ma;
- Zhengzhou, China - Ziya Gao;
- Ondo State, Nigeria - Samson Olujini Lanade;
- Altaif, Saudi Arabia - Awaad Alzhrani;
- Dhahran, Saudi Arabia - Adnan Alameer;
- Qatif, Saudi Arabia - Ali Almajid;
- Saihat, Saudi Arabia - Mohsin Aleirani, Zainab Alghuryafi, Zainab Almashama, Zahra Alrashed;
- Seoul, South Korea - Hyeryeong Oh;

The students receiving graduate degrees were:

- Beijing, China - Yicong Sun;
- New Taipei, Taiwan - Chao-Jung Chen.
ALUMNI REUNION — The University of Tennessee at Martin's WestStar Leadership Program hosted an alumni reunion Dec. 1 in Memphis. Among those in attendance were Weakley County residents (from left) Charley Deal, executive director, WestStar Leadership Program; Bobby and Susie German, of Dresden, both retired; and Virginia Grimes, coordinator, WestStar Leadership Program.

SANTA'S VILLAGE FOURTH-LARGEST ON RECORD — More than 17,000 visitors participated in the 32nd-annual Santa's Village celebration last week in the Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex on the main campus of the University of Tennessee at Martin. This makes the 2016 event the fourth-largest on record. UT Martin and the City of Martin co-sponsored the event with assistance from Simmons Bank, Casey's General Store, Savant Learning Systems, MTD Products and First Community Bank, among others. "It was a fantastic year and everyone seemed to enjoy all that was offered," said Kim Kirby, program director, City of Martin Office of Parks and Recreation. "This wouldn't be possible with our sponsors, volunteers and media, and we are always grateful for their support."
Four years after beginning her journey as a 16-year-old undergraduate student at the University of Tennessee, Amelia Coalter crossed the commencement stage Dec. 10 with a bachelor of science degree at the age of 20.

Although she graduated at a younger age than most, for Coalter, she’s only continuing a family tradition set by her father and older sister, who also graduated from high school at age 16.

“It’s not new really in my family, so to me it doesn’t seem as big of a deal. I guess it just depends on your perspective,” she said.

Coalter originally came to UT Martin as a chemistry major, but after taking an introductory geology course, she realized she had passion for geology that surpassed any feelings she had for chemistry.

“I remember on that first day of class, Dr. (Stan) Dunagan (professor of geology) said, ‘My goal is to get you to be driving in your car and to look out and see the rocks and just annoy your family talking about them.’ I remember so specifically thinking how great that was because I do that all the time,” she said.

During her time in the geosciences program, Coalter gained hands-on experience through field trips that benefited her both as a student and as a future professional. Geology field trips allowed Coalter to build relationships with her classmates and grasp key concepts through travels to the Gulf Coast, East Tennessee and Missouri.

“You sit in the class and (professors) tell you about all these things and to try and picture them in your head. It’s a lot easier to figure out what is actually going on (during field work),” she said.

Coalter’s age isn’t the only thing that sets her apart from other geology students, however. Her faith continues to play a role in how she approaches the science-based field.

“[My faith] has been a big deal, partly because it’s a part of me and affects everything I do,” she said. Growing up in a small Christian school, she was taught a certain perspective about the theory of evolution.

“To them, evolution was a cell turned into a monkey turned into you, which is very limited in scope,” she said.

The theory of evolution is a large part of geology, and it was through her classes that Coalter discovered what it really means. “People who grow up in tiny Christian schools like I did, they don’t have someone to explain to them, ‘This is creation, and this is evolution, and this is how they overlap or how they’re different.’ I want to help other people see what I didn’t see,” said Coalter.

Coalter will participate in one last field trip to Florida before beginning graduate school in the fall of 2017. She hopes to spend time in the field as a geologist and someday teach others her love of geology. Looking back on her experience at UT Martin, she says being a supplemental instructor for two years taught her how to teach and prepared her for her future.

Although she enjoyed her time at UT Martin, Coalter looked forward to graduating with anticipation. “Part of me [was] really just ready to be done with school, but then there’s also that part of me that [was] like, ‘I accomplished something,’ and I’m really excited about that,” she said.

ROCK ON - Amelia Coalter of Martin is shown crossing the UT Martin commencement stage Dec. 10. Coalter received a bachelor’s degree in geology at the age of 20.
Local Residents Receive Degrees From UT Martin

MARTIN — Several Carroll County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during fall commencement held Saturday, December 10 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:

Bruceton — Kayla Darlene Cooper, Morgan Taylor Dunlap;
Clarksburg — Taylor L. Hays;
Hollow Rock — Jan Marie Brotherton;
Huntingdon — Kayla Nichole Boyd, Keisey L. Brown, Katherine G. Carter, Daryl Oliver Hawkins, Taylor L. Hilliard, Lauren Denise Hixon, McCord Kennedy Maddox, Mikaela Anne Miles, Colton L. Moore, Jo Ann Smith, Tyler S. Warbritton, Ashley Carol Webb, Desiree Nicole Wheeler;
Lavinia — Alexandria Nicole Gilley;
McKenzie — Jesse Lee Forsythe, Damon William Hardy, Larry James Lee, Rocio Mejorado, Lucas Keith Robertson;
Trezevant — Jacob Ryan Poevyhouse, Brittney Leigh Wilson;
Westport — Brett A. Hampton.

MILAN GRAD GRADUATES FROM UT MARTIN
- Beth Anne Brady, of Milan, graduated from the University of Tennessee at Martin during commencement exercises Dec. 10 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center. Brady received a bachelor’s degree in agriculture. Approximately 680 students from the summer and fall 2016 classes were eligible to receive degrees during the ceremony.

Dr. Joe DiPietro, UT System President, was present to confer degrees.
Conwright earns degree at UT Martin

Special to the Sun 12/21/2016  http://www.edmondsun.com

MARTIN, TENN. – An Edmond resident was among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during fall commencement Dec. 10 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

Shelton Dejuan Conwright was listed among students earning degrees at the University of Tennessee.

UT Martin is a primary campus in the University of Tennessee System and is known for excellence and outstanding value in undergraduate education.

LaunchTN partners with UTM

For the Independent Appeal

MARTIN – The University of Tennessee at Martin, in partnership with the Northwest Tennessee Entrepreneur Center, has received a $4,000 grant from LaunchTN to encourage student entrepreneurship.

This is the second year for the university to be chosen as a LaunchTN University Venture Challenge Partner, and the grant will be used to support the Skyhawk Venture Challenge, previously known as the UT Martin Business Innovation Pitch Contest.

The fourth annual contest, scheduled for March 30, 2017, will allow UT Martin students from all academic areas to pitch business concepts and product ideas to a panel of judges. Winners will receive cash prizes to fund their business ideas and have an opportunity to advance to the statewide University Venture Challenge, sponsored by LaunchTN.

The university expanded the competition program during the fall 2016 semester to include an optional six-week entrepreneurial workshop, which covered a broad range of topics related to new business start-ups.

Special topics courses stemming from these workshops will soon be taught by Dr. Joey Mehlhorn, UT Martin Gil Parker Chair of Excellence, and Dr. Tommy Cates, UT Martin Tom E. Hendrix Chair of Excellence in Free Enterprise.

The Skyhawk Venture Challenge is sponsored by the UT Martin College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, UT Martin’s Parker and Hendrix chairs of excellence, the Northwest Tennessee Entrepreneur Center and the Northwest Tennessee Angel Investment Group.

(For more information, contact Dr. Todd Winters, dean, UT Martin College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, at 731-881-7251 or by email at winters@utm.edu.)
Local residents receive degrees from UT Martin

Several Dyer County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during fall commencement held Dec. 10 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:
- Finley – Dylan Michael Enochs, Jared M. Peckenpaugh
- Newbern – Ann Ashlea McCann, John William Parks, Mackenzie Lee Walker
- Trimble - Brittany Michelle Shaver

‘Smart Fridge,’ mobile games win awards for UT Martin computer science students

Students from the University of Tennessee at Martin Department of Computer Science received third place and honorable mention accolades at the 2016 Association for Computing Machinery Mid-Southeast Regional Conference held Nov. 10-11 in Gatlinburg. UT Martin students were also recognized for their work at the first annual VOLSHACK event held at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, earlier this semester.

Seniors Chase Breeden, of Martin; Justin James, of Rives; and Carter Crews, of Dyersburg; received third place in the ACM conference’s undergraduate research competition for their “Smart Fridge” project.

The students used a small computer known as a “Raspberry Pi” to turn a regular refrigerator into a self-monitoring device capable of sending and receiving data via an Internet connection. This smart fridge uses Amazon Web Services to monitor its internal temperature in real time and alert owners of problems, such as unsafe temperature changes, through mobile alerts.

Seniors Adam Fuqua, of Martin, and Trevor Dych, of Covington, received an honorable mention in the same category for their mobile game “Dungeon Diver,” which uses the Android operating system. This game creates a different player environment each time it is opened and introduces levels and enemies that adapt to player difficulty over time.

Five UT Martin students also participated in the VOLSHACK event hosted at UT Knoxville earlier this semester. This type of event, referred to as a “hackathon,” takes place over several days and requires students to work around-the-clock from initial idea to project completion.

UT Martin students Dych and Brooks Becton, of Milan, worked alongside Christopher Ostrouchov, a graduate student at UT Knoxville, and Tyler Whitten, a student at East Tennessee State University, to create the City Trail Project. This mobile game uses real map data and demographic information to create a real-life version of the classic Oregon Trail computer game.

The team won a prize from ESRI, one of the event’s corporate sponsors, for the best use of the company’s programming interface.

These accomplishments come on the heels of UT Martin success at the local branch of the Association for Computing Machinery International Collegiate Programming Contest in November. Student teams from UT Martin took first, third and fourth-place honors in that competition.

For more information on the UT Martin Department of Computer Science, contact Dr. Joshua Guerin, associate professor of computer science, at 731-881-7246 or email jguerin@utm.edu.
Local residents receive degrees from UT Martin

Several Decatur County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during fall commencement held Dec. 10 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:
- Decaturville: Brooke Haley Barnett, Savannah Leigh Walker and Eli Garrett Wright
- Parsons: Daniel Clay Barnes, Jami Michael Brownyard, Abby Jo Hays, Dustin W. Menzies, Kandi Michelle Montgomery and Taylor Brooke Trull

Santa's Village Celebrates 32nd Season

Organizers of the 32nd Annual Santa's Village, held at the Ned R. McWherter Agricultural Pavilion on the campus of the University of Tennessee at Martin, were well pleased with the number of visitors and donations to the less fortunate during the four-day event.

According to Martin Parks & Recreation Director Brian Moore, there were 17,131 visitors, which is the fourth largest crowd ever to attend Santa's Village. He stated the number of canned goods and other non-perishable food items, as well as toys, have not yet been counted.

The donations of food and toys will benefit deserving families this Christmas, providing holiday meals and gifts for the children.

In addition to helping others, visitors experienced a virtual winter wonderland. The best example of this is the enchanted forest, which consists of thousands of colorful lights and mechanized Christmas characters that never fail to generate exclamations of wonder from children and adults alike. Youngsters also enjoyed visiting with Santa, the petting farm and amusement rides.

Many adults were seen shopping at the various arts & crafts booths, while others were seated listening to the live entertainment.

Santa's Village is co-sponsored by the City of Martin and UT Martin.

Local students UT Martin degrees

Several Gibson County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during fall commencement held December 10 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees are:
- Humboldt - Luke Harris Brittain, Emily Lynae Fly, Gauri Kamlesh Patel, Trey O'Ryan Patrick, Donovan Jajuan Thomas
- Medina - Tyler Austin Lowery, Elizabeth P. Riddle, Tyler J. Stephenson

The students receiving graduate degrees were:
- Medina - Brian G. Kozlowski
Let's look for the good — and praise it

Dave Bratcher
COMMENTSARY

This past week was a culmination of many things around our city, county, and part of the state. I was able to see goodness and blessings all around and wanted to highlight three specific examples to make sure the story is told. During this season, we should find the good and praise it. As we wake up to another terror attack in Turkey and Berlin, we must not bury our heads, but good does win over evil. Let's take a look at a few things that make our part of the country special.

I had the opportunity to attend the Leadership Jackson graduation last Thursday. For over thirty years, the Jackson Chamber has been training leaders and building up the capacity of leadership across our county. One of the nuances to the program involves establishing things done by classmates, which trigger them having to pay a fine. This could be arriving late, forgetting to silence their cell phone and several other things. The fines are collected over the course of the four months and the class decides where the money should go. This year, the class made the decision to donate the money to Rico Bryon’s family (Leadership Jackson 2015 graduate), as his wife is fighting breast cancer. Through FaceTime, Rico spoke to the audience and current class, saying “thank you.” This was an amazing moment.

Another component to the Leadership Jackson curriculum involves a group project. The class is broken into three groups. This year, one of the groups, The Tree Frogs, selected The STAR Center as the recipient of their efforts. They worked with our STAR team to develop a plan to renovate one of our therapy rooms. This room will be used by music therapy, speech, and orientation/mobility for those ages 0-4. It is now an age appropriate space and one that will enable us to live out our mission to help any person with any disability to realize their potential.

Ironically, one of the people who helped launch and spread local leadership development programs presides over his final commencement ceremony as interim chancellor at The University of Tennessee at Martin. Dr. Bob Smith came into a tumultuous situation at UT Martin and hit it with everything he had. The university was placed on probation and is now back to full accreditation. This was only possible because of the leadership and great team at UT Martin. I'm grateful for what Dr. Smith has done over the years for West Tennessee and his most recent assignment to my alma mater.

Christmas is coming and the examples of goodness are all around us. We must peel back the negative being thrown at us from every angle and clearly focus on the good. This will enable us to cling to our family, hide in the shadow of the manger, and spread good tidings to those around us. It is up to us to be the hands and feet of the one whose birthday we are about to celebrate. Merry Christmas!

Dave Bratcher is the founder of www.davebratcher-com. speaker, teacher and trainer in the area of leadership and organizational development. He serves as the president of the STAR Center. He can be contacted at dave@davebratcher.com.

Local residents receive degrees from UT Martin

Several Gibson County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during fall commencement held Dec. 10 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:

Trenton: Micajah Aaron Barnes, Taylor P. Coomer, Logan Farley, Karlynn Paulina Hayes, Chante L. Jackson, Deidre Rochelle Jackson, Kayla Clare Mathenia, Deedrick A. Ramsey, Amber Nicole Wallsmith;

Bradford: Kristen Lynne Allen, Hannah K. McDade, Catrina T. White;

Dyer: Chelsea K. Joyce, Jonna Lynn Simms;

Rutherford: Katherine D. Utter;

Yorkville: Brandy Lee Moore.

Kerry L. Smith, of Trenton, received a graduate degree.

Bratcher
Continued from Page 5A
One of the nation's longest touring Christmas orchestra's performed a concert in Paducah this month, with a UT-Martin professor part of the show.

Dr. Doug Owens, who is an associate professor of music, was part of the group Manheim Steamroller, during their show on December 7th.

Dr. Owens talked about the history of the famous holiday group.

Owens said he received his second chance to perform with Manheim this year, thanks to his affiliation with the Paducah Symphony Orchestra.

Owens said the groups spectacular musical performance came after only one practice before the concert.

Dr. Owens plays English Horn and Obo, and teaches saxophone and double reed at the college.

Several Obion County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during fall commencement held Dec. 10 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees from South Fulton were Alexandra Elizabeth Burrow, Tenna G. Bynum, Sarah Rachel Dodd, SaraLynn Eaves, Mikacla Margaret Hardy, and Clare McConnell.

The student receiving a graduate degree from South Fulton was Erin Laine Vicary.
Rives senior a member of team

UTM students earn honors for ‘smart fridge’ project

Students from the University of Tennessee at Martin Department of Computer Science received third place and honorable mention accolades at the 2016 Association for Computing Machinery Mid-Southeast Regional Conference last month in Gatlinburg.

UT Martin students were also recognized for their work at the first-ever VOLSHACK event held at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville earlier in the semester.

Seniors Chase Breeden of Martin, Justin James of Rives and Carter Crews of Dyerburg received third place in the ACM conference’s undergraduate research competition for their “smart fridge” project.

The students used a small computer known as a “Raspberry Pi” to turn a regular refrigerator into a self-monitoring device capable of sending and receiving data via an Internet connection.

This smart fridge uses Amazon Web Services to monitor its internal temperature in real time and alert owners of problems, such as unsafe temperature changes, through mobile alerts.

Seniors Adam Fuqua of Martin and Trevor Dych of Covington received an honorable mention in the same category for their mobile game “Dungeon Diver,” which uses the Android operating system.

This game creates a different player environment each time it is opened and introduces levels and enemies that adapt to player difficulty over time.

Five UT Martin students also participated in the VOLSHACK event hosted at UT Knoxville earlier this semester. This type of event, referred to as a “hackathon,” takes place over several days and requires students to work around-the-clock from initial idea to project completion.

UT Martin students Dych and Brooks Becton of Milan worked alongside Christopher Ostrouchov, a graduate student at UT Knoxville, and Tyler Whitten, a student at East Tennessee State University, to create the City Trail Project.

This mobile game uses real map data and demographic information to create a real-life version of the classic Oregon Trail computer game.

The team won a prize from ESRI, one of the event’s corporate sponsors, for the best use of the company’s programming interface.

These accomplishments come on the heels of UT Martin’s success at the local branch of the Association for Computing Machinery International Collegiate Programming Contest in November. Student teams from UT Martin took first, third and fourth-place honors in that competition.

Several Obion County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during recent fall commencement.

The event was held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

Students who received undergraduate degrees were:
- Hornbeak — Rebecca Ann Bloodworth;
- Rives — Alyssa Lynn Culver and Garrett Daniel Ellison;
- South Fulton — Alexandra Elizabeth Burrow, Tenna G. Bynum, Sarah Rachel Dodd, Sara Lynn Eaves, Mikaela Margaret Hardy and Clare McConnell;
- Troy — Macy Beth Allison, Tyler J. Barber, Trevor Louis Bolton, Jonathan Spencer Kelly and Morgan Chase Quinton;

Among those awarded graduate degrees were:
- Kenton — Brittany Jill Smith Simmons;
- South Fulton — Erin Laine Vicary;
- Union City — Tracey Freeman Valentine.
EARNS DEGREE — Carly Coleman of Union City graduated from the University of Tennessee at Martin during commencement exercises recently in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center. She received a bachelor's degree in agriculture. Dr. Joe DiPietro, UT System president, was present to confer degrees to about 680 students from the summer and fall 2016 classes who were eligible to receive degrees.

GRADUATES UTM — Mikaela Hardy of South Fulton graduated from the University of Tennessee at Martin during recent commencement in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center. She received a bachelor's degree in biology. About 680 students from the summer and fall 2016 classes were eligible to receive degrees during the ceremony. Dr. Joe DiPietro, UT System president, conferred the degrees.
Husband, wife and son graduate together from UT Martin; daughter to follow next year

Angie Gertsch of Martin has been looking forward to graduation day for 20 years. After two decades of hard work and perseverance, she received her bachelor’s degree during the University of Tennessee at Martin’s commencement exercises Dec. 10 alongside her husband, Robert Gertsch, and her son, Jonathan Crawford, who also received bachelor’s degrees. Her daughter, Hannah Crawford, is scheduled to graduate in December 2017.

Angie took her first UT Martin classes in 1996 while juggling a full-time job and the responsibilities of a single mother of two. After withdrawing several times, she began the final leg of her journey in 2010 with her children alongside her. Jonathan began his own college experience that same year, and Robert and Hannah enrolled a few years later.

"Having our whole family in school at the same time has been a wonderful, chaotic experience. We have spent the past few years having classes together and trying to arrange schedules so we can have lunch together," said Angie. "We have spent many nights at the library studying together and helping each other out."

With four family members juggling courses in four different academic areas, the struggle to stay connected was real. However, Angie says it was nice to have a support system regardless of the subject area.

"We have a built-in audience for speeches and presentations, editors for papers and study buddies to ask us review questions," she said. "Even though we are all from different majors, we have all had at least one class with each other, which was a lot of fun."

Angie received her bachelor’s degree in interdisciplinary studies and plans to earn a master’s degree in education focused on student affairs and college counseling. Robert earned a degree in criminal science and, as a veteran himself, hopes to help future student-veterans navigate their way through the college process. Jonathan studied business administration with a focus in information systems, and Hannah is set to graduate next year with a degree in veterinary health technology.

Jonathan says having his family in school with him has helped him choose the best professors and classes to benefit his career goals. Hannah says the difference in academic perspectives has helped her in her studies as well.

"With my studies (in veterinary health technology), it helps that mom knows a good deal about medical terminology ... even though she took the human class while I am taking the animal class," she said. "While our fields are so different, we do try to help each other whenever possible. My role is mainly that of an editor and proofreader. ... It is definitely hectic at times and can be very stressful (to have everyone in school). While it is difficult to keep four schedules straight, it is also something to be proud of. It involves a lot of due dates, late nights and lots of coffee."

Angie and Robert hope their academic perseverance teaches Jonathan and Hannah a lesson about the value of hard work and dedication. "I hope that (my children) can take a sense of pride from seeing me finish this degree. They have given me a lot of love and hope through these years, which has inspired me and kept me going. I hope that I can be an example to them to always keep dreaming, to never stop trying, and to never lose their sense of self in the crowd," said Angie.

Hannah says she is inspired by the dedication her mother, stepfather and brother have shown to further their education. "They have all taught me to push for the goal and give it my all. I have seen all of the hard work, determination and perseverance that it takes to finish, and it has given me the motivation to finish my last year, this final stretch."

Coming to the end of the road is a bittersweet moment for the Gertsch/Crawford family. After sharing so many college experiences together, they have all found a deeper love not only for each other, but for the campus they call home. "Sharing this chaotic and adventurous experience with my family has been one of the most pivotal moments in my life," said Robert. "There have been many late nights spent at the university waiting on each other and chasing each other in our crazy class schedules, but I cannot imagine my college experience without sharing it with my family. It has been the bond that has brought us all together. UT Martin is not just a place we all met or that we share and have in common. UTM is our family’s university. We take great pride in truly being a Skyhawk family."

"This has truly been a wonderful experience to have as an individual, but to be able to share this with my family is overwhelming," said Angie. "These have been some of the happiest of years. UT Martin will always be special to me."
For other nontraditional students who may be contemplating finishing or beginning a college degree, Angie passes on a few words of wisdom given to her by a fellow student: "Don't keep putting off going back to school," she said. "I have been in classes where I was the oldest person in the class, including the professor. I have also been in class with a wonderful lady who was 83 years old, and her words are still fresh in my mind. She told me, 'Honey, I am 83 and I will never get too old to learn something. Never give up on yourself. Just keep on going, however long it takes. You should compare yourself to no one; you are only competing

A FAMILY AFFAIR — Pictured before the commencement ceremony are family members (from left) Hannah Crawford, Robert Gertsch, Angie Gertsch and Jonathan Crawford. Robert, Angie and Jonathan all graduated together Dec. 10.

DOTTIE ANN HURT, a member in the honor society of Phi Kappa Phi, graduated cum laude December 10th from the University of Tennessee at Martin with a bachelor of interdisciplinary studies degree.

She is the daughter of Dottie West, of Halls, and the late Jimmie L. Thompson, of Gates, and the granddaughter of Annie Thompson, of Halls, and the late Katie M. Liggeons, of Gates. Dottie is currently employed at Care Rite, PLLC in Halls, and she also works part-time at Mid-South Convenient Care in Ripley. The mother of four, has plans to continue her education to receive her master’s degree in clinical mental health counseling at Argosy University.
Area Students Earn Degrees

Several Lauderdale County students received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during fall commencement held December 10th in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.


Caitlyn Clendenin, of Halls, received a graduate degree.

Posted Dec 25, 2016 at 1:01 AM

Glencoe native receives honor

Emily McCartney, Glencoe, recently received one of two Kelly W. Murray Excellence in Portfolio Management Awards from the University of Tennessee at Martin.

This award, created in honor of the late son of Dr. Sandra and Bill Murray, recognizes outstanding effort and dedication in managing the UT Martin stock portfolio in conjunction with the Tennessee Valley Authority Investment Challenge, which gives students real-world learning experience in portfolio management.

McCartney received a bachelor's degree with a major in accounting during the university's commencement ceremony Dec. 10.

Andrew Terrell was the recipient of the second award.
A Sumner County resident was among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during fall commencement held Dec. 10 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus. The student receiving undergraduate degrees was Devon B. Gaddes of Hendersonville. Congratulations!

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Student teams from UT Martin took first-, third- and fourth-place honors in that competition.

For more information on the UT Martin Department of Computer Science, contact Dr. Joshua Guerin, associate professor of computer science, at 731-881-7246 or email jguerin@utm.edu.
Groundbreaking

A ground-breaking ceremony Dec. 7 at the former Methodist Fayette Hospital in Somerville signaled the start of renovations that will create a new home for the University of Tennessee at Martin Somerville Center. Participating in the ceremony were (from left) Marlin Mosby, higher education committee member and donor; Bob Turner, administrator for the town of Somerville; Kara Tapp, UT Martin Somerville Center director; Dr. Bob Smith, UT Martin interim chancellor; Dr. Brian Donavant, interim executive director, UT Martin Office of Educational Outreach; Skip Taylor, Fayette County mayor; Ronnie Neill, Somerville mayor; Ellen Wadley, architect, Fleming Architects; state Sen. Dolores Gresham (R-District 26); and Charley Deal, UT Martin associate vice chancellor for alumni relations and annual giving.
UT Martin begins Somerville revamp

Earning a college degree without the expense of leaving home within reach

THE JACKSON SUN

Danielle Ables was determined to attend college after earning her GED certificate from Fayette Literacy. The 20-year-old Somerville resident found the educational opportunity she needed close to home at the University of Tennessee at Martin Somerville Center.

Ables joined fellow students Courtney Burns and Elizabeth Wilburn and officials for a groundbreaking ceremony earlier this month that marked the beginning of major renovations to the center’s new home at the former Methodist Fayette Hospital. The new facility is expected to open in fall 2017, according to a press release from UT Martin.

Ables, a full-time student, works part-time at night for FedEx as she pursues academic interests in both agriculture and business. Earning a college degree without the expense of leaving home is within her reach, thanks to the center. “It’s just amazing how we can actually go to school and get a better education here in our hometown,” she said. “It means a lot.”

Discussions about a possible Fayette County higher education center began in 2004. The University of Tennessee and UT Martin became involved in 2012 when a new building for the center was initially proposed, but the project was cost-prohibitive. Methodist Fayette Hospital then closed in March 2015, and Fayette County officials suggested Methodist Healthcare give the facility to the town. The facility was transferred to the town in July 2015, and Methodist Healthcare gave the city $250,000 to assist with the facility’s renovation. On July 25, the State Building Commission approved a lease between the University of Tennessee and the city of Somerville to house the UT Martin Somerville Center in the former hospital building.

Earlier this year, the Tennessee General Assembly approved $250,000 in recurring funding for the center in the state’s 2016-17 budget. Also approved was $875,000 in one-time funding to support the hospital’s renovation. Gov. Bill Haslam visited Somerville on July 26 to formally present UT Martin with the total $1.125 million in funding from the state to establish the new center.

Attendees were greeted by overcast, cold and windy conditions as they arrived at the groundbreaking event held at the facility’s main entrance. Construction workers were already on site, and renovation work was imminent.

Fayette County Mayor Skip Taylor said the project took many turns through the years, and he credited retired UT Extension agent and former UT Martin Chancellor Keith Carver for the project’s success.

See UT Martin, Page 6A

UTM

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state Rep. Jamie Jenkins, state Sen. Dolores Gresham (R-District 26) and others for giving the project direction. “We tried a bunch of different ways (to create the center), and everybody here today, and a lot folks who aren’t here today ... my thanks go out to them, because there’s no way any of us could have done this by ourselves,” he told the audience.

Gresham acknowledged the work that made the center a reality for Somerville, Fayette County and the region. “I am so happy ... as I had said before, this is truly a game-changing event,” she said.

“It’s a game-changer for each of us who are here personally, and it’s a game-changer for the students who will attend school here. Thank you, Jesus, for this great day.”

Newly elected Somerville Mayor Ronnie Neill added his thanks for those who supported the center. “This center will be much more than a place to obtain college credit. It will be a place that will change people’s lives,” Neill said.

“We will be supporting the mega-site just 13 miles north of here, and we’ll be supporting the governor’s Drive to 55. So all of those things will occur on this site,” UT Martin Interim Chancellor Bob Smith helped create UT’s first higher education center in McNairy County, which opened in 1998. He sees UT Martin’s fifth off-campus center well positioned to succeed.

“I think you’re going to look back five years from now, 10 years for sure, and say, ‘My word, what have we accomplished here?’ because it will be extraordinary,” he said.

“The best days are ahead for this center,” Smith added on behalf of incoming UT Martin Chancellor Keith Carver.

Smith’s interim chancellor’s appointment will end in early January, and Carver will begin his role as the university’s 15th chancellor Jan. 3.

Danielle Ables already has career options in mind after she earns her degree. “It’s great what everybody’s doing, coming together as a community to better everything,” she said. “It’s just really amazing.”

Learn more about the UT Martin Somerville Center at utm.auditorium/somervillle/or call the center at (901) 465-7313.
The University of Tennessee at Martin’s online master’s-level programs have again proven their value in several recent rankings.

The online master of business administration program is included in three listings from OnlineMBAReport.com. The program is ranked 10th in the South, 22nd among public schools and 21st nationally in the 2016 lists.

This is an increase from the website’s 2015 rankings, which put the UT Martin program in 15th, 33rd and 39th places, respectively. UT Martin is the highest-ranked Tennessee institution in all three categories.

According to the online ranking page, the UT Martin program placed in the top 14 percent of Southern schools considered, the top 15 percent of public schools considered and the top 8 percent of schools included nationally.

Criteria considered for these rankings included academic reputation, tuition value, program enrollment, admissions selectivity and program quality and rigor. UT Martin’s online MBA is a 33-credit-hour program that can be completed entirely online in 20 months.

The UT Martin MBA program is independently accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.

UT Martin’s online master’s degree in agriculture and natural resources was also recognized as a great value by BestMastersDegrees.com. The university is ranked ninth in the website’s list of the most affordable master’s degrees for 2016-17. This degree program offers concentrations in agribusiness and risk management, natural resources systems management and systems science in agriculture.

UT Martin is the highest-ranked Tennessee institution in this listing, as well.

For more information on UT Martin’s online degree offerings, contact UT Martin Online at (731) 881-7021 or visit utm.edu/onlinestudies.

Ashley Vaughan of Gates graduated from the University of Tennessee at Martin during commencement exercises Dec. 10 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center. Vaughan received a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies degree.

Brandi Driver-Jones, left, and LaQuinta Davis, right, both of Ripley, graduated from the University of Tennessee at Martin during commencement exercises Dec. 10 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center. Driver-Jones received a bachelor’s degree in Interdisciplinary studies, and Davis received a degree in agriculture. Approximately 680 students from the summer and fall 2016 classes were eligible to receive degrees during the ceremony. Dr. Joe DiPietro, UT System President, was present to confer degrees.
UT Martin Removed from Accreditation Probation Status

By: Bud Grimes-Office of University Relations

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges has officially removed the University of Tennessee at Martin from probationary status. The announcement came during the final day of the 2016 SACSCOC Annual Meeting held Dec. 3-6 in Atlanta, Ga.

UT Martin received notice of the commission's decision to place the university on a 12-month academic probation in December 2015. The decision was based on the university's "failure to comply" with five of the 92 accreditation standards. The university remained fully accredited by the commission throughout the probation period, and program-specific accreditations also remained in place and continue.

"While I must congratulate UT Martin on successfully addressing the matters raised by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, I never for a moment doubted that success would be the outcome," said Dr. Joe DiPietro, University of Tennessee president. "The UT Martin faculty, staff, students and administration, under the exceptional leadership of Interim Chancellor Bob Smith, committed themselves tirelessly with a Herculean effort and an incredible sense of teamwork to ensure all concerns were resolved, and their hard work has paid off with the return of their full accreditation status. No doubt, I am very proud of their accomplishment."

Since the commission's decision, UT Martin faculty members, administrators and support staff have made significant changes in the campus atmosphere and documentation surrounding assessment and student outcomes. A long-term plan is in place to ensure the issue does not recur.

A SACSCOC team made a site visit to the UT Martin main campus Oct. 4-6, which included a series of meetings and the team's follow-up report to the commission. The visiting team made no recommendations for further action.

"I'm grateful to our UT Martin faculty and staff for their hard work and persistence in successfully addressing this critical challenge," said Dr. Bob Smith, who guided the university through the yearlong process leading to SACSCOC's decision. "Our students, alumni and friends showed tremendous confidence in us during the past year, and I'm especially pleased that they are rewarded for standing behind their university."

Dr. Keith Carver was elected the university's 10th chancellor in October by the UT Board of Trustees and will begin his duties Jan. 3. He said the accreditation news offers the university a positive foundation for the year ahead.

"This news reflects the great work of the UT Martin team over the past year. This was a tremendous effort by the entire campus community," said Carver. "I'm excited by the momentum this has created, and I look forward to our continued work to educate the region's best and brightest students."

UT Martin is a primary campus in the University of Tennessee System and offers 17 undergraduate degrees with more than 100 specialized concentrations and five graduate degrees with 17 specialized concentrations.
Brother and Sister Receive Degrees

Randy (stepfather) and Veronica Shepard-Moore and Wayne Bailey, the parents of Jovontio Shepard-Bailey and Dedra Shepard-Bailey, would like to announce that both siblings graduated from UT Martin on December 10th, 2016 with a BS degree in Health and Human Performance. They both graduated from Fayette Ware High School.

UT MARTIN STUDENTS COMPLETE TVA INVESTMENT CHALLENGE – A group of seniors from the University of Tennessee at Martin’s College of Business and Global Affairs has completed the annual Tennessee Valley Authority’s Investment Challenge. TVA’s Investment Challenge is a partnership between TVA and 25 universities in its service territory that provides a real-world learning experience in portfolio management by allowing students to manage actual stock portfolios. Participating students also select classmates to receive the Kelly W. Murray Excellence in Portfolio Management Award. This award, created in honor of the late son of Dr. Sandra and Bill Murray, recognizes outstanding effort and dedication in managing the UT Martin TVA stock portfolio in conjunction with the investment challenge. This year’s recipients are Andrew Terrell, of Union City, and Emily McCartney, formerly of South Fulton and of Glencoe, Ala. Pictured after the TVA presentations are, left to right, Dr. Mahmoud Haddad, professor of finance; Terrell; Morgan Grisham, of Union City; Dallas Hunter, of Milan; Bill Murray, father of the late Kelly Murray; Tyler Stephenson, of Medina; Ryan Stevenson, of Milan; Reagan Brock, of Martin; Chris Hutchinson, of Martin; McCartney; McKenzie Bonetti, of Martin; Dr. Ross Dickens, dean, UT Martin College of Business and Global Affairs; and Mohammed Alamro, an international student living in Martin. (Photo submitted)
UTM online programs rank high nationally

The University of Tennessee at Martin’s online course offerings have recently received national attention at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

AffordableCollegeCommunity.org ranked UTM’s online programs number seven on the website’s list of the “Best Online Colleges in Tennessee for 2016-17”. UTM comes in above the UT Knoxville and the UT Chattanooga, which ranked numbers 13 and 14 respectively.

Institutions must be fully-accredited and offer at least three online degree programs to be considered for this listing. The ranking considered a variety of factors, including tuition and fees, types of available programs, graduate rates, scholarship availability, and job-placement services.

Additionally, UTM’s online master’s degree in agriculture and natural resources was recently named one of the “Top 20 Most Affordable Online Master’s in Agriculture Business/Agriculture Business” for 2016-17 by GradSchoolHub.com. The program is ranked number eight on the list, making it the highest-ranked Tennessee school in the listing.

The Princeton Review included UTM’s Master of Business Administration program in its 2017 list of the “Best Business Schools”. Included programs are simply listed alphabetically, not ranked. Approximately 25,000 students from business programs across the country rated their institutions, and the top 294 schools made the list.

UTM’s published profile calls the university “a friendly, flexible, low-key place to get a quality business education”.

UTM offers six undergraduate programs completely online, as well as an online program for veterinary technicians. Four master’s degrees are available to distance learners, including three Master of Science degrees and the Master of Business Administration. For more information on online programs, contact UTM Online at 731-881-7080.

The UTM MBA program is offered in a hybrid format, which allows students to complete a combination of online and on-campus courses. A fully online option is also available.

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Students in the News Dec 30, 2016

University of Tennessee

Samantha Rae Davis of De Soto was among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during fall commencement held Dec. 10.