

addenda



The University of Tennessee at Martin Faculty and Staff Newsletter | Feb. 21, 2022

DeVito uses mathematics to describe shape of Universe

The February event in the UT Martin Research Series will take a deep dive into mathematical theory. **Dr. Jason DeVito**, professor of mathematics and statistics, has been studying the mathematical tools that allow us to measure and understand complex physical structures. The public presentation begins at noon on Thursday, Feb. 24, in the Paul Meek Library and will be livestreamed.

In academic terms, DeVito's research deals with the "manifolds of non-negative and positive sectional curvature, especially those with symmetry." His presentation, however, will translate this work for a general audience, showing how geometry and topology allow for a mathematical description

of curved objects including our known universe.

"Don't be scared," he jokes, "There won't be a quiz. It is amazing what math can tell us about the world around us."

DeVito joined the faculty of UT Martin in 2011 and has published in a variety of journals, including *Involve*, a *Journal of Mathematics*, *Geometriae Dedicata* and *Documenta Mathematica*.

He is currently the principal investigator on a three-year project supported by a \$99,262 grant from the National Science Foundation and was also a 2020-21 recipient of UT Martin's Reagan Leave awards. Together with his colleague, **Dr. Steve Elliott**, DeVito convenes the annual Middle School Math

contest that is open to all West Tennessee students in grades 6, 7 and 8.

Co-sponsored by the Division of Academic Affairs and the Paul Meek Library, the monthly UT Martin Research Series highlights the research of campus faculty, staff and students. The event will be held in the North Reading Room of the Paul Meek Library. Light refreshments will be served, and attendees are welcome to bring their lunch to the event. The livestream can be found [here](#).

Parking for the reception will be in the Paul Meek Library parking lot on Wayne Fisher Drive off Mt. Pelia Road. Parking permits are available online at www.utm.edu/departments/publicsafety by selecting the "Online Visitor



Dr. Jason DeVito

"Parking Permit" link. For more information, contact **Dr. Erik Nordberg**, dean of the Paul Meek Library, at 731-881-7070.



Italy trip planned for fall 2022

A group of UT Martin students and faculty members is going to Italy for 12 weeks in fall 2022. Now is the time to make plans to participate in this travel opportunity.

Three business courses will be offered during the trip: Management 300, Finance 301 and Business Law 301.

These UTM courses are all taught by College of Business and Global Affairs faculty members. A course about the culture of Siena, where the group will be studying, is also required and will be taught by a local faculty member in Siena.

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STATE OF THE
UNIVERSITY ADDRESS

**FEB. 23
1 P.M.**

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Dr. Mark Simmons has been named a national semi-finalist for the American Prize “Dale Warland Award” in Choral Conducting for 2022. Ten conductors across the country are selected annually at the semi-finalist stage through an extensive jury selection process. Finalists and winners are named by summer. Performances that were considered in this nomination contained concerts of the New Pacer Singers and as a result, the New Pacer Singers have also achieved national semi-finalist consideration for the American Prize category of Choral Performance for 2022. The New Pacers are among 16 collegiate choral ensembles at this stage. Finalists and winners will be selected as the American Prize jury moves toward the summer.



Dr. Bob Peckham, professor emeritus of French, is the active and founding editor of *Société François Villon, Bulletin*, a yearly bibliography of both scholarly and reception history resources of France’s most famous late medieval poets. In 2021, Villon was chosen by the French university system to represent their annual evaluation of candidates for lycée and university teaching and research positions. Along with the usual bibliographic entries, this issue notes activities related to the 2021 concours d’agrégation de lettres modernes and starts a discussion about sources and canonicity in the edited text of Villon’s poetry. You can read the bibliography at [this link](#).



Dr. Mahmoud Haddad, professor of finance, was featured in WalletHub’s recent online story titled “Best Secured Credit Cards.” You can find the story and his related comments about secured credit cards in the “Ask the Experts” Q & A [here](#). WalletHub, based in Washington, D.C., is a financial website that offers information such as credit-improvement advice and personalized savings alerts. The site’s business-related features are supplemented with information from subject-matter experts.

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ITALY from PAGE 1

The trip will include four days touring Rome, two trips to Florence and two culinary classes. The food will be exceptional throughout the trip, and Siena is a gorgeous town in Tuscany. The town is small enough to walk wherever you want to go, and



Siena, Italy

much of the old-world flavor of the buildings and streets is preserved.

UTM is financially supporting the trip with special rates for courses and travel. Normally, trips like this cost \$12-14,000, but the university is helping to reduce the cost to \$9,500. The cost covers tuition, fees, books, air and ground travel, an apartment and books. Each participant will be responsible for food costs.

All scholarships and grants that are available (PELL, Lottery, Deans and Chancellor’s Scholarships, Scholars, etc.) contribute to the costs. Some students may qualify for additional assistance. Persons interested in the trip can contact **Drs. Patrick Baker, Mark Farley or Tommy Cates** in the College of Business and Global Affairs for more information.

In Memory

Mr. Ted Hornbeak, a retired electrician from UT Martin’s physical plant, died Feb. 16. He was 83. Hornbeak worked at the university from June 1973 until June 2003. He retired as foreman. A services were held Saturday, Feb. 19, at Bowlin Funeral Home in Dresden. His complete obituary notice can be found [here](#).

Ms. Susan Parr, a former instructor at UT Martin, died Feb. 15. She was 73. Parr worked at UT Martin from 1976-1989 and was also a longtime educator in the Union City School System. Services were held Friday, Feb. 18, at Hornbeak Funeral Chapel in Fulton. Her complete obituary from notice can be found [here](#).



FACULTY / STAFF TOWN HALL MEETINGS

March 30, 10 a.m.
(Virtual)

April 28, 10 a.m.
(Virtual)

Join Chancellor Carver in these meetings for the latest information on campus happenings.

SKYHAWKS VOLUNTEER

UT Martin alumni, friends and family members, please join us for a volunteer day in Dresden on Feb. 26 as we help our neighbors with cleanup efforts after the December tornadoes.

**SATURDAY, FEB. 26
8 A.M. – 5 P.M.**

JACKIE JOHNSON
JJJOHN253@UTM.EDU



HOME OF THE SKYHAWKS

A pair of red-shouldered hawks have started to build a nest in front of the university's Holland McCombs Center on the quad. This nest may become home to one or more young hawks in the spring if nest construction is successful. Red-shouldered hawks build their nests out of sticks in the crotch of a main branch near the top of a deciduous tree. Once the nest is complete, they will lay between two and five eggs that must be incubated for a little over a month before they hatch. Red-shouldered hawks are medium-sized hawks with rounded wings that tend to live in forested habitats. They are tolerant of people and can be observed in parks, cemeteries and other areas similar to the UT Martin quad. You can recognize them sitting on power lines around Martin by the red barring on their chest and brownish red patches at the bend of their wings (or "shoulders"). Red-shouldered hawks hunt by sitting on a limb searching for prey, which gives them agility as they pursue their potential victim, perhaps a mouse, squirrel or lizard. They may occasionally grab a bird from a backyard bird feeder. *Information provided by Dr. Dawn Wilkins. Photo by Dr. Jack Grubaugh. Both Wilkins and Grubaugh are professors in UT Martin's Department of Biological Sciences.*

HUMAN RESOURCES OFFERS 'SEARCH COMMITTEE 101' TRAINING

On Thursday, Jan. 20, the Office of Human Resources partnered with **Dr. Marquis McCloud**, UT Martin's chief diversity and inclusion officer, and Olivia Ralph, senior compliance officer with the UT Health and Science Center Office of Equity and Diversity, to present a newly developed training, Search Committee 101. Four employees completed the inaugural training: **Amy**

Mistic, assistant director of financial aid; **Ashley Bynum**, associate athletics director for compliance and academics; **Alisha Melton**, interim executive director of research, grants and contracts; and **Gina McClure**, assistant vice chancellor of student and residential life. The training was designed in response to the executive team identifying the need to bring

more structure to the search process at UT Martin. As such, this training is required for anyone who serves on a search committee or interview team at the university. The Office of Human Resources is looking forward to involving all employees in this interactive and informative training over the coming months.

"The Search Committee 101 training provided interactive

and engaging guidance on all the procedures involved in the candidate-selection process. The variety of presenters kept the training interesting, and the numerous topics were covered thoroughly with plenty of time for questions and comments from participants. I highly recommend this training if you want to feel more confident about serving on search committees," said Melton.



UT DAY ON THE HILL – On Wednesday, Feb. 15, University of Tennessee leaders, including Chancellor Keith Carver, met with dozens of legislators and executive branch officials at UT’s annual Day on the Hill. UT Day on the Hill is a longstanding tradition at the Capitol. The governor, lawmakers and legislative staff proudly wore their UT colors to celebrate the UT System and its impact on the state. Pictured (l-r) are Chancellor Mark La Branche, University of Tennessee Southern; President Randy Boyd, UT System; Vice President Herb Byrd, Institute for Public Service; Gov. Bill Lee; Chancellor Donde Plowman, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Chancellor Steve Angle, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; Chancellor Peter F. Buckley, University of Tennessee Health Science Center; and Chancellor Keith Carver, UT Martin.

22ND ANNUAL UTM CIVIL RIGHTS CONFERENCE

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EXAMINING RESTRICTIONS OF FREEDOM



KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
Tim Wise

THURSDAY, FEB. 24 | 6 PM | WATKINS

TO READ MORE UT MARTIN NEWS, VISIT [UTM.EDU/NEWS](https://utm.edu/news).

You Tell Me

• **Question** – What kind of birds are flying into the main campus after approximately 4 p.m. each day? Where do they come from, why are they coming here, and when will they leave? Also, are the birds in the numbers we see a health hazard?

• **Answer** – These flocks are generally a mix of what is collectively referred to as “blackbirds” and usually consist of Common Grackles, Red-winged Blackbirds, European Starlings, and Brown-headed Cowbirds. They roost together during the winter; then these flocks break up in the spring as they spread out across the landscape and set up territories for reproduction. The recent winter storms may have pushed some of the northern blackbirds into our area, increasing the size of the roosts. Temporary roosts, while they may be annoying to their human neighbors, generally do not present any health hazards; however, if they are allowed to stay established long enough for waste material to accumulate in large amounts underneath the roost, there is a chance that a fungus called Histoplasma can occur, and inhalation of the fungus spores can lead to Histoplasmosis, a respiratory illness that varies in severity. (Response courtesy of **Dr. Dawn Wilkins**, professor of biology.)

Submit your questions anonymously to the Suggestion Box link at www.utm.edu/suggestionbox.

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