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When I became Chancellor in 2017, I knew UT Martin could be a hub, a cultural, intellectual and social center for the region, if we could dedicate our energy to academic program excellence, student experience and success, inclusion, advocacy and service. With these values in mind and the help of nearly 600 individuals, we began drafting the UT Martin Five-Year Strategic Plan in order to increase the quality of service and impact students, community members and regional industries experience.

We began this extensive planning process by revising the UT Martin Mission Statement to embody the university’s goals through one concise and succinct sentence. “The University of Tennessee at Martin educates and engages responsible citizens to lead and serve in a diverse world.” As our graduates leave UT Martin, I hope that they are able to take with them lessons learned not only in the classroom but also in life that will help prepare them as they represent this great university in the real world.

The Five-Year Strategic Plan recognizes five important goals that we are able to measure and track each year for progress, which you will see in the 2020 Chancellor’s Annual Report. These include preparing graduates to be responsible, informed and engaged citizens in their workplaces and the larger community; recruiting, retaining and graduating students prepared for careers, professions and life; ensuring a campus that is open, accessible and welcoming to all; promoting strategic, sustainable and responsible stewardship of human, financial and capital resources in support of university goals and objectives; and improving the vitality and prosperity of West Tennessee and beyond to increase the visibility of UT Martin through service and advocacy.

How are we doing? Based on our 2020 numbers, we are headed in the right direction.

• 54% six-year graduation rate; increase of 14.4% since 2016
• 34.3% four-year graduation rate; increase of 10.8% since 2016
• 40% increase in graduate students since 2019
• 73.77% freshman to sophomore retention rate
• 5,143 donors to UT Martin (the highest in campus history)

Now in year three of our five-year plan, follow along with me through the annual report as we see what impact our Five-Year Strategic Plan has already made on the University of Tennessee at Martin.

Dr. Keith S. Carver, Jr.
UT Martin strives to prepare its graduates to be responsible, informed and engaged citizens in their workplaces and the larger community, and with over 100 areas of academic focus, UT Martin students are prepared for success no matter which major they choose. Through undergraduate research opportunities, top-of-the-industry programs and dedicated faculty and staff, students in all fields of study have excelled in the classroom and, most importantly, in their professional careers.

Even in the midst of a pandemic, our students have persevered and overcome many challenges to continue thriving in an academic setting that will help them as they spread their wings and soar from UT Martin.

During the spring 2020 semester, 285 student-athletes earned a place on the Athletic Director’s Honor Roll, setting a university record with a 3.26 GPA. The honor roll recognizes every student-athlete who earned a 3.0 GPA during the semester. Sixty-five athletes even achieved perfect 4.0 GPAs, with at least one athlete represented from each of UT Martin’s 13 teams.

On an individual level, another university record was set this May as Mallory Clenney, of Scotts Hill, became the first nursing major to graduate from the program in just three years. UT Martin boasts one of the top-rated nursing programs in the region, including a No. 1 ranking in the state by registerednursing.org, and students like Clenney are proof of its prestige. Now a nurse at Jackson-Madison County General Hospital, Clenney says she is especially thankful for the education she received from UT Martin as she helps treat COVID-19 patients. While she did not expect a pandemic right before graduating, Clenney knows she is capable of helping others overcome illnesses through proper care and knowledge.

Another 2020 UT Martin alumnus is leaving his mark on history after graduating from the plant and soil science program and being hired by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services to help create initial soil maps for the state of Alaska. Michael Singer, a soil scientist from Hermitage, is now identifying the soil types of the remaining roughly 300 million acres of Alaska to help complete the USDA’s goal of mapping the entire United States by 2026. Singer says it is the lessons and techniques he learned in his classes and working in the soils lab at UT Martin that helped him earn this position, and he is excited to continue putting that knowledge to practice in the field.
While our graduates are excelling in their chosen professions, on-campus opportunities, such as undergraduate research projects, are also helping Skyhawks not only determine their goals but also make an impact in the field they are studying. A senior University Scholar is using the resources available to her, flesh-eating beetles, to help reevaluate the post-mortem interval, which determines the time of death. Hannah Trimble, a criminal justice major from Jackson, has conducted this research study for two years with the help of Dr. Jack Grubaugh, professor of biological sciences, and will publish her findings before graduating to help set her ahead of her peers when applying for graduate school.

**US News & World Report ranked UT Martin 13th in the South** as a top regional public institution, 30th out of all regional southern universities, 49th as a best value school in the South and tied in 52nd-place as a top performer in social mobility. The university was also designated a veteran-friendly campus with a 17th-place ranking for best colleges for veterans in the South.

There are many hands-on learning opportunities available for students in every department, like WUTM 90.3 FM “The Hawk” student-run radio station and The Pacer student newspaper, which give communications students real-world mass media production experience, or even the video game design certificate that shows students how to create their own video games. UT Martin is dedicated to helping students succeed, and these students are just a few examples of the thousands of fully capable and qualified students that graduate from UT Martin prepared to be responsible citizens who will make an impact in their community.

**The Princeton Review recognized UTM as 2021 Best Colleges: Region by Region for the 18th consecutive year.**
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Savannah Metheny

While she may be small in stature, the legacy Savannah Metheny, a spring 2020 animal science graduate, has left at UT Martin casts a tall shadow. In fact, it is 17-hands tall.

When the pre-veterinary student was asked if she wanted to help rebuild a fully articulated equine skeleton, she knew she could not pass up such an opportunity. The chance to disassemble, clean and rebuild a horse’s skeleton was, according to Metheny, an invaluable experience that solidified her decision to become an equine orthopedic surgeon.

“There are so many things that I have already seen differently after this,” said Metheny. “I’ve held each portion of the horse in my hand and turned it around to make it fit where it was supposed to go, then put it back together. So, I’ve literally taken everything apart and then put it back together piece by piece. As a future equine surgeon, it’s going to be priceless, truly. ... It’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

Metheny and Dr. Diana Watson, veterinary sciences lecturer, spearheaded the project of rebuilding “Ron,” the 28-year-old thoroughbred, to create a teaching model for UT Martin’s animal science classes. With no instructions or guide for how to reassemble Ron, the pair creatively reconstructed the horse from the ground up in eight months.
Ron now stands 7 ½ feet tall in the Veterinary Science Lab and will be used to teach equine anatomy. Through creative measures, his roughly 200 bones are held together with high-tensile wire, fishing line, glue, epoxy, threaded rods, a little bit of tape, and according to Watson, a few prayers. Through collaboration with the departments of engineering and biology, the 75-pound structure is fixed on an in-house designed platform, which holds the horse skeleton upright.

Metheny is now studying veterinary medicine at Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, Virginia Tech, and is thankful for how this unique research opportunity helped her succeed in her veterinary program.

Learn.org ranked the university’s agriculture degree programs 10th nationally, including its bachelor’s and master’s degree options.

Study.com ranked UT Martin 3rd in a national list of the most affordable online colleges during the COVID-19 crisis.

Institutional Research & Evaluation named UT Martin among “America’s 100 Best College Buys” for the 15th consecutive year.
UT Martin is dedicated to recruiting, retaining and graduating students who are prepared for their career, profession and life. UT Martin’s four-year graduation rate has increased 10.8% since proposing “Soar in Four” in 2015, the tuition model that encourages students to take at least 15 hours per semester in order to graduate in four years. The “Soar in Four” tuition program began in the fall 2016 semester and saw its first four-year graduating class May 2, 2020.

In 2019, UT Martin presented the highest graduation rate not only in the UT System, but also when compared to aspirational peers and locally governed institutions such as the University of Memphis, Middle and East Tennessee State Universities and Tennessee Tech, by at least 5%.

“When you look at a four-year window, we are (10.8) percentage points better. I like that trend, and we have to keep pushing and improving that,” said Chancellor Keith Carver. “It’s really exciting to think about.”

When originally implemented, the “Soar in Four” program increased tuition and mandatory fees to fund extracurricular programs that promote graduating within four years and student well-being. Before 2016, UT Martin did not charge for additional hours taken exceeding the full-time minimum of 12 credit hours. While 12 hours is still the minimum number of credit hours a student can take to be considered full-time, “Soar in Four” mandated a flat rate tuition which charges for 15 hours to encourage students to take the average number of credit hours needed to graduate in four years.

The funding allowed for more faculty and staff hires in departments with bottlenecks and prerequisite courses that could not account for the number of students who were required to take the course; student success counselors who are responsible for providing resources to help students achieve academic excellence; living-learning communities, which group freshmen in residence halls by major; and an upgraded Career Planning and Development office to assist students’ transition from college to employment through interview training, résumé building and job fairs.
Riley Allison, a junior accounting major from Jackson, has taken advantage of the services offered by Career Planning and Development and believes the skills he has learned through the program will help him succeed in his future career.

“The CPAD services have made me want to be more intentional with my time as a college student. (They) have helped me apply content knowledge I have gained within my classes to the skills needed to attract potential employers,” said Allison.

In 2015, UT Martin’s four-year graduation rate was 23.5% increasing to 34.3% in 2019, and while Carver says “Soar in Four” cannot take complete responsibility for the increased rate, it is a major factor when evaluating the success of retention in the past four years.

“Soar in Four” is reevaluated every summer in order to distribute funds where support is most needed and to reassess the effectiveness of the programs implemented by the initiative.

“UT Martin really is committed to retention and graduation; we want our students to persist and graduate,” said Carver.

The Aviators Marching Band revealed their new uniforms March 10, modeled by Byron Cupples, of Newbern, in front of upcoming and current members of the marching band, as well as faculty, staff and Department of Music alumni. According to Steve Barnett, director of athletic bands, the new light-weight uniforms took over six months to design and are unique to UT Martin.

WUTM-FM 90.3 “The Hawk,” student-run campus radio station, brought home 20 awards from the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System Media annual conference, including the station’s 10th-consecutive Platinum Award, which is the highest peer-reviewed award given by the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System. The Hawk also continued broadcasting to the community through the COVID-19 pandemic as the university transitioned to virtual learning.

Eleven students, along with associate professor of sport business Dr. Dexter Davis, experienced the largest single day sporting event in the United States as they assisted NFL staff at Super Bowl LIV.

Shaley Dawson, a senior geoscience major from Lobelville, has earned the chance to receive hands-on, real-world experience as the WBBJ Eyewitness News 7 weekend meteorologist.
“You have to make sure you have the experience; don’t let the experience have you.” Through the UT Martin Call Me MiSTER program, Justyn Johnson has done just that: made the most of every situation he’s experienced while in college.

The Call Me MiSTER program is a leadership organization that seeks to provide future teachers from diverse backgrounds with the tools and support needed to pursue successful careers in elementary and middle schools across the nation. “MiSTER” stands for “Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models,” and the program’s goal is to provide under-served, socioeconomically disadvantaged and educationally at-risk communities with minority educators.

Johnson, a sophomore secondary education major from Union City, applied to the Call Me MiSTER program in his senior year of high school with the hopes of becoming a history teacher in West Tennessee. As an African American man, Johnson grew up without seeing minority male representation in the education system and wanted to help change that for future generations of students.

“(The Call Me MiSTER program) is something that represents a lot more than just being male minority teachers. I think it is helping because ... some people go their entire school careers without ever having a minority teacher,” Johnson said. “For me, I hope that one day when I teach a kid that is like me, that might be mixed or might not come from a good home life, they can look at me and be like, ‘Well, he is like me, and he is successful. He is thriving in his life, so, why can’t I?’”

While only in his second year as a MiSTER, Johnson has already had the opportunity to serve in the West Tennessee community and see his impact first-hand. Through a mentorship partnership with minority students at Fulton Independent School District, granting scholarships to teachers in West Tennessee for their classrooms and working with the Rotary Club of Martin, Johnson has already accrued experiences he says will help him as a teacher.

When asked what advice he had for other students, Johnson said, “You have to make sure you have the experience; don’t let the experience have you. So, if something is going wrong in your life, don’t let that define who you are. Take that experience, make it a part of you and grow from it,” just as he has.
In order to further UT Martin’s mission to ensure the campus is open, accessible and welcoming to all, Dr. Mark McCloud was named interim chief diversity and inclusion officer at UT Martin. In this new role, McCloud is responsible for developing a comprehensive cultural competency plan for faculty, staff and students in order to promote institutional diversity and inclusion.

“As a proud UTM alumnus and change agent, I am honored to serve in this crucial role at this time in our university’s history,” McCloud said.

“I want UT Martin to reflect diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in everything we do. As an institution, we should be leaders in creating a welcoming and supportive community for all, while learning and respecting the unique individual cultures that make us one.”

McCloud is also responsible for providing oversight to the Chancellor’s Cabinet concerning campus issues related to diversity, inclusion, equity and belonging, as well as partnering with the university community to implement programs, like the Multicultural Center for underrepresented student groups, to foster diversity and increase minority retention rates.
In the short amount of time McCloud has served as the interim chief diversity and inclusion officer, he has already overseen the creation and the implementation of the Skyhawk Creed at UT Martin. The creed, based on “respect,” “responsibility” and “right choices,” symbolizes the values and mission of UT Martin in its effort to promote a welcoming and diverse university. The document was created in response to students’ concerns of social injustices on campus.

The Skyhawk Creed states, “The University of Tennessee at Martin is an educational community committed to excellence in personal integrity and intellectual growth in a diverse and inclusive environment. As a voluntary member of this community: I will respect the rights and property of all persons and treat them with dignity and civility. I will take responsibility for my actions and hold others accountable for theirs, while demonstrating a concern for others, their feelings, and their sense of belonging. I will make right choices that will demonstrate academic integrity, discourage bigotry and hate, and strive to learn from the unique differences of people and opinions. I pledge to model these principles and values and encourage others to follow my example.”

The university hosted a creed-signing party Aug. 21, where UT Martin officials and student representatives signed the document into effect, including Chancellor Keith Carver, McCloud, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Philip Acree Cavalier, Faculty Senate President Sean Walker, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Andy Lewter and Black Student Association President Kaylin Bailey.

• In advocacy for the Skyhawk Creed, UT Martin students helped create a video to discuss what the creed means to them. Through the university’s efforts to become a more inclusive and welcoming institution, the Skyhawk Creed encourages students to be respectful and take responsibility for their actions.
• **Farm Credit Mid-America** has partnered with UT Martin to support students in the university’s Department of Agriculture, Geosciences, and Natural Resources. The recent collaboration will support the recruitment of minority students in agricultural business fields and the creation of an agricultural business futures and options course.

• **UT Martin is home to the only Call Me MiSTER program in Tennessee** and is already seeing the positive effects it can have on students in West Tennessee. The Call Me MiSTER program, originally founded at Clemson University in 2000, is a leadership program that seeks to provide future teachers from diverse backgrounds with the tools and support needed to pursue successful careers in elementary and middle schools across the nation.

• **The UT Martin annual Civil Rights Conference** celebrated its 20th anniversary in February. The week-long event featured numerous events open to the public and hosted Civil Rights activist Joan Trumpauer Mulholland, who had participated in more than 50 sit-ins and demonstrations by the time she was 23 years old, as the keynote speaker. UT Martin is one of only two higher education institutions in the nation to host an annual Civil Rights Conference.

• **As UT Martin strives to be open and welcoming to all,** administrators recognized the need for a safe forum for students to voice questions and concerns they have regarding current events and experiences on campus. The Office of Student Life and Multicultural Affairs created Captain’s Courageous Conversations, which continued virtually through the pandemic, for students to discuss difficult topics as racial tension grew in the nation over the year.
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:
Justin Foulks

“Good things come from the dark as long as you can have faith, as long as you persevere.”

When Justin Foulks received the news during his junior year of college that his cousin had been killed in an accident, he knew the responsibilities of his family farm in Rondo, Arkansas, would now increase. As an agribusiness major, Foulks was preparing himself with the education he needed to help his great-uncle and cousin make the 3,200-acre farm as successful as possible.

Now, UT Martin fall 2020 graduate just completed his first successful harvest while finishing his agriculture degree online.

“I’ll be the first generation to go to school for farming. My family’s been farming since the early 1930s. The same land we’re running over now, my family was raised on it,” Foulks said. “My cousin ended up sending me off to school. I told him I had an interest in farming, and he (had been) teaching me the roles since I was eight. I still remember the day he said, ‘Well, if you’re going to do it, do it the right way and go to school, get your degree and come back. The farmland will be here forever.’

“(My cousin) ended up passing away last year… and somebody had to help my family with the leadership responsibilities on the farm, or we’d have ended up selling. So, I switched to completely online and started doing school full-time and farming full-time, and here I am at the finish line. It’s been a journey, but I’m here.”

After working on a farm for most of his life, Foulks knew if he was going to go to college for agriculture, he needed a hands-on program that would give him a better understanding of the technical and business sides of running a farm.

“The hands-on experience is 10-times better than actually being in a classroom. Because I’ve seen both sides of being a farmer and being an agribusiness graduate, I’ve learned that – that farmers don’t want somebody to tell them what to do that doesn’t have experience,” Foulks explained. “I think UT Martin has helped me gauge what I need to do to be successful in the agriculture sector.”
He says the many challenges he’s overcome since moving his degree online couldn’t have been achieved without the help and understanding of the Department of Agriculture, Geosciences, and Natural Resources. From having to do schoolwork in his truck and tractor to staying up late to turn in assignments because planting took longer than expected, Foulks has experienced the grace of faculty members who understand the difficulties of running a farm while also finishing school.

“They don’t realize how good of a blessing they were to me,” Foulks said.
UT Martin has been fortunate to see numerous substantial donations pledged to the university over the past three years as it strives to promote strategic, sustainable and responsible stewardship of human, financial and capital resources in support of university goals and objectives. On an exciting day for the university, the UT Martin community, along with numerous notable Tennessee officials, gathered in front of the future site of the Latimer Engineering and Science Building, on Sept. 18, to honor Bill and Carol Latimer for their $6.5 million gift to the university. The Latimers, Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee, Lt. Gov. Randy McNally and UT President Randy Boyd were all in attendance to help break ground on the first academic building to be constructed at UT Martin in over 40 years.

“Bill and Carol truly understand the vital role education plays in changing the trajectories of families, strengthening communities and developing future leaders,” said Dr. Philip Acree Cavalier, UT Martin provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs. “Like many of the speakers and dignitaries who are here today, they value the role the University of Tennessee at Martin plays in the economic development of West Tennessee. Recognizing the new ways this building will contribute to the transformational experiences of our students, Bill provided the lead gift for this building that enabled us to secure the matching funds from the state. Today, because of Bill’s incredible leadership and generosity, we are officially breaking ground on this great new facility.”

Bill donated the 10% match for the $65 million, 120,000-square-foot, three-story STEM building in 2016 while Dr. Robert Smith was UT Martin interim chancellor. Bill attributed Smith’s diligent work to bettering the university as one of the reasons the groundbreaking ceremony was even happening. Through the hard work and dedication of many UT Martin officials, including Smith and current UT Martin Chancellor Keith Carver, over the past four years, the Latimers’ donation was realized, and construction began.

Bill said of the many reasons he and his wife decided to provide UT Martin with the match needed to fund the building, his faith in God and his faith in UT Martin were the leading factors.

“Carol and I believe that if God has blessed you, then you need to use His blessings to bless others,” said Bill. “God has blessed us much more than we could ever have expected and much, much more than we deserve, and God’s blessing is the reason we are up here today.”
The Latimer Engineering and Science Building will house the departments of chemistry and physics, computer science, engineering, mathematics and statistics and the pre-professional health sciences program. The Latimer Building will feature classrooms, laboratories, offices, and a small observatory.

The building is estimated to have an economic impact of $56.3 million, as well as create over 900 jobs from initial construction through the first 10 years of graduates.

“The Lord certainly granted favor to this university when he introduced the Latimers to it, or when they became as engaged in it as they have been,” said Lee. “Thank you very, very much for your commitment here. It wouldn’t have happened except for you. This building wouldn’t be going up except for you. The lives that are going to be changed in that facility and in this region wouldn’t be changed except for you. We are deeply grateful for that.”

The Latimer Engineering and Science Building is scheduled to open fall 2022. Current construction for the Latimer Building can be viewed from the Holt Humanities Building webcam at utm.edu/webcams.
• Bill and Rosann Nunnelly, of Nashville, received the Philanthropist of the Year Award from the University of Tennessee President’s Council during a dinner Jan. 31 at Discovery Park of America. Their $22 million bequest to fund scholarships at UT Martin is the largest in UT Martin history and could provide as many as 90 scholarships each year when the gift is realized.

• Dr. Charley Deal was named vice chancellor for university advancement for the University of Tennessee Foundation Inc. and UT Martin, assuming responsibilities April 1. As the vice chancellor for university advancement, Deal became responsible for managing UT Martin’s fundraising and alumni programs; coordinating development efforts with UT Foundation and UT System administration; representing UT Martin in the community and among alumni groups and potential university supporters; and serving on the UT Martin chancellor’s cabinet. Under Deal’s leadership, UT Martin received donations of more than $9.7 million for student aid, programs and campus enhancements during the 2019-20 fiscal year.

• Bill Blankenship, 1955 UT Martin alumnus and noted university donor, donated $500,000 to the construction of the Northwest Tennessee Arts Center, or Phase II of the Fine Arts Building. The facility will be used by the Fine and Performing Arts programs at UT Martin, as well as host guest performers, academic speakers, fundraising events, conferences and regional competitions.

• Corteva Agriscience, of Union City, donated 35 retired drones, valued at approximately $35,000, to UT Martin to supplement three new courses premiering fall 2021 that will teach students the fundamentals of unmanned aerial systems and their emerging importance in the field of agriculture and natural resources management.

• UT Martin’s 2020 Captain’s Challenge one-day fundraiser shattered not only the stated goal but also the university’s record for the largest amount raised in 24 hours, with over $404,000 donated to the university by a record number of donors.

• Martha Coleman Edinger, resident of Sarasota, Florida, former resident of Weakley and Obion counties, funded the new Aviators Marching Band Yamaha drumline equipment. The band debuted their new instruments in November at the Last Blast Concert. The Aviators Marching Band presented Edinger with a marching bass drum head signed by the drumline members.
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:
Emmalee Mathews

When Emmalee Mathews, of Lyles, was deciding where to go to college, she knew her options were extremely limited because of financial constraints. Having already decided to go to a community college, Mathews received an unexpected phone call from a UT Martin admissions counselor who informed her that she was eligible for a new scholarship provided by Bill and Rosann Nunnelly, and it changed the course of her life.

Now a sophomore health and human performance major, Mathews is thankful for the opportunity to be a second-year recipient of the Bill and Rosann Nunnelly Family Scholarship, as she prepares for a career as an occupational therapist.

“I really appreciate the scholarship because it has given me so many opportunities, and it has opened so many doors for me,” Mathews said. “I was going to be stuck in my hometown, and it’s given me so many advances in not only my education, but I have met so many people through college. ... I would have never gotten that if I had not received that scholarship because that scholarship was the whole reason that I came to Martin. It’s been very good for me.”

The Nunnellys announced in 2019 the $22 million bequest to UT Martin to fund scholarships where Bill earned his degree in 1970. The money was gifted to immediately provide greater academic and financial opportunities to students from Hickman County. Once the bequest is fully realized, students from Dickson, Giles, Lawrence, Lewis, Maury and Humphreys counties will also be considered. The Nunnellys’ gift is the largest in university history.

“I hope that I get to meet the Nunnellys soon. I would personally love to meet them and tell them ‘thank you’ in person because this scholarship has shaped my experience in so many ways and not just education wise,” Mathews said. “It has shaped my whole academic career, so I am very, very fortunate.”
As an advocate for industries in the region, UT Martin strives to improve the vitality and prosperity of West Tennessee and beyond, as well as increase the visibility of UT Martin through service. Just like many others, UT Martin was directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic but found ways to help others through the unprecedented times. Through making personal protective equipment for health-care workers to providing at-home laboratory kits for students, UT Martin found unique ways to ensure its community members were cared for in the crisis.

UT Martin partnered with THEC and TEMA to create PPE for Tennessee COVID-19 relief aid. UT Martin centralized all of the 3D-capable printers on campus into the Rogers Media Center and printed headbands for medical face shields.

“We are pleased to engage with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and other educational partners across the state to provide safety materials to Tennessee’s health-care workers. Our faculty and staff are working to create filament bands for safety masks on our campus 3D printers,” said Chancellor Keith Carver. “We want to be a resource for the region and state’s efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic situation.”

The media center, located in the Paul Meek Library, continued to add more printers to the operation each day, increasing maximum production and support. At the beginning of the operation, the media center was running eight printers around the clock to produce as many headbands as possible. THEC has also purchased two additional 3D printers to aid UT Martin’s capacity.

The printers were operated by faculty, staff and students who all agree that while the work is time-consuming, it was rewarding to know that they are making a difference for Tennessee medical professionals fighting COVID-19. The center is also responsible for cutting out sheets of acetate, as well as elastic to complete the shields that will be assembled after being transported to TEMA.

As UT Martin helped TEMA reach its goal, local health-care providers in need of PPE, such as West Tennessee Healthcare Volunteer Hospital and Reelfoot Rural Ministries, reached out to the university to purchase additional equipment.

Other members of the UT Martin community also contributed to the cause. Dr. Renee LaFleur, associate professor of history, and her daughter, Eleanor, created medical face masks out of quilting material to donate to hospitals where supplies are needed the most. LaFleur, wanting to show her young daughter how important it is to help others, donated the first batch of face masks to Dr. Nikhil Patel’s supply drive that is sending medical equipment to New York. Patel is a physician with Gastroenterology Associates of Martin.
In addition to creating masks for health-care providers, the university also wanted to create hands-on, at-home learning opportunities for students in technical classes to benefit from. Two faculty members, Dr. James Smart, professor of biology, and Dr. Abigail Shelton, associate professor of chemistry, made lab kits containing the materials needed for their students to safely conduct their own experiments at home to supplement the corresponding lectures. The kits included the lab components each experiment required, such as test tubes and graduated cylinders, microscopes, balances, atom and cell models, and even a few chemicals that were approved by the Tennessee Department of Transportation to ship to each student. Some kits were even delivered to students’ homes by Carver himself.

While the kits were not a cure-all solution for virtual learning, both Smart and Shelton were proud of how their students completed the lessons and were able to use this method as virtual learning continued.
• The UT Martin Regional Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Center, which now houses the Tennessee Small Business Development Center, has dedicated its services to helping regional businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March 2020, the REED Center and the TSBDC have assisted more than 60 registered regional businesses in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic at no cost through CARES Act funding. The center will continue to provide professional assistance with marketing, accounting, technology support and other COVID-19 related needs at no cost through September 2021 or until funds are depleted. Through the pandemic-related services of the REED Center and the TSBDC, more than 250 jobs were retained, $1.8 million relief funds were provided and 177 individual businesses received professional support.

• Eighty UT Martin faculty, staff and students participated in bagging and passing out food to over 450 families in need April 21 at We Care Ministries Thrift Store. The community also helped raise funds to support the food drive through a $5,000 donor match challenge. Not only was every car served, enough food and funds were raised for We Care Ministries to provide food for families who were not able to attend the event.

• UT Martin partnered with Discovery Park of America to provide free digital resources to teachers and parents who are now navigating the world of virtual education. Numerous faculty members from UT Martin shared fun and entertaining 20 to 30-minute Zoom lessons utilizing their area of expertise for students in grades six through nine.

• As industry standards continue evolving, the UT Martin Department of Engineering established a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering degree that began accepting students in the fall 2020 semester. Dr. Shadow JQ Robinson, dean of the College of Engineering and Natural Sciences, said the new degree program was a result of the mechanical engineering industry-required qualifications students need to find careers in the field after graduating from UT Martin. While the new BSME degree consists of the same classes as the BSE with a concentration in mechanical engineering, the formal designation of a degree is more widely recognized by employers.
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:
Jordan Reynolds

When UT Martin moved classes online in March 2020, students across the university wondered how their college experience would change. Jordan Reynolds, a senior health and human performance major from Bradford, was no exception.

The night the announcement was made, Reynolds was working a shift in the Steven E. Rogers Media Services Center in the Paul Meek Library. Although he hadn’t been concerned about COVID-19 up to that point, his mindset quickly changed once the announcement was made.

“I worried, ‘What was going to become of my job, and how were we going to move forward, and if we could even work at all,’” Reynolds said. “It was quite a trying time of just constant unknowns.”

During the shutdown, Reynolds faced a number of challenges. He had to adjust to an online experience both academically and socially, as well as figuring out how to make ends meet financially. Thankfully, as a recipient of the Displaced Student Worker Fund, Reynolds was able to use the money to help him stay afloat until he could begin working again.

The Displaced Student Worker Fund was established by the Office of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving to provide stipends for students who were temporarily displaced from their campus and community jobs. Over $40,000 was raised by generous donors to help students through difficult setbacks caused by the pandemic.

One year later, Reynolds is incredibly grateful for the aid he received from the university’s donors.

“It allowed so many student workers, like me, to not worry in the beginning of the transition because we had donors and alumni who made sure that the students had at least one burden taken care of and could focus on other challenges,” Reynolds said. “Thank you to all of you who gave during a burdensome time to people who may never even get to meet. It is truly humbling.”
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GIFTS OF $250,000 OR MORE
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Marvin L. Downing
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Jim and Barbara Wingett

* Deceased
The Philanthropist Roll of Honor is compiled yearly to honor the alumni, friends and organizations that support UT Martin and its mission. We wish to publicly recognize these donors. The report is a list of gifts to UT Martin beginning January 1, 2020, and ending December 31, 2020. Each entry was carefully reviewed and every effort made to ensure accuracy. If there are errors or omissions, please contact the Division of University Advancement at 731-881-7628.

The Chancellor’s Annual Report is produced by the UT Martin Office of University Relations.