



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
TENNESSEE  
KNOXVILLE

# PARTNERSHIPS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH | 2023



## **A NOTE FROM THE ASSOCIATE VICE CHANCELLOR**

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, stands among 38 land-grant institutions that are recognized nationally by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching for both very high research activity and community engagement. The Office of Community Engagement and Outreach embodies UT's land-grant mission by fostering mutually beneficial connections between university and community knowledge.

We support UT's administration, academic departments, students, faculty, and staff in addressing societal concerns through impactful external partnerships. These collaborations co-generate, apply, transmit, and preserve knowledge. Through comprehensive engagement and steadfast commitment, we aim to create significant local and global impact.

The OCEO aligns with the Carnegie Foundation's definition of community engagement: "collaborations between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of collaboration and reciprocity."

Over the past year, UT has advanced knowledge, relationships, and support through a variety of collaborations. This publication highlights initiatives that strengthen our commitment to democratic engagement; foster mutual growth, capacity building, and decision-making; contribute to healthy and thriving communities; and prepare civic-minded graduates and professionals for lives of engaged citizenship.

As you explore these highlights, you'll discover a university deeply connected with its local, regional, and global communities—truly a university on the rise!

All my best,

Javiette Samuel

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Associate Vice Chancellor and Executive Director  
Office of Community Engagement and Outreach

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## UT'S STRATEGIC VISION

### CULTIVATING THE **VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

Demonstrate leadership in providing high-quality educational opportunities for people at every stage of life, whenever and wherever they seek to learn.

### CONDUCTING RESEARCH **THAT MAKES LIFE AND LIVES BETTER**

Advance the frontiers of knowledge to create a more just, prosperous, and sustainable future through world-class research, scholarship, and creative work.

### ENSURING A CULTURE WHERE **VOL IS A VERB**

Develop and sustain a nurturing university culture where diversity and community are enduring sources of strength.

### MAKING OURSELVES **NIMBLE AND ADAPTABLE**

Empower and sustain a culture of collaboration, agility, and innovation throughout the university.

### EMBODYING THE MODERN R1 **LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITY**

Connect with every Tennessean and with communities around the world, inspiring future Volunteers to join our diverse community.

**“This is the blueprint for a new kind of land-grant university—  
one that partners, leads, shares, and strives for impact.”**

—Chancellor Donde Plowman

Flagship Address, September 2023

## ACCESS AND ENGAGEMENT

“We want Tennessee high school students and their families to know how they can be guaranteed admission to the UT campus of their choice. Identifying these standards allows us to make earlier admissions offers for more Tennessee students, and it allows them to start planning for their college experience with more certainty.”

—UT System President Randy Boyd

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVES GUARANTEED ADMISSIONS POLICY

The Board of Trustees voted on a new undergraduate admissions policy that ensures admission to UT for Tennessee’s top high school students. The initial policy gave high school students with a 4.0 GPA or higher and those who finish in the top 10 percent of their graduating class guaranteed admission to any UT campus, including UT Knoxville. The criteria were amended in 2024 to include minimum ACT or SAT scores. The policy does not guarantee admission into a particular college, school, department, major, or program within the university.

### FLAGSHIP WRITING PROGRAM EXPANDS

After a series of tragic events involving gun violence affecting students at Knoxville’s Austin-East Magnet High School in 2021, the Division of Access and Engagement asked how the university could come alongside the community. The response from the principal indicated a need for writing support for their students. With initial funding from the division, the Flagship Writing Program was initiated with UT’s Judith Anderson Herbert Writing Center and the Department of English. In 2023, the program expanded to all Knoxville Flagship high schools.

### PARTNERSHIP CONNECTS MUSIC INDUSTRY PROGRAMS

The Natalie L. Haslam College of Music established a partnership with Pellissippi State Community College to create a seamless pathway from Pellissippi State’s Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree program in media technologies/audio production engineering to UT’s Bachelor of Arts in music business administration. The new collaboration opens up a broader range of opportunities for students interested in the music industry, allowing them to expand their skills and expertise across various areas of music and music business at UT. It ensures that credits will transfer smoothly, addressing the challenges typically faced by AAS students when transferring to four-year institutions. The new agreement paves the way for enhanced educational opportunities and career prospects for aspiring music professionals.

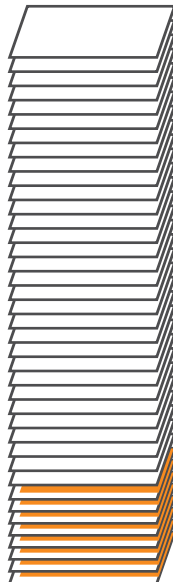
### LEARN, GROW, LEAD PROGRAM INCREASES AWARENESS OF FOOD-RELATED CAREER FIELDS

DURING THE SUMMER, THE DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION IN THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND HUMAN SCIENCES LAUNCHED LEARN, GROW, LEAD: HAVE A VOL EXPERIENCE, A PRECOLLEGE PROGRAM TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS PURSUING STUDIES IN FOOD, NUTRITION, AND AGRICULTURE BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL.

**57,278**

APPLICATIONS  
FOR FALL 2024  
ENTRY

By the regular admission deadline of December 15, 2023, UT received 57,278 applications for fall 2024 entry, a 19% increase and 9,157 more applications compared to 2022.



**77.2%** were from  
out-of-state and  
international students  
(44,236).

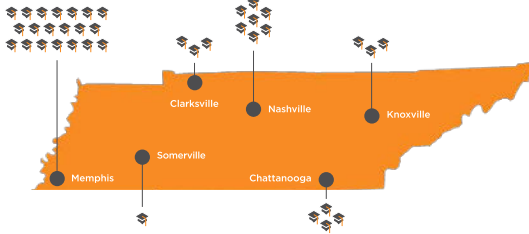


**22.8%** were from in-  
state students (13,042)  
*In-state applications  
increased by 11.5%.*

THE INITIATIVE WAS OPEN TO RISING 10TH, 11TH, AND 12TH GRADERS IN KNOXVILLE, WITH A PRIMARY FOCUS ON STUDENTS ATTENDING KNOX COUNTY'S THREE FLAGSHIP HIGH SCHOOLS. THE PROGRAM RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE.

### SCHOLARSHIPS PROVIDE ACCESS TO TENNESSEE RESIDENTS

As the state's flagship public institution,



UT is committed to providing Tennesseans with a high-quality affordable education. The Tristar Scholarship Program—which includes the Flagship Scholarship, UT Promise Scholarship, and Tennessee Pledge Scholarship—helps Tennessee residents access the Volunteer experience. The Tennessee Pledge Scholarship covers tuition, mandatory fees, and the costs of the average on-campus housing and food for all Tennessee students below a certain income threshold. Eligible students from 38 Flagship high schools across the state qualify for the Flagship Scholarship, which covers the costs of tuition and mandatory fees. The UT Promise Scholarship is offered to admitted first-year, transfer, and current students who qualify for the HOPE Scholarship and have a family income of less than \$60,000 a year (increasing to \$75,000 a year in fall 2024).

### EDUCATION RESEARCH AND OPPORTUNITY CENTER SUPPORTS ACCESS, SUCCESS

The Education Research and Opportunity Center plays a pivotal role in supporting educational access and success through

five federal TRIO programs: Pre-College Upward Bound, Academic Enrichment Upward Bound, Math and Science Upward Bound, Educational Opportunity Center, and Veterans Upward Bound. Through those programs, the center focuses on producing high-quality research, conducting outreach initiatives that have a significant impact, and advocating for effective policies and practices that enhance educational success and opportunities for underserved populations. Its mission underscores a commitment that aims to break down barriers and empower individuals to achieve their academic and career goals.

### UT EXPANDS PARTNERSHIP WITH KNOXVILLE COLLEGE

UT forged a partnership with Knoxville College, East Tennessee's only historically Black college, to assist in its efforts to regain accreditation and reclaim its status as a premier institution of higher education. Under the direction of Professor of Higher Education Patrick Biddix, UT students worked with KC on a draft of its accreditation application to the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools. Current Knoxville College students and faculty continue to have shared access to UT Libraries' electronic databases and physical material. The collaboration aims to foster new opportunities and leverage untapped resources between the two schools.

### FUTURE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAM BUILDS EMPOWERMENT

The FUTURE Postsecondary Education Program is a transformative initiative spanning two to three years, empowering young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to secure meaningful employment. This comprehensive program facilitates a successful transition from high school to adult life by offering career and clinical counseling. Students benefit from tailored support aimed at enhancing their academic, vocational, social, and decision-making skills.

Upon successful completion of the pro-



gram, students earn a vocational certificate, validating their readiness for the workforce and reinforcing their journey toward personal and professional success.

### COLLABORATION WITH UNIVERSITY OF RWANDA STRENGTHENS ACADEMIC ENDEAVORS

After a summer exploratory partnership program carried out in Kigali, Rwanda, representatives of the University of Rwanda visited Knoxville in the fall to strengthen collaborative academic initiatives. Facilitated by UT's Center for Global Engagement, the deepening partnership has led to discussions with the Rwanda Development Board regarding future collaborations. The University of Rwanda, renowned for academic excellence, research, and innovation, plays a pivotal role in shaping the country's



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

### **BUSINESS CLASS AWARDS GRANTS TO LOCAL NONPROFITS**

For the past several years, as part of instruction on operating successful nonprofits, students in the Haslam College of Business course Learning Through Giving review grant proposals and select area nonprofits to receive funding. In 2023, Lakeway CASA received \$6,000, Special Growers and Maryville College received \$3,600, East Tennessee STEM and the University-Assisted Community Schools Initiative received \$1,750, Emerald Youth Foundation and Centro Hispano received \$3,600, and Bridge Services Inc. and the Center for English received \$5,050.

### **UT STUDENTS, FACULTY CELEBRATE MANUFACTURING DAY WITH AREA HIGH SCHOOLERS**

For Manufacturing Day—a celebration highlighting manufacturing in the US and encouraging the next generation to pursue manufacturing careers—about 200 students from Powell High School, Karns High School, and Hardin Valley Academy joined UT students and faculty at the Tennessee Manufacturing and Design Enterprise (TN-MADE). Organized by MSC Industrial Supply Company, the event showcased advanced manufacturing techniques and technology. UT students provided

demonstrations of machines in operation, offering high school participants a first-hand glimpse into the practical applications of manufacturing technologies. The interactive approach sparked curiosity and enthusiasm among the high schoolers.

### **EYES ON LAFOLLETTE MARKS 30 YEARS**

Eyes on LaFollette, a documentary photography initiative showcasing everyday life in the small former coal town of LaFollette, Tennessee, reached a significant milestone of 30 years. Initiated in 1993, the project has fostered a distinctive relationship between the university and the town, evolving into a comprehensive historical documentary captured through the lenses of Professor Robert Heller's advanced photography students.

### **STUDENTS AND ALUMNI SPEND SPRING BREAK VOLUNTEERING IN MEMPHIS**

In honor of its 30th anniversary, the VOLbreaks alternative break program dedicated its spring break programs to service in Memphis. The program brought together incoming and current students along with alumni to collaborate in volunteer efforts with local organizations including Clean Memphis, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Memphis, the Memphis Dream Center, the Mid-South American Red Cross, and the Mid-South Food Bank. Since its inception, VOLbreaks has orchestrated numerous service initiatives and provided logistical support, enabling hundreds of UT students to engage meaningfully with communities while broadening their global outlook.



### **HOMECOMING WEEK TRADITION GIVES BACK**

During Homecoming week, campus organizations participated in the Tower of Cans, a competition in which students collected cans throughout the week to construct the tallest tower possible from their donations. The cans, totaling nearly 700 pounds, were donated to FISH Pantries across five locations.

### **LEADERSHIP KNOXVILLE SCHOLARS PROGRAM CELEBRATES A DECADE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE**

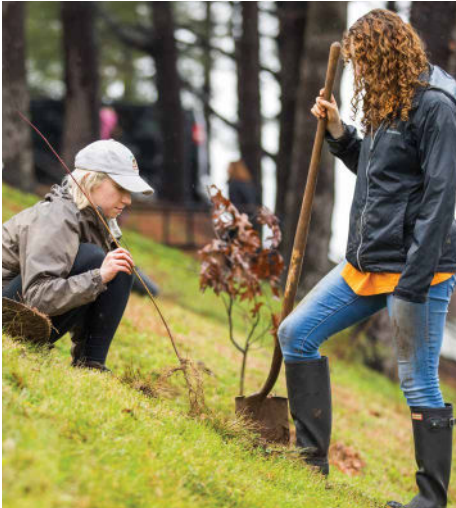
Leadership Knoxville Scholars, an intensive leadership development initiative hosted by Student Life, marked a decade of shaping students into impactful leaders poised to make a difference in the world. Each participant dedicates 60 hours across two semesters, engaging in community service and completing a collaborative community action project within a small group setting. Guided by mentors, students cultivate meaningful relationships while working to enact positive transformations within their chosen organizations.

### **UT AND KNOXVILLE RECEIVE \$4.3 MILLION TO PLANT TREES**

Two federal grants totaling \$4.3 million have enabled the Knoxville community to significantly expand tree planting initia-



tives in urban areas, particularly benefiting underserved communities. UT secured \$2.6 million of the funding to enhance tree canopy coverage, mitigate stormwater runoff, combat extreme heat, and introduce essential ecosystem services to East Knoxville. Typically, the city of Knoxville plants about 500 trees annually, but with the support of the grants that number is expected to triple in 2024.



### **NEW TECH HAS LOW-INCOME HOUSING COVERED**

An interdisciplinary team led by Nick Zhou, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering, received a \$1.5 million grant to develop an innovative technology known as Monolnsu, capable of rapidly insulating and sealing a home's exterior within a few days. It helps address numerous challenges faced by homes in lower-income neighborhoods, which often suffer from aging infrastructure, inadequate insulation, and outdated air conditioning systems, resulting in high electricity bills and uncomfortable living conditions. Variants of Monolnsu will undergo pilot testing in underserved communities across Knox County, aiming to significantly reduce energy costs, enhance thermal comfort, and improve the aesthetic appeal of homes in a single application.

## **HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

### **UT-TSU EXTENSION PARTNERS WITH SECOND HARVEST ON PROJECT GROW**

The UT-Tennessee State University Extension of Benton County partnered with the Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee on Project Grow, an innovative farming and gardening initiative addressing food insecurity. The collaborative effort uses various gardens, accessible raised farming beds, and row crop fields to sustainably produce fresh food for residents in need. To date, Project Grow has distributed nearly 2,000 pounds of food across 14 counties in West and Middle Tennessee.

The partnership has facilitated the establishment of food pantries, congregate meal sites, shelters, childcare facilities, senior centers, group homes, and youth enrichment programs. Its comprehensive approach underscores the commitment to enhancing food access and nutritional support for vulnerable populations throughout the region.

### **EXTENSION RECEIVES FUNDING TO IMPROVE NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention granted UT Extension \$525,000 for the inaugural year of its five-year High Obesity Program. The initiative targets universities collaborating with local cooperative Extension offices in predominantly rural counties where 40 percent or more of adults are affected by obesity. UT Extension will spearhead the implementation of the program in several Tennessee counties, including Clay, Crockett, Decatur, Hancock, Hardeman, Haywood, and Henderson.

### **BRIDGING TO OPPORTUNITY PREPARES NURSES IN THE DELTA REGION**

The College of Nursing was awarded a grant of \$1.47 million from the US Department of Labor's Employment and Training

Administration for Bridging to Opportunity, a collaborative initiative involving UT, Dyersburg State Community College, Southwest Tennessee Community College, Baptist Memorial Hospital, the United Way, the Rural Health Association, and the American Job Center. It aims to bolster nursing education in the region by enrolling 32 trainees in UT's online RN to BSN program, offering training for nurse mentors and faculty members, and establishing workplace mentoring programs. The overarching mission is to strengthen economic stability and improve health outcomes in the Delta region.

### **VOLUNTEER PUPPY PARTNERS PREPARES DOGS FOR SERVICE TRAINING**

Alumna Laura Porter, driven by her passion for animals and her involvement with the local nonprofit Smokey Mountain Service Dogs, helped establish Volunteer Puppy Partners, a student group aimed at educating peers about the significance of service dogs. Amy Engstrom Clugg, a marketing faculty lecturer in the Haslam College of Business, led the new campus group. Students complete training with SMSD and then spend two hours a week helping socialize dogs preparing to be trained as service dogs. Witnessing firsthand the positive impact and joy that service dogs bring to individuals in need, Clugg believes that supporting SMSD aligns perfectly with UT's Volunteer spirit.



## **VOLTHON HELPS PURCHASE AMBULANCE**

During the 2022–23 academic year, VOLthon, UT’s largest student-led philanthropy, raised over \$160,000 in support of East Tennessee Children’s Hospital. The ongoing initiative is dedicated to raising funds and awareness year-round for children and families at ETCH. The proceeds were specifically allocated towards the acquisition of a lifeline ambulance. VOLthon’s contributions significantly enhance the experience of countless families, donors, staff, and sponsors involved in supporting the hospital.



## **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY**

### **YOU MIGHT BE RIGHT PROMOTES CIVILITY IN POLITICS**

The podcast *You Might Be Right*, produced by the Baker School of Public Policy and Public Affairs, concluded its third season. The podcast is hosted by two former Tennessee governors, Democrat Phil Bredesen and Republican Bill Haslam, who engage in discussions with invited guests on challenging subjects aimed at fostering civil conversations. The podcast has achieved notable success, reaching No. 6 on Apple’s US Government charts and accumulating more than 100,000 total downloads by September 2023. Its format and content underscore its role in promoting constructive dialogue on complex issues.



### **APPALACHIAN JUSTICE RESEARCH CENTER ESTABLISHED**

UT established the Appalachian Justice Research Center, a transdisciplinary research and training collaborative dedicated to advancing just and equitable community visions in Appalachia and the mountain South. Co-directed by Professor of Sociology Michelle Brown and Professor of Law Wendy A. Bach, the center works to address urgent, protracted, and historically underaddressed issues in the region. Projects are centered around community priorities and legacies of resilience—specifically those communities most impacted by histories of poverty and violence.

### **JOINT TASK FORCE ON CHILDREN’S JUSTICE AND CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PROVIDES STATE PLANNING**

The Joint Task Force on Children’s Justice and Child Sexual Abuse released its 2023 state plan, prepared for the Tennessee Department of Children’s Services. UT’s Social Work Office of Research and Public Service oversees the management and coordination of activities for the task force, which includes a diverse group of child welfare professionals. The group collaborates to formulate strategies and execute recommendations aimed at enhancing the prevention, investigation, prosecution, judicial handling, and treatment of cases involving child sexual abuse, exploitation, and severe child abuse and neglect, and its efforts are pivotal in advancing the safety and well-being of children in these critical areas.

### **COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK FUNDS SOCIAL JUSTICE INNOVATION INITIATIVES**

The College of Social Work funded five projects for the 2023–24 academic year under its Social Justice Innovation Initiative:



the Campaign School for Social Workers, a two-day workshop on becoming politically knowledgeable and active as a candidate, staff member, or volunteer; Inclusive Practices for Serving Youth, a one-day in-person training highlighting issues of gender and racial bias and promoting inclusive practices for serving youth; VAC Impact—New Directions Health Care Solutions, improving vaccine access to under-served communities; Empowering Youth, aimed at mitigating the barriers of systemic racism and acknowledging the need for a social-emotional learning curriculum that is trauma responsive and culturally competent; and the Aging Rainbow Coalition, working to improve health care knowledge and reduce disparities for older LGBTQ+ persons in the Knoxville area. The initiatives reflect the college's commitment to fostering innovative approaches that promote social justice and address critical issues within various communities.

#### **UT LIBRARIES PARTNERS WITH GPO TO PRESERVE GOVERNMENT INFORMATION**

UT Libraries launched a collaboration with the US Government Publishing Office to enhance public access to and preservation of government information. The GPO oversees the print and digital production and distribution of official publications and services across all branches of government,



from passports to official publications of Congress, the White House, and various federal agencies. Through the new partnership, UT Libraries plays a crucial role in ensuring the preservation and accessibility of these vital government resources for researchers, students, and the public.

#### **PARTNERSHIP CONNECTS FACULTY WITH BIPARTISAN POLICYMAKERS IN DC**

UT forged a partnership with the Bipartisan Policy Center in Washington, DC, aimed at offering nonpartisan public policy insights and fostering innovative research initiatives. BPC serves to facilitate connections between policymakers, legislators, subject matter experts, and academic researchers. In one element of the partnership, UT faculty members traveled to Washington to collaborate with BPC staff on developing policy briefs, providing informed perspectives and recommendations to shape effective policy decisions.



## EDUCATION AND STEAM

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### SEAL FOR NAVY FOSTERS STEM EDUCATION

The Office of Naval Research established and funded STEM Education and Apprenticeship Liaison, or SEAL for Navy, to work with the UT Space Institute, the UT Institute of Agriculture, and the Tickle College of Engineering to boost K-12 STEM education in the state. The partnerships provide financial scholarships to support students throughout their college enrollment, encouraging their pursuit of STEM education and careers.



### UT STRING PROJECT BENEFITS CHILDREN

Established in 2020, the UT String Project has a dual mission of instructing novice string students and cultivating future string educators. Targeting children aged 8-10 from Knox County public schools, the program offers instruction in fundamental skills for violin, viola, and cello. The project promotes self-discipline through regular practice, provides opportunities for performances in professional venues, and facilitates new friendships among students who share a passion for music.

### HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS THRIVE AT INAUGURAL SCM SUMMER CAMP

The Department of Supply Chain Management organized its inaugural SCM Summer Camp, which welcomed more than 10 high school juniors and seniors from multiple states. Participants engaged in faculty-led sessions on leadership skills, college readiness, and the advantages of majoring in supply chain management. The group visited key industry locations including a Clayton Homes manufacturing facility in Rutledge, Tennessee, a PepsiCo distribution center, and the headquarters of Axle Logistics in Knoxville, enriching their understanding of supply chain operations and logistics in real-world settings.

### PROJECT CREDIBLE PROVIDES FOUNDATIONAL DATA LITERACY

Joshua Rosenberg, an assistant professor of STEM and education science, received a prestigious National Science Foundation CAREER award of \$846,612 over five years to establish Project CREDIBLE (Creatively Reimagining Engagements with Data in Biology Learning Environments). This project offers high school students and teachers the opportunity to foster data literacy and engage with data science through experiential learning in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

### CRRRAFT ADDRESSES LACK OF DIVERSITY IN STEM

The CRRRAFT (Culturally Relevant Robotics: A Family and Teacher Approach) Partnership for Computational Thinking in Early Childhood is a research-practice partnership that works to enhance computational thinking and inclusivity in computer science through its Culturally Relevant Robotics program. The initiative partners with university educators to develop robotics programs for Black and

Latinx preschoolers, aiming to address the lack of diversity in STEM fields. By providing tailored learning experiences for more than 100 children from these communities, the program seeks to counteract racial and gender income inequalities and better prepare young learners for future opportunities in technology and science.

### UNIVERSITY-ASSISTED COMMUNITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE ENRICHES SCHOOLS

The University-Assisted Community Schools initiative plays a pivotal role in providing academic support services and enrichment programs to community school partners. It transforms schools into neighborhood hubs where educators, community members, families, and students collaborate to enhance conditions for student learning and holistic development. This collaborative approach is aimed at fostering stronger ties within communities, particularly in Knox County and Morgan County, Tennessee. UACS has significantly impacted the Knoxville community by addressing needs and leveraging assets within low-income neighborhoods, ultimately contributing to the continuous improvement of local schools and the overall well-being of students and families. UT supports these efforts through district-wide evaluation and statewide networking and advocacy for the community school strategy.

### COLLEGE OF LAW STUDENTS SERVE AS MENTORS, COACHES TO FULTON MOCK TRIAL TEAM

Four students from the College of Law collaborated with Knoxville's Fulton High School to coach and prepare a team for the district-level high school mock trial competition. This partnership was initiated by Caleb Andris, a criminal justice instructor at Fulton. The UT students instructed the mock trial club on essential skills such as delivering opening statements, conducting direct and cross-examinations of witnesses, making objections, and presenting closing arguments. The collaboration underscores UT's commitment to fostering community engagement and educational enrichment.

## UT RESEARCH PARK AT CHEROKEE FARM



The University of Tennessee Research Park at Cherokee Farm, situated near the Knoxville campus, fosters collaboration among companies, entrepreneurs, and UT talent. Facilitating connections that promote success in key areas such as

advanced materials and manufacturing, future mobility, energy and environment, artificial intelligence, and human health and wellness, the research park offers an ideal environment for innovation and interdisciplinary research.

The UT Research Park continues to expand its network of partner companies, each leveraging its presence to cultivate enhanced collaborations with the university. The current roster includes 13 partners:

- Civil & Environmental Consultants Inc.
- IACMI-The Composites Institute
- Institute for Advanced Materials and Manufacturing
- New Day Diagnostics
- OrthoTennessee
- RegScale
- Trimble
- US Forest Service
- UT College of Nursing
- UT Medical Center
- University Health Pharmacy
- University Health System Inc.
- Volkswagen Group of America



This diverse array of partnerships underscores the research park's role as a dynamic center for innovation and interdisciplinary engagement across various sectors.

In January 2023 UT and AT&T dedicated a new AT&T 5G lab at the research park. UT stands among just six universities in the United States engaged in pioneering research projects in collaboration with AT&T. The lab represents a significant advancement in both partners' dedication and capability to introduce high-speed technologies that serve meaningful purposes to the people of Tennessee.

In February 2023 UT Medical Center and the College of Nursing inaugurated the BSN Scholars Program, which offers students from other areas of study a pathway to a nursing degree. The program's unique learning environment within the research park's Innovation North facility. It includes a 12-bed skills lab, four acute-care high-fidelity simulation rooms with adjoining 10-person capacity debriefing rooms and control rooms, a classroom holding up to 36 people, and two large classrooms for shared learning spaces holding up to 54 people each.



In July 2023 the university celebrated the groundbreaking of Innovation South, an 85,000-square-foot multiuse facility at the park. UT will occupy a 30,000-square-foot high bay and laboratory space designed to support teams of faculty, students, and industry collaborators who will work together on concepts, prototypes and testing for advanced manufacturing applications. The building has also been leased out to partner organizations who will be able to work side by side with UT researchers and students on innovations.

## BUSINESS, ECONOMIC, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

### UTIA AND AT&T PARTNER TO PROVIDE RURAL DIGITAL LITERACY TRAINING

The UT Institute of Agriculture collaborated with the AT&T Foundation to address critical issues of broadband access and education through the Tennessee Broadband Digital Literacy Training Program. The partnership engages, invests in, and trains residents of rural communities in Tennessee, enhancing their skills and facilitating greater broadband adoption. The initiative seeks not only to bridge the digital divide but also to empower communities by equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

### TENNESSEE RIVERLINE ANNOUNCES COMMUNITY IMPACT GRANTS

The Tennessee RiverLine's 2023 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Community Impact Grant was awarded to the communities of Chattanooga, Tennessee; Bridgeport, Alabama; and Hardin County, Tennessee. The grant is part of the Tennessee RiverLine initiative, led by the UT Institute of Agriculture, which promotes economic development, public health, resource stewardship, and equitable access across diverse communities spanning four states along the

Tennessee River. The grant, totaling nearly \$20,000, will support programs tailored to the needs of Tennessee River communities.

### KNOX ASIAN FESTIVAL CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

Sponsored in part by the Office of Community Engagement and Outreach and the Center for Global Engagement, the annual Knox Asian Festival promotes and celebrates Asian cultures, traditions, and talents by bringing together people from various cultural backgrounds to promote peace, harmony, unity, and healthy lifestyles. In 2023 the festival celebrated its 10th year with more than 75,000 people participating, creating an economic impact on Knoxville in excess of \$4.4 million. From a modest beginning with 3,000 visitors in 2014, the Knox Asian Festival has grown to become the largest in the Southeast.

### EXTENSION REPORTS COUNTY-LEVEL CONTRIBUTIONS OF TENNESSEE AGRICULTURE

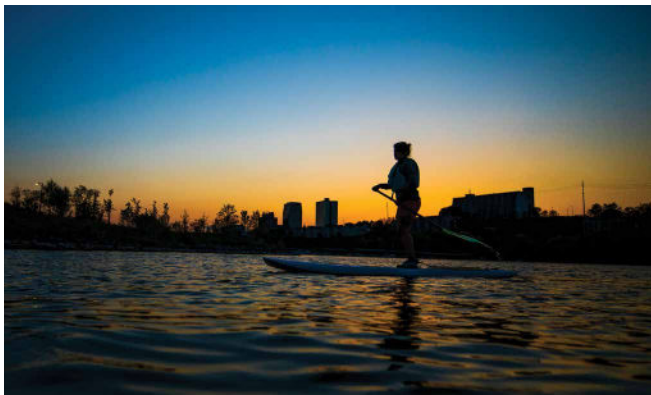
UT Extension published comprehensive reports outlining the agricultural contributions of all 95 counties in



Tennessee. The reports provide estimates of agriculture's economic impact in terms of output and employment for 2021. They serve as essential resources for local and regional policymakers, the agricultural community, and the public at large, offering valuable insights into the importance of agriculture within each area.

### GSCI COLLABORATIVE CONTINUES RICH HISTORY OF LEADERSHIP IN TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS

UT's Global Supply Chain Institute launched the Transportation and Logistics Collaborative in collaboration with the Center for Transportation Research and the Baker School of Public Policy and Public Affairs. The collaborative works to deepen insights into global and domestic transportation systems, policies, and industry dynamics. UT's supply chain programs, ranked among the top in North America, comprehensively cover disciplines such as purchasing, manufacturing, planning, and distribution.



### **UTIA RESEARCHERS EVALUATE POTENTIAL USE OF SOLAR PANELS ON TENNESSEE FARMLAND**

Researchers from the UT Institute of Agriculture undertook a study examining Tennessee's land use in the context of expanding utility-scale solar energy production, reflecting the nation's heightened emphasis on decarbonizing the electric grid. The study highlights Tennessee's ongoing loss of farmland to urban and residential development and explores considerations for solar development in agricultural communities, including the dual use of land for agriculture and solar energy production.

### **UT-VOLKSWAGEN PARTNERSHIP DEEPENS**

UT and Volkswagen Group of America entered into a renewed five-year master research agreement, further solidifying their longstanding partnership in innovation. Over the previous five years, the collaboration has resulted in 27 ongoing research projects, 15 published works, and multiple pending patents. UT research faculty and Volkswagen scientists are collaborating to advance technologies focused on lighter vehicle manufacturing, extended battery life, and the development of sustainable materials.

### **DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION INITIATIVE RECEIVES EXPANDED FUNDING**

Elizabeth Eckelkamp, an associate professor and state dairy Extension specialist in the Department of Animal Science at UTIA, and her multi-institutional team of researchers and specialists received additional funding of \$7.05 million from the US Department of Agriculture for the Southeast Dairy Business Innovation Initiative. Collaborating with researchers and Extension specialists from North Carolina State University, the University of Kentucky, and the Kentucky Dairy Development Council, Eckelkamp's team addresses diverse challenges including automated calf feeder



management, assessing greenhouse gas emissions from dairy operations, fostering community engagement in dairy opportunities, providing leadership and educational programs for dairy stakeholders, and supporting internships for underrepresented students.

### **JAPANESE BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE CONNECTS UT, INDUSTRY PARTNERS**

Japanese businesses throughout Tennessee and community stakeholders convened at the Baker School of Public Policy and Public Affairs to discuss the strong business ties between Japan and the state. Leaders from UT, including Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation, and Economic Development Deborah Crawford, alongside representatives from industry giants like DENSO Corporation and Bridgestone Americas, emphasized the impact of collaborative research partnerships.

UT's industry partners play a pivotal role in translating innovations into tangible market solutions, leveraging the state's robust economic development efforts to forge pathways globally connecting Tennessee's economy.



## GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT



### NURSING AROUND THE GLOBE

Nursing students traveled to Panama to better understand the relationship between water and health. The trip took them to an indigenous village, where they implemented a comprehensive community health and water assessment. The College of Nursing offers international opportunities for students to travel abroad, with destinations including Kenya, Peru, and Belize in addition to Panama. In Nyeri, Kenya, students participate in learning activities at the Waka Medical Training Institute. International programs provide nursing students with opportunities to develop a global perspective, engage in advanced nursing research, and deliver hands-on care to diverse populations worldwide. Both students and faculty benefit from firsthand experiences observing health care systems on a global scale.

### GRANT STRENGTHENS SOUTHEAST ASIAN AGRICULTURE

The UT Institute of Agriculture's Smith Center for International Sustainable Agriculture is the lead partner for Agricultural Leaders of Tomorrow, which works with youth in

Cambodia, the Philippines, and Vietnam to build more resilient and inclusive food systems. The project is supported by a five-year \$5 million grant from the John Ogonowski and Doug Bereuter Farmer-to-Farmer Program, known as F2F, with the potential for an additional \$25 million in funding from the US Agency for International Development. F2F provides technical assistance from US volunteers to farmers and agricultural groups in other countries, promoting sustainable improvements in food security and agricultural production, processing, and marketing.

### UT NAMED A TOP PRODUCER OF STUDENT FULBRIGHTS

For the sixth consecutive year, UT was named a top producer of Fulbright students, with 13 students and recent graduates receiving Fulbright awards in the 2023-24 academic year. Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor John Zomchick noted, "This designation represents UT's commitment to global engagement and academic excellence. We are rightfully proud of the Volunteers who explore, connect and share ideas around the globe."

### MARCO INSTITUTE PARTNERS WITH FRENCH UNIVERSITY

Members of UT's Marco Institute for Medieval and Renaissance Studies traveled to Poitiers, France, for an international colloquium as part of a long-standing collaboration between the institute and the Centre d'études supérieures de civilisation médiévale at the Université de Poitiers. The colloquium, *Aftermath of Conflict and Crisis in the Middle Ages*, examined the repercussions of disasters and wars and discussed how responses to afflictions can provide critical insights into cultural shifts. The group also spent a study day exploring medieval art and architecture in the area.



### COIL

Collaborative Online International Learning, or COIL, is a virtual exchange program that connects students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Students engage in activities, projects, and coursework designed to foster intercultural understanding and collaboration. The initiative provides opportunities for intercultural learning to students who may not have access to traditional study abroad programs.

## AWARDS AND GRANTS FOR BROADER IMPACTS

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OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

### CHALLENGE GRANT

#### **Stefanie Benjamin**

Associate Professor, Department of Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management

*Speakeasy to the Truth*

#### **Dan Jin**

Assistant Professor, Department of Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management

*Transforming the Hospitality Workplace: Fostering Marginalized Employee Wellbeing and Equity*

#### **Sukanya Moudgalya**

Assistant Professor, Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education

*Harvesting Hope: Fostering Urban Agriculture through Community-Driven AI Education and Civic Empowerment*

### ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH GRANT

#### **Rhea Carmon**

Math Program Facilitator, College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences

*Collectively Speaking*

#### **Elizabeth DeGeorge**

Communication Specialist, School of Art

*High School Art Academy*

#### **Patrick Grzanka**

Professor, Department of Psychology

#### **Erin McConocha**

Doctoral Student, Department of Psychology

*Understanding the Needs of People Accessing Harm Reduction Services in East Tennessee*

#### **Alyssa Hayes**

Doctoral Student, Department of Nuclear Engineering

*Engineering Mentoring Workshop Series at Austin-East High School*

#### **Julie Lohnes**

Director and Curator of Galleries and Collections, School of Art

*Katrina Andry Exhibition and Events*

### SPONSORSHIP

#### **Carren Broadnax**

Community Leader

*Community Service Engagement*

#### **Ivonne Vidal Pizarro**

Research Consultant

*Campus-wide Research Poster Symposium*

#### **Tracy Van de Vate**

Community Leader

*Grandparents as Parents—Parenting the 2nd Time Around Conference*

#### **Ronda Wright**

Senior Advisor and Adjunct Assistant Professor, College of Architecture and Design

*Creating Artifacts of Home*



# DIVISION OF ACCESS & ENGAGEMENT

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