Contents

01. Spotlight Stories
03. Volunteer Spotlights
   Shout Outs
13. Comment Box Locations
14. Birthdays

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Spotlight Stories

With a department as large as Facilities Services, there’s always something to learn about the work we accomplish that keeps campus running. For this issue of Just The FACs, student assistant Ella Stewart shares a few insights on campus landscape and sustainability practices so we can spread the word in support of the incredible work our team does daily.

Taking Care of Campus Trees

How many trees do you think are on the UT Knoxville campus? Would you say over 9,000? If so, that would be correct! There are exactly 9,232 trees on the campus.

That number includes the main campus, UT Research Park at Cherokee Farm, UTIA Research Properties and several other satellite properties in Knoxville and Oak Ridge.

Sam Adams, UT’s designated arborist, began working with trees in 1984 as a student worker while pursuing his bachelor’s degree in Environmental Studies. His passion for arboriculture began then and continues today as he directs the small but mighty arboriculture team.

Currently, the crew is taking advantage of prime planting season here in East Tennessee by planting and transplanting trees around campus. They’re also gearing up for annual Arbor Day celebrations on April 5th. Once their seasonal work is completed they will transition into more general tasks such as tree removal and pruning and perform health and risk assessments on the tree population.

They’re able to keep track of all these trees through the UT Campus Tree inventory which is a GIS-based map that identifies trees by their location and includes specific attributes such as diameter, height, condition, maintenance, etc.

“The tree inventory is a living document that represents our campus canopy and has to be updated whenever we make a change to a tree’s status whether newly planted, pruned or removed,” Adams said.

If you would like to learn more about our thousands of trees check out this interactive map of the tree inventory here.
**Spotlight Stories**

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**Coffee: Good for Plants/Bad for Plumbing**

You’ve probably heard “coffee is good for plants” for years; but is it actually?

The Landscape unit is here to set the record straight. Yes, it can be!

Coffee contains nitrogen, potassium, magnesium and calcium which are all beneficial for plant growth and vigor. The best way to integrate coffee into plants is in liquid form if it’s diluted to look like a weak tea or straight coffee grounds are also good when incorporated into compost or soil mix.

Landscape recommends adding coffee to plants no more than once per month as it can make the soil too acidic if overused. Signs of acidic soil include stunted plant growth and yellowing/browning of leaves.

Although coffee is good for most plants like hydrangeas, rhododendrons, azaleas, blueberries, etc., it’s not for all. Specifically, asparagus, brussels sprouts, garlic and most common houseplants prefer a higher pH, resulting in low acidity.

Most importantly, make sure to never let coffee grounds get into the plumbing.

According to O’Connor Plumbing, sending coffee grounds down the drain can cause serious problems for the pipes. Over time, the grounds create build-up in the pipes which can be especially problematic for garbage disposals. The result is a blockage that is stinky, messy, and expensive.

Next time you make a pot of coffee, share the grounds with a plant or two rather than pouring down the drain!
As we celebrated Women’s History Month in March we thought it was a great time to introduce you to some of the women who serve in more behind-the-scenes roles as support to our on-campus colleagues. Check out this story on a few of the women who help keep campus running through Administrative & Support Services, Design Services and Communication & Information Services. [https://fs.utk.edu/women-in-facilities-behind-the-scenes-support/](https://fs.utk.edu/women-in-facilities-behind-the-scenes-support/)

We also had the opportunity to talk with Maria Martinez, Director of Space Management to discuss her accomplishments, accolades, and advice as one of Facilities Services’ women in a senior leadership role. In this profile, she offers insight and inspiration that we could all benefit from! Read all about this incredible leader here [https://fs.utk.edu/women-in-leadership-maria-martinez/](https://fs.utk.edu/women-in-leadership-maria-martinez/)
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

LIGHTING THE TORCH - SHOUT OUT TO UTILITIES

We just want to extend a shout out to our Utilities Services team for all they do in the background to make sure campus is running safely and smoothly. Lately, this team has worked many outages and overtime hours to make sure campus is safe.

We take the Volunteer Creed seriously around here, “One that beareth a torch shadoweth oneself to give light to others.”

Photo Credit: Gavin Ramsey

WELCOME ASSISTANT VC MOTSKO AND MAFFETT

As Chancellor Plowman has powerfully said, the University of Tennessee is on the rise! With increased enrollment and expanded academic offerings, the workload for Facilities Services is steadily increasing. To better support our campus, UT Facilities Services welcomed two new Assistant Vice Chancellors to support our mission of responsibly stewarding state resources to provide safe, clean, state-of-the-art environments with a commitment to excellence.

Please help us welcome Matt Motsko, Assistant Vice Chancellor Construction, and William Maffett, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Planning & Design, to the Volunteer family! To learn more about these new Vols and how they’ll contribute to a better campus, see below.

https://fs.utk.edu/avcconstruction2024/
https://fs.utk.edu/utk-facilities-services-announces.../
CONGRATS, CCP GRADS!

Help us congratulate the latest round of CCP grads! These individuals completed a Custodial Certification Program through CMI that takes participants through basic and advanced concepts of facilities cleaning and floor care. Graduates go on to become advocates for stewarding our facilities with commitment to consistent and quality service for all UT customers. (Pictured L to R: Ahmad Moadi, Steve Church, Rebecca Cinnamon (supervisor), Johnny Robinson, Ashley Watts, Hawk Coin, and Tyler Vandiver (instructor)

JAY PRICE RECEIVES KEEP KNOXVILLE BEAUTIFUL’S FELICIA AWARD

Congratulations to UTK Office of Sustainability Manager, Jay Price, on receiving the Felicia Award as part of Keep Knoxville Beautiful’s Orchid Awards! Jay was honored as a community leader who excels at keeping the Keep Knoxville Beautiful mission alive of a cleaner, greener, more beautiful Knoxville. Jay embodies the spirit of stewardship, volunteerism, and giving as he goes above and beyond professionally and personally. Congratulations, Jay! You deserve this and more!
SHEEHAN & ALCORN GRADUATE APPA PROGRAMS

We’re proud to see our own Rebecca Alcorn and Candis Sheehan among APPA’s most recent grads! Congratulations to Rebecca on completing the APPA Leadership Academy, and congratulations to Candis for wrapping up the APPA Institute for Facilities Management. This was a multi-year professional development commitment, and we’re proud that you were able to see it through. Your knowledge and training helps make us an even better team.

ZONE MAINTENANCE RECOGNIZED FOR QUALITY SERVICE

Recently one of our Zone Maintenance teams removed/replaced a floor that has had years of hard use and a leaky refrigerator. Jennifer Schweitzer, a Professor at Dabney-Buehler, came by and was so happy to have her floor done. She said it looks great! Building Services is taking this service one step further by cleaning and waxing the floor for them. This was a great project for our team and two Apprentices, Jason and Tyler. Their foreman said “I think the two Apprentice guys Jason, and Tyler did a great job. With a little help, and never had done any tile work before, it only took a day, and a half.” Great job, team!
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

DESIGN SERVICES DAZZLES WITH MCCLUNG TOWER
12TH FLOOR REMODEL

Our Design Services team was heavily involved in this amazing renovation on the 12th floor of McClung Tower. The transformation is incredible! Thanks to our interior design consultant, Z Creative Group, for these before and after/in progress pics! Great work, Design!

SPRING SAFETY EVENT A SUCCESS!

In early April, Facilities Services Safety partnered with UT’s Environmental Health and Safety’s (EHS) Industrial Worker Safety team for a spring safety expo. From 10a to 2p, Facilities Services team members had the opportunity to talk with EHS and other vendors with a focus on safety measures, heat awareness, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Participants were treated to lunch and a chance to win some excellent prizes! Thanks to all who attended!
FACILITIES SERVICES TEAM MEMBERS HONORED AT 2024 ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AWARDS

This year’s Environmental Leadership Awards were a true testament to the commitment of many in Facilities Services to sustainable practices on campus! In the Staff Award for Environmental Leadership category, three of the five nominees are part of our team! Congratulations to Barbara Tallent (Design Services) and Gavin Ramsey (Utilities Services) on your nominations, and congrats to Garrett Ferry (Stormwater Management) on your win! While Garrett couldn’t attend, teammate Ted Murphy accepted the award on his behalf. We also had the opportunity to see David Brown honored with the John Nolt Lifetime Achievement Award for his 55+ years of service to UT, most recently as a post-retirement employee working as the primary recycling truck driver on campus since 2006. All of those nominated and honored are deserving of this recognition as they work behind the scenes to create a better campus for tomorrow today.

Other nominees from Facilities Services include Wyatt Miner (Student Environmental Leadership Award) and Jay Price (John Nolt Lifetime Achievement Award), both of which are extremely deserving! Help us congratulate our team in the comments! Shout out to the UTK Office of Sustainability for all of the hardwork they put into this event!
JORDAN MAPLES GRADUATES APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

We are proud to share that Jordan Maples has officially met all of his requirements to graduate from the Zone Maintenance Apprenticeship Program! A lot of time and effort went into this, and he has passed with flying colors!

DENBO CENTER FOR HUMANITIES & THE ARTS TRANSFORMATION

Facilities Services is proud to have played a role in the new Denbo Center for Humanities & the Arts located in Cherokee Mills. The Denbo Center, formerly known as the UT Humanities Center, was housed in Melrose Hall until it was relocated to Dunford in 2019. Due to demolition, the center was again relocated in winter 2023 to it’s new home at Cherokee Mills. This beautiful new space was the perfect location to unveil the center’s new name this month as they officially became known as the Denbo Center for Humanities & the Arts. Shout out to Barbara Tallent (Design Services), Space Management, and Moving & Events Services for their hard work on this project! To view this transformation, click here.
UTPD COMMENDS JOHN HUOTARI FOR HARD WORK

We have had wonderful experiences with the employees you have assigned to our building here at UTPD (1101 Cumberland). When Ms. Esther left, we had good expectations that you would provide someone who would be good at their job - or they wouldn’t be here, but never did we expect that we would get someone who, in his own way, is equal to Esther and more.

It may be less than usual that you receive letters of praise as it is easier for people to mention the troubles rather than the triumphs, but in this season of good cheer I bring you great news...we continue to appreciate the complete professionalism that Mr. John Huotari displays - in all matters and manners. We thank you for the efforts you have obviously taken to train your employees so well. It has come to our attention that Mr. Huotari has put in for a supervisory position and we wanted to take this time to share our positive experiences with you.

Mr. John acts and speaks with the most kindness and consideration. He recognizes the industry we are in (Law Enforcement) and the confidentiality that comes with this suite. He never enters a room - or even an area where there are a group of people speaking without announcing himself, excusing the interruption and almost always asks permission to continue his work or “I can come back and arrange to do it when best for you” attitude. We have seen Mr. John in a training capacity, most recently with Mr. De’Angelo Solomon. Mr. John leads by example - attention to detail (everything is always so CLEAN), works in a timely manner, is always polite and considerate. He is always patient and kind in word and action to everyone. Mr. John’s attitude toward Mr. Solomon has been one of genuine respect and interest in his learning the correct and best way to keep things in order and in respecting everyone’s time and space around him. We are blessed to have John in our area and wish him and you the best in your decision in the selection of a supervisor. We do hope it is Mr. John Huotari as we know he has earned it and, in his humility and excellent work ethics, continues to earn it.

I hope you will share this with those who have an interest in Mr. John and his possible selection/promotion to supervisor and even with Mr. John himself. He deserves to know how appreciated and special he is!

Thank you,
Deb

Deb O’Brien
Administrative Assistant to the
Associate Vice Chancellor for Public Safety
and Chief of Police
SNOW WEEK SHOUT OUT

Hi Mike and Derek, this is just a note to say thank you so much for all you did to allow Executive MBA classes to happen in HBB this weekend! We were able to be in the building Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The building was spotless, the sidewalks and roads looked great, and we had facilities support all three days. The students and faculty loved being on campus and in the Haslam Building. We had been holding class in a conference space in the basement of a downtown hotel since the snow hit, so it was like being out of a cage!

Your flexibility and support are greatly appreciated. Hopefully, we will see melting today and things will be more “normal.” At least as normal as you can expect for the first day of class.

Thank you again.

Amy

AMY CATHEY, PhD
Associate Dean, Graduate and Executive Education
Ms. Lingerfelt,

I am a UT Professor Emeritus of History. Pursuant to my retirement agreement, I maintain a campus office as long as I remain an active scholar, though no longer employed by UT as an instructor.

Like everyone in the History Department, I was compelled to leave my old office in Dunford Hall pending its imminent demolition. I was assigned a new office at B202A Walters Academic Building and put in touch with Greta Buckman of Construction Services to prepare it for my occupancy. There was a lot to be done: the room needed renovation including repainting and reflooring, and I had furniture and a small mountain of books to move. It could have been a taxing or even traumatizing experience; but working with Greta made it easy and even fun. She was a model of cordial efficiency throughout: always available, always cheerful and helpful, and always looking forward to overcoming the next hurdle. There was one major hitch along the way: seepage from a nearby flood ruined the brand-new drywall and carpet only hours before my furniture and possessions were scheduled for delivery (they’d already been packed up and moved over from Dunford). Greta not only swiftly arranged for repairs to the damage; she went out of her way to contact me about it on a day when I was very difficult to reach. She also helped make the transition to Walters seamless by making sure that my phone line and number, electrical and computer connections, and off-hours cardswipe building access were all arranged and ready when I moved in.

Altogether I cannot say enough to praise Greta’s performance on my move. I came not only to rely on her, but to view her as a friend. I salute your office for having such a splendid worker on your staff.

Regards,

Dan Feller
Distinguished Professor Emeritus
Good morning! Kudos to your Landscape Team! We “took over” a planter just outside our 107 entrance and planted some perennials last year, which are coming up again. And now, thanks to Matt and his landscape team, they have provided us with a drip irrigation system.

Employee Comment Box Locations:

- Facilities Services Complex Break Room
- Facilities Services Shop Area
- Hodges Library outside room 171a
- Steam Plant (near time clock)
- Landscape Trailer Breakroom
- The electronic employee comment box can be found at tiny.utk.edu/fscommentbox.
APRIL

Verna Spencer    4/1
Riley Kneale      4/1
Patricia Curtis     4/2
Aaron Lufkin     4/3
Joseph Savage     4/3
Donnie Patterson     4/3
Edward Alley     4/4
Brian Beeler       4/4
Clinton Graham     4/6
James Faulkner     4/6
Robby Huggins     4/8
Chris Mireles     4/8
Chris Webb     4/9
Charles Anderson     4/9
Jeremy Kellerman   4/10
Denny Gann   4/10
Geoffrey McMahan   4/10
Mike Van Duzer   4/12
Steve Bradford   4/12
Johnathan Sawyer   4/13
Wayne Stalans                     4/13
Susan Gibson                     4/14
Conner Wright                     4/14
James Moore                     4/14
Jeff Jones                     4/15
Kyle Korn                     4/16
Lala Henderson                     4/17
Ella Dohrmann                     4/17
Randi Hamilton                     4/17
Anthony Harris                     4/18
Val Brooks                     4/18
Cory Cox                     4/18
Alberto De La Garza                     4/19
Toni Adams                     4/19
Amanda Ruelle                     4/19
Shannon Nason                     4/19
Bill Hutchins                     4/20
Britt Hancock                     4/20
Wesley Cook                     4/20
Mike Brady                     4/20
Samuel Walker-Boley                     4/21
Cale Clemmer                     4/21
Jairus Miller                     4/21
Radojan Psar                     4/21
Wayne Palmer                     4/21
Dave Stark                     4/21
Alexa Castillo
Chip Pennoyer
Steven Stellmach
Johnny Waggoner
Paul Hons
Jerry Nelson
Kevin Leising
Lance LeMaster
Eric Poe
Herbert Seaman
Matt McConnell
Amanda Hankins
Mike Billington
Ruby Strange
Patrick Childress
Teddy Tackett
Jade Temple
Neal Vercier
Chris Absher
Mike Duncan
Doug Mikels
Jordan Doane
Michael Ownby
Norman Bumby
Gary Phillips
Tishayla Mitchell
Raj Arepalli
Temeka McDermott
Chris Spangler
Garrett Ferry
Michael Lowe
Michelle Johnson
Ross Riley
Jerry Brooks
Brian Riley
Robert Browne
Sandra Slusser
Dwayne Roach
Ray Loveday
John Huotari
Stacy Poe
Collin Davis
Corey Debusk
Samantha Daulton
Tuchar Krishna Panumatcha
William Kirkland

JUNE

Travis Sturdivant      5/1
Daniel Webber      5/1
James Kendrick      5/2
Guthrie Butler      5/2

Matthew Murphy       6/1
Katie Brown       6/1
Amit Sharma        6/1
Barbara Talient    6/1
Steve Bodenheimer    6/1
Chris Hinshaw        6/2
Douglas Grant        6/2
Vernon Smith         6/2
Zachary Childs         6/3
Michael Roysdon        6/4
Earl Miller         6/4
Alain Miller        6/5

May

Travis Sturdivant      5/1
Daniel Webber      5/1
James Kendrick      5/2
Guthrie Butler      5/2

Mike HOWZE       6/17
Candis Sheehan     6/19
Frank Tallman     6/20
Melanie Reese     6/20
Michael Multiyan     6/20
Mark Hensley     6/21
Abraham Bates     6/21
Wally Beets         6/22
Charlie Burton      6/22
Josh Cash         6/22
Richard Stacey       6/24
Brad Moats          6/24
Austen Nicely       6/24
Aaron Glenn         6/25
Nicholas Spina       6/25
Casey Mclemore       6/27
Eric Goss         6/28
William Wainwright    6/28
Joe Whitton         6/28
Martine Lubelanu     6/29
Nathaniel Howard     6/29

JUNE

Preston Jordan      6/1
Katie Brown      6/1
Amit Sharma        6/1
Barbara Talient    6/1
Steve Bodenheimer    6/1
Chris Hinshaw        6/2
Douglas Grant        6/2
Vernon Smith         6/2
Zachary Childs         6/3
Michael Roysdon        6/4
Earl Miller         6/4
Alain Miller        6/5

MAY

Travis Sturdivant      5/1
Daniel Webber      5/1
James Kendrick      5/2
Guthrie Butler      5/2

Matthew Murphy       6/1
Katie Brown       6/1
Amit Sharma        6/1
Barbara Talient    6/1
Steve Bodenheimer    6/1
Chris Hinshaw        6/2
Douglas Grant        6/2
Vernon Smith         6/2
Zachary Childs         6/3
Michael Roysdon        6/4
Earl Miller         6/4
Alain Miller        6/5