

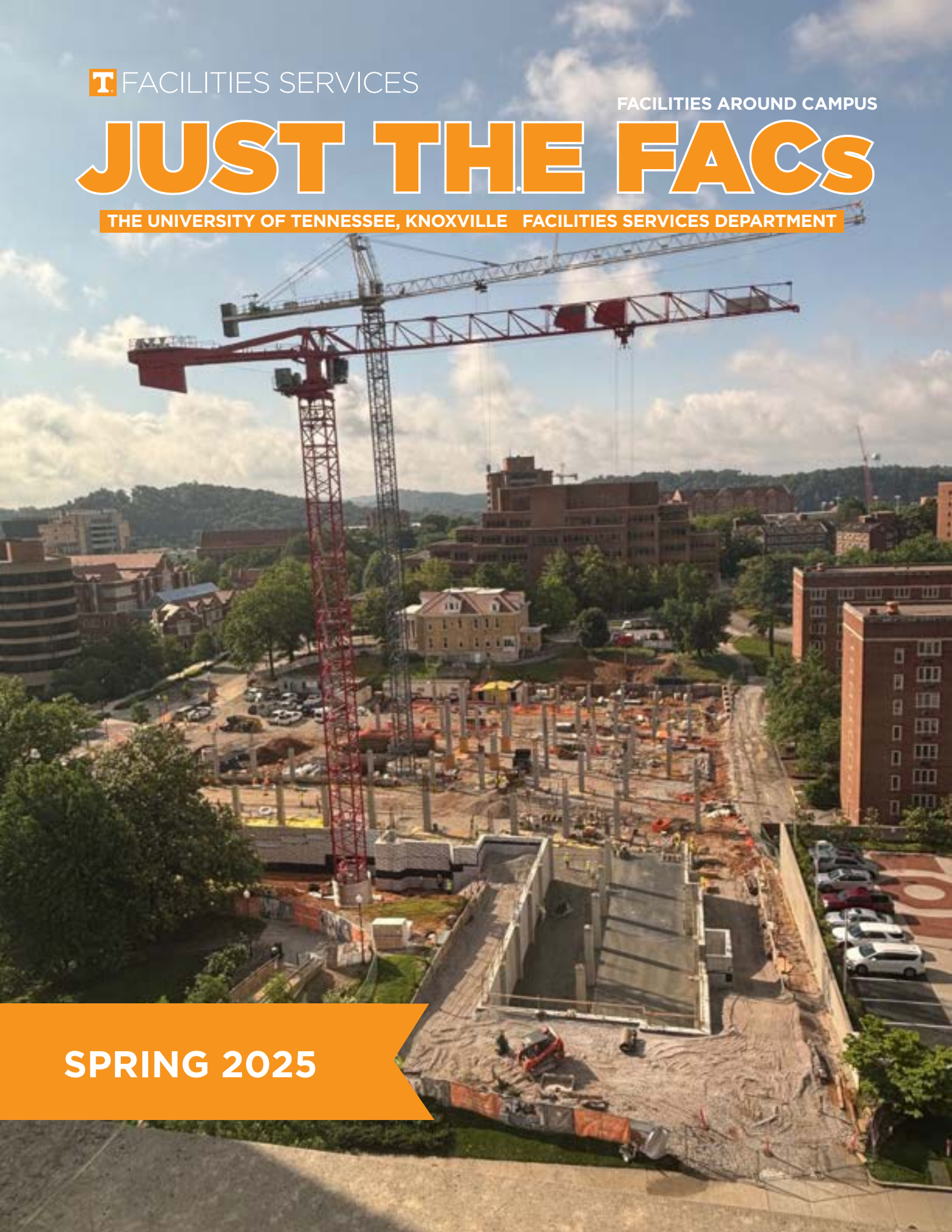
T FACILITIES SERVICES

FACILITIES AROUND CAMPUS

JUST THE FACs

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE FACILITIES SERVICES DEPARTMENT

SPRING 2025



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THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

FACILITIES SERVICES

Spotlight Stories

Turf Triumphs: Keeping Our Campus Pristine in Every Season

By: Ella Kelley, FS Communications Student Assistant & UT Journalism Major

This fall, FS Communications student assistant, Ella Kelley, sat down with several of our staff to learn more about the delicate dance of relocating staff for the Haslam Business Expansion project. The article detailing their conversation is below.

After a cold winter on campus, the days are getting longer and the number of classes left in the spring are dwindling. As spring showers fall and temperatures rise, the Facilities Services Turf Management team is prepared to shine.

Small but mighty, the Turf Management crew is tasked with managing 50 acres of turf on campus and 50 acres at other university-owned properties.

The goal of Turf Management is to create a peaceful environment in the middle of a city. They aim to achieve a country atmosphere that softens the concrete jungles to make everyone on campus feel at home.

Each season looks a little different for Turf Management. In the time leading up to spring, mowing foremen Austin Nicely and Jackie Wheat lead their teams in preparation. They are currently making pre-emergent herbicide applications, which involves throwing out fertilizer and treating and feeding the grass.

“It’s giving a feed to start it, basically, and killing anything that might be getting ready to or to prevent it from germinating, like a weed, clover, or something like that,” Nicely said.

Spring/Summer Mowing Season

They’re planning for a busy mowing season, which isn’t limited to cutting grass and trimming weeds. These crews use this time to place sod where needed and to reconstruct where vehicles, pedestrian activity, and events damaged grassy areas in the fall.

During the busy season, most areas on campus are mowed up to twice a week. That’s up to 100 acres every seven days, but let’s put that in UT terms. This kind of coverage is equal to mowing Shield-Watkins field in Neyland



Stadium 75.6 times in a week!

Turf Management also emphasizes the care of event lawns like Circle Park as showpieces on campus. Cole Gonzales is the turf specialist tasked with the care and keeping of these special spaces. Event lawns feature a different type of grass better suited for high traffic areas and are subsequently managed differently. Campus has roughly 3.5 acres of event lawns which are typically mowed three times per week.

In the fall, they primarily focus on leaves and maintaining the grass from the summer. Leaf management becomes a big task with 9,200+ trees across campus. Crews use leaf vacuums to manage leaves from October until early February.

During the fall, they also prepare the grass for the winter weather. This is particularly important for the event lawns, as the foot traffic and tailgating during football season continuously damages the grass every fall.

“With the football season, they have tents up, so all that wear and tear from all the foot traffic can have a pretty detrimental impact on the lawns,” Gonzales said.

Spotlight Stories (cont.)

After football season ends, Turf Management overseeds the lawns to allow the grass to recover from the damage done. Without taking these precautions, the grass will go dormant upon the first frost. To avoid this, Turf Management overseeds these areas with ryegrass to keep campus lawns green year-round.

Turf Manager Curtis Pique said, “the problem is, we are introducing competition to that Bermuda grass with the ryegrass, and then we’re also beating it down to the dirt right as it’s going into its hardest time. We’ll put the ryegrass out, they’ll have two or three more games, and they kill all of that, then we have to do it again. But by that time, it’s gotten so cold that even the ryegrass has a hard time germinating. So it really takes until about February for all that seed to get back out.”

Winter is a slower season because grass stagnates or goes dormant when the temperatures drop. As it gets closer to spring, Turf Management typically has to re-sod the event lawns altogether before they enter mowing season.

Turf Management works tirelessly to maintain the lawns to their standards. Tennessee is in a geographical transition zone, meaning it is too far north for warm season grasses and too far south for cool season grasses. Because of this, Turf Management has a lot to contend with. It takes hard work, time, and dedication to keep campus lawns up to their standards, but they get the job done.

These standards are largely influenced by the American Physical Plant Association (APPA) which provides guidelines for educational facilities management. APPA is an organization that provides resources and programs for facilities professionals. They have a system for judging the level of attention necessary for proper grounds maintenance at institutions. Level one is referred to as “state-of-the-art maintenance applied to a high-quality diverse landscape” and is “associated with high-traffic urban areas, such as public squares,

government grounds, or college, university, or school campuses.” Level two is referred to as “high level of maintenance” and is “associated with well-developed public areas, malls, government grounds, or college, university, or school campuses.”

“On average, we maintain our entire campus to the level two,” Pique said. “So, grass is cut at least once a week, good fertilization plan, good weed control plan, irrigated turf.”

Some of the lawns on campus require level one maintenance, like around the Student Union, Ayres Hill, and the event lawns.

“It takes an army to keep that where it needs to be,” Pique said. “We have 12 people that do nothing but mow every day, mow, line trim, edge and blow.”

This crew takes great pride in how their work helps beautify campus, and they believe their attention to detail is what sets our campus apart. Everything they do must be done with meticulous care and attention to detail to ensure that the campus looks its best. People may not always notice the good things that landscaping does, but they notice when it is not done well. That is why Turf Management works tirelessly to maintain their high standards for the turf and landscape across campus.

“We take a lot of pride in it, and these guys do a great job at that,” Pique said.

Everyone on campus sees what Turf Management does, so it is important to them that their job is done well.

“I was given the old adage when I was in the golf course business. A guy comes into the golf pro shop for five minutes. He’s in that office for five minutes, but he’s in our office for four and a half hours. It’s the same kind of thing. They’re in class for their hour, hour and a half, but they’re in our office moving between classes the entire day,” Pique said.

To learn more about the Turf Management team and Facilities Services, visit our Operations page on the FS website.

Spotlight Stories

Work Order Management Team Adds Layer of Customer Support

By: Ella Kelley, FS Communications Student Assistant & UT Journalism Major

When campus customers need to report a facilities issue, their first line of defense is the Facilities Services One Call number where they're greeted by a friendly and helpful member of the Work Order Management team. This customer service team has not always been a function of Facilities Services, but it's now an integral part of how we interact with customers. Let's take a look at how we got here and where we're headed.

The Work Order Management (WOM) team launched in December of last year, as a part of Facilities' efforts to restructure the process of work order execution. The team consists of three people, Allie McCosh, Amanda Johnson, and Sam Shiflett, with plans to continue expanding. They are responsible for answering phone calls to Facilities Services regarding maintenance and custodial issues, as well as dispatching messages to the proper teams. As their name suggests, they manage work orders from maintenance requests, acting as a liaison between campus and Maintenance.

Submitting Requests

When you experience a maintenance or custodial issue on campus, you have a couple of options. You may either contact 865-946-7777 to speak with a member of the WOM team or access the client portal. When you call the phone number, Allie, Amanda, or Sam will answer, or you will be placed in a brief call queue until one of them is available. The team member who answers the phone will ask questions to gain pertinent information about your issue so Maintenance & Repair knows what to expect when they go to address it. WOM will then create a ticket in TDX, which is a ticket system that allows them to keep track of calls and the different types of issues called in. Next, they enter the main work order in Dash, assigning it to the correct building foreman or shop foreman to handle the issue.

If you want to enter a work order request through the client portal, you simply log onto Dash and navigate to the page titled "Maintenance Work Request." There, you create a request and enter the necessary information. The request is sent to the WOM team who then create a work order and a ticket and reroute the order to the proper team.



The work request on the client portal shows updates on the process of the work order. You can log in and see whether it's waiting to be approved, in process, or closed. When you call to request a work order instead of using the client portal, you cannot see these updates. However, you will receive a reference number after the work order is created, which you can use to call and request a status update from WOM.

Building Relationships & Bridging Gaps

This has allowed the WOM team to quickly build relationships and bridge gaps that were previously difficult to address. When serving as the central work request point of contact for all of campus, there's not much downtime during the day, but this team uses their team wisely to maximize customer satisfaction and improve departmental communication.

WOM received 4,300 calls in the first quarter of this year. When classes are in session, they get around 140-180 calls per day. Prior to the creation of WOM, there was only one person in charge of answering calls and dispatching to the Maintenance crew. As you can imagine, the call volume made it extremely difficult

Spotlight Stories (cont.)

for one person to give each caller the time and attention deserved while still putting in the work orders and completing assigned administrative tasks. Now, the team of three can distribute the responsibilities so that everything can get done efficiently and with more attention.

After clear communication with the customer, the WOM team gets to work behind the scenes as the voice of Maintenance & Repair by connecting them to those who need an issue fixed. In the life cycle of a work request, WOM is the front end of the process, Maintenance and/or Utilities take care of the middle, and quality assurance is the back end. After a work order is complete, Sheena Rhea handles quality assurance to make sure the work is finished properly. Throughout the process, WOM keeps track of the work orders, providing updates to the customer when requested. They may do follow-ups as well to see the progress on a work order.

Continuous Improvement

In efforts to continuously improve, the WOM team has begun going on field trips, accompanying Maintenance as they carry out the work orders. WOM does this to get a full picture of the whole process, to see what goes on on the other side. They want to better understand how the maintenance processes work so that they can make the work order process smoother.

Though they just started, WOM is consistently trying to become more efficient, always looking for ways to improve communication and grow. Each team member is motivated by the common goal to increase efficiency in the work order process, to aid in navigating each step, and to ensure that interdepartmental communication is successful and resolute.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

UT Takes Second Place in ISSA Spotless Spaces Contest



As part of International Cleaning Week, the International Sanitary Supply Association (ISSA) recently held a contest to determine the best of Spotless Spaces across the country. The Student Union Building Services crew made it to the final round of nominees, and thanks to the help of our campus and community partners, we're thrilled to announce that we were awarded second place!

To read more, click [here](#).

Facilities Services Partners with VolShop on “We Rock” Collab

In early May, Facilities Services teamed up with the VolShop to offer a special two-week pre-order for the brand-new We Rock tee that was conceptualized, designed, and marketed by Facilities Services staff.

The pre-order was the first of its kind partnership, but we hope to continue to grow this relationship with the VolShop in the future! Shirts arrived in mid-June and are in the process of being distributed.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

ANRB Receives American Institute of Architecture Award

BarberMcMurry and Lord Aeck Sargent recently notified UT Facilities Services that the Agriculture and Natural Resources Building (ANRB) on the UT Institute of Agriculture campus has received a design award from the Georgia chapter of the American Institute of Architecture.

To learn more, click [here](#).



Mike Howze Earns Doctorate, Brings New Vision to FS



On Saturday, April 26, Michael Howze, our very own Director of Administration and Finance for Facilities Services, crossed the stage at Point Park University to receive his Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Leadership and Administration. This milestone represents far more than the completion of a degree—it's the culmination of a powerful and deeply personal journey.

He shared his story with us, and you won't want to miss it.

Click here to [read](#) more.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

FS Team Members Complete UConnect Program

Congratulations to our Facilities Services team members who recently completed the UConnect program through UT HR! This program helps cultivate leaders through personal and professional growth, self assessment, and immersive leadership opportunities. Our department is better for every UConnect graduate, and we know these three have an incredible future ahead.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Chris Blair Retirement



It's hard to write about a retirement for someone who has played such an integral role in Facilities Services for their entire UT career. We are excited for Chris Blair as she hangs up her Lock and Key Services hat and enters her next adventure, but we already miss her here! She's leaving the shop in good hands, but we wish her all the best. Happy retirement, Chris!

New Chick-Fil-A Opens on Cumberland Avenue

There's nothing better than being a part of seeing campus improvements come to life! This week, staff from our Planning & Design and Capital Construction teams were present for the "First Bite" event at the new Chick-Fil-A on Cumberland Avenue! This first-of-a-kind, co-branded store sits on the corner of 17th and Cumberland. It is next to the VolShop, a stone's throw from the Baker School, Law, Haslam College of Business, and convenient to Neyland Stadium. We know it will be a hit, and we're proud to have had a hand in bringing this innovative concept to campus!



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

ASHRAE Gives Toward Facilities Services Scholarship Funds



Recently our friends from the local chapter of ASHRAE stopped by to present a generous donation toward Facilities Services scholarships after we hosted their November meeting where the National ASHRAE president was in attendance. Thanks to this gift from their education fund, we can provide additional scholarships to children/grandchildren of Facilities Services staff through the John C Parker and Bob Evans Memorial Scholarship Funds.

Arbor Day Event a Resounding Success

We had a great turnout for this year's Tennessee Arbor Day celebration in the Reese Hall courtyard on March 7!

It was so fun to see so many people gathered together for the ceremonial tree planting, refreshments, and information (and goodies) from various partners! Thanks to the UTK Office of Sustainability for co-hosting with our Landscape Services team!



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Facilities Services Rescues Wedding Ring

No two days in Facilities Services are alike, especially when we go above and beyond the call of duty! Just yesterday, Blake Weiss, Director of Basic Needs in the Center for Basic Needs, witnessed our Volunteer Spirit firsthand.

Blake said, “I’ve only been married for less than a year, so I’m still learning how to keep up with my wedding ring, but I never expected to lose it in the trash compactor at the Student Union while throwing away trash for the Big Orange Pantry! My heart sank, but before I could even fully panic, the incredible Facilities Services team jumped into action. It felt like the whole university paused to help me find my lost ring. Their determination, teamwork, and kindness turned what could have been a terrible moment into an unforgettable act of support. I’m beyond grateful for my fellow Vols in Facilities Services for going above and beyond to save the day!”



Mechanical Engineering Students Partner with FS

Dr. Miller’s Mechanical Engineering 460 class spent the semester collaborating with Facilities Services to look at energy saving and efficiencies in HVAC systems at Hodges Library, Zeanah Engineering, and ANRB. The findings will then be used by our team to inform our work. We love collaborating with students and faculty in meaningful and impactful ways!



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Adam Trent Graduates UTILA Program



Congratulations to Adam Trent!

We are proud to announce that Adam Trent from our Space Management team has graduated from the University of Tennessee Inclusive Leadership Academy (UTILA). Over the past academic year, Adam and his cohort have engaged in a comprehensive learning experience designed to equip leaders with essential knowledge, leadership skills, and the support needed to foster a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Adam's dedication and growth through this program have made Facilities Services stronger. Join us in celebrating his achievement and commitment to leadership excellence!

FS Awards Two Student Assistant Scholarships

Congratulations to our 2025 Student Assistant Scholarship winners, Ashlynn McManus and Reagan Frye!

Ashlynn and Reagan have shown outstanding dedication to both their academic pursuits and their roles as student employees. We're proud to recognize their hard work and commitment, and it was an honor for the committee to present them with this well-deserved award today. We love supporting and celebrating our amazing students!



STAFF APPRECIATION NOTES

My name is Logan Massey, and I serve as Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority Chapter Advisor. Over the summer I reached out to your department with the need of rekeying our sorority house, after our entire key book went missing. Since the very beginning of this process, you and your team have been incredible to work with. Additionally, I would like to take a moment to recognize one employee in particular, Jeromey White, for going above and beyond in all of our requests.

Jeromey has been quick to respond to any request and even has problem solved with me when he exhausted all of his resources and guided me to an outside company. Through all of this, he has been so kind and professional even in the busiest of times on campus. It has been a pleasure to work with him!

Thank you again for your continued help and thank you Jeromey!

Best Regards,

Logan Massey
Zeta Tau Alpha, General Advisor

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**.



MAY

Ahmad Moadi	5/1	Zachary Childs	6/3	Rickey Parton	7/6
Daniel Webber	5/1	Earl Miller	6/4	Chris Lynd	7/6
Guthrie Butler	5/2	Michael Roysdon	6/4	Steven Mainor	7/7
Alexa Castillo	5/2	Alain Miller	6/5	Stephan Prive	7/7
Chip Pennoyer	5/3	Matthew Murphy	6/5	David Cash	7/8
Ethan Glascock	5/3	Tim Metzger	6/6	Steven Kopp	7/8
Zachary Shaffer	5/3	Liam Fernandez	6/7	Bethany Morris	7/9
Johnny Waggoner	5/4	Kimberly Smith	6/7	Billy Floyd	7/10
Steven Stellmach	5/4	Alexander Potts	6/8	Christopher Stoffer	7/11
Kevin Leising	5/5	Patrick Childress	6/9	Rebecca Alcorn	7/12
Ronald Cannon	5/5	Sam Brown	6/9	Rick Gometz	7/12
Lance Lemaster	5/5	Donnie Carden	6/10	Taylor Phelps	7/12
Herbert Seaman	5/5	Debra Smithers	6/10	Gabriel Barney	7/13
Eric Poe	5/5	Bailey Pauley	6/10	Vaughn Gusby	7/14
Matt McConnell	5/6	Justin Church	6/10	Angela Eidemiller	7/15
Amanda Hankins	5/7	Amlan Kumar Dey	6/10	Jason Poag	7/15
Mike Billington	5/7	Dusten Gibson	6/12	Rick Lemaster	7/15
Ruby Strange	5/10	Danielle Parrott	6/12	David Tye	7/16
Patrick Childress	5/10	Ed Householder	6/12	Netsanet Aboye	7/17
Jade Temple	5/11	Shawn Whitaker	6/13	Raymond Keith	7/18
Teddy Tackett	5/11	Nathaniel Pfeiffer	6/13	Cheryl Miller	7/18
Neal Vercier	5/12	Sharon McKinney	6/15	Donnie Lowery	7/18
Chris Absher	5/12	Mike Huber	6/15	Stephen Bogan	7/18
Mike Duncan	5/13	Brennen Ady	6/16	Dan Smith	7/18
Doug Mikels	5/13	Shane Jones	6/17	Jim Smith	7/19
Jordan Doane	5/13	Mike Howze	6/19	Larry Shoopman	7/19
Chelsey Large	5/14	Candis Sheehan	6/19	Chris Mahoney	7/19
Norman Bumby	5/15	Melanie Reese	6/20	Lawrence Williamson	7/20
Gary Phillips	5/16	Frank Tallman	6/20	Josh Spenard	7/21
Tishayla Mitchell	5/17	Michael Mulryan	6/20	Kenneth Boldt	7/21
Raj Arepalli	5/17	David Hensley	6/21	Bill Wilson	7/21
Chris Spangler	5/17	Abraham Bates	6/21	Ernie Cox	7/21
Temeka McDermott	5/18	Faith Coomer	6/22	Roy Gresham	7/23
Garrett Ferry	5/18	Josh Cash	6/22	Mark Hatfield	7/24
Michael Lowe	5/20	Casey McLemore	6/22	Michael Kent	7/25
Michelle Johnson	5/21	Casey Bailey	6/22	Beronica Francisco Mendez	7/27
Brian Riley	5/22	Wally Beets	6/22	India McAfee	7/27
Jerry Brooks	5/22	Charlie Burton	6/22	David LaLone	7/27
Bob Browne	5/22	Martha Shen	6/23	Rhonda Damron	7/28
Sandra Slusser	5/23	Richard Stacey	6/24	Daniel Carlotta	7/28
Ernest Loveday	5/23	Brad Moats	6/24	Stevin Amonett	7/29
Dwayne Roach	5/23	Austin Nicely	6/24	Curtis Pique	7/29
Chris Rogers	5/24	Aaron Glenn	6/25	Chuck Tidler	7/30
John Huotari	5/26	Cesarie Bulangalire	6/25	Greta Buckman	7/31
Judy Cox	5/26	Nicholas Spina	6/25	Georgia Kalioppe	7/31
Stacy Poe	5/26	Eric Goss	6/28	Jessie Dyke	7/31
Collin Davis	5/28	William Wainwright	6/28		
Corey Debusk	5/29	Joe Whitton	6/28		
Corbin Niece	5/30	Martine Lubelanu	6/29		

JULY

Katie Brown	6/1	Raheem Obaid	7/1
Steve Bodenheimer	6/1	David Warren	7/1
Barbara Tallent	6/1	Kevin Beeler	7/2
Doug Grant	6/2	Fazili Lwanga	7/3
Chris Hinshaw	6/2	Paul Warren	7/4
		William Lee	7/5