



Dr. Bender is a UTC Mildred Routt Distinguished Teaching Professor. She has been a member of the university faculty for more than 30 years. Her undergraduate degree was awarded by the University of Chattanooga, UTC's predecessor. She holds a master's degree from Wake Forest University and an Ed.D in administration and management of higher education from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

Dr. Bender has been a member of the English Department since 1981 after a stint as head of the Department of Human Services Management.

She has served the university on a number of administrative committees including, chairing the Academic Standards Committee, the Instructional Excellence Committee, the Commencement Committee, the Faculty Administrative Relations Committee, and the Faculty Research Committee. She was the First Vice-President of the UTC Faculty Council, and she has served as secretary of the Faculty Council.

She has been active in community service through chairing the A Tale for One City Committee, the Education Committee of St. Nicholas School Board of Trustees, and she has served as a member of the UTC Wesley Center's board of trustees. She is also the Vice-President for the Tennessee Council of Teachers of English (TCTE) for the Chattanooga area and sits on the TCTE Executive Committee.

Dr. Bender serves as a reading consultant for the state of Tennessee's Reading First Program. She conducts frequent workshops and consultation sessions for elementary and high school teachers.

Bender's research interests include literacy and the role of children's and young adult literature in schools. She is currently working with English Department Head Verbie Prevost on a study of children's literature related to the U.S. Civil War.

She has twice led study-abroad courses to the United Kingdom to study the young adult literature of England and Scotland. The most recent trip was in June of 2008 during which her students studied the works and lives of Beatrix Potter, J.K.Rowling, and Robert Louis Stevenson among other authors.

In July, 2008, Dr. Bender was named the Assistant Provost for Student Retention and Success. Her duties include developing and implementing strategies to help students stay in school until the awarding of the bachelor's degree.