



Learning and Leadership are indispensable to each another.

- John F. Kennedy

The challenge of leadership is to be strong, but not rude; be kind, but not weak; be bold, but not bully; be thoughtful, but not lazy; be humble but not timid; be proud, but not arrogant; have humor, but without folly.

- Jim Rohn



The multidisciplinary [UTC LEAD programs](#) are designed to equip participants with an understanding of the relationship that learning and leadership play in the instructional process; develop reflective practitioners in a variety of organizations/institutions; and focus on the interwoven nature of leadership, decision-making, and learning; emphasizing the proficiency that individuals will need as they pursue the challenges of organizational change and/or ever-changing instructional processes and practices.

Honoring Our Veterans

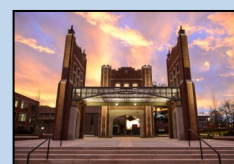


Last Fall, several LEAD faculty members participated in and were honored during the UTC Veterans Day Luncheon. Dr. David Rausch provided introductory remarks, Dr. John Harbison delivered the keynote address, and Drs. Mike Breakey and John Harbison were presented with Quilts of Valor. Additionally, Dr. Harbison was interviewed by the UTC marketing department regarding his commitment to service, learning, and leadership. For details, please visit the following links: [Veterans Day Luncheon](#) & [Leading with Purpose](#)



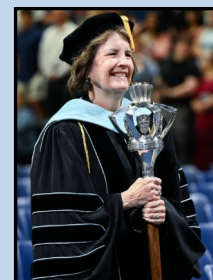
Welcome EdD25 & PhD25 Cohorts

Our newest EdD & PhD scholar-practitioners successfully completed the initial foundational course, LEAD 7000 Learning & Leadership: Induction and Integration, on campus and via the Virtual Classroom (Canvas/Zoom) this past Summer. They are currently enrolled in their first semester of core coursework (leadership, research, and inquiry). Welcome to the LEAD community!



[UT Leadership Institute Spring 2025](#)
Pictured at left are Dr. Adlai Hurt,
Dr. Izzetta Slade, Dr. Elizabeth Crawford,
and Dr. Charley Deal

Congratulations, Dr. Crawford, on
earning the [UTK Master of Legal Studies](#)
degree in Spring 2025!





LEAD Participant/Candidate News

- **Chris Atkins** was the day one keynote speaker at the 10th Annual Conference of the International Society of Accelerated Resolution Therapy (IS-ART). His keynote was focused on key considerations for delivering trauma therapy to military servicemembers and combat veterans. Additionally, Chris co-authored an article, *The minimization and mismanagement of concussions*, in a recent issue of *On Board with Professional Psychology*.
- In April, scholar-practitioners **Marci Reiter** and **Utamu Lackey** were recognized by the UTC Graduate School and LEAD faculty as the 2025 Outstanding Graduate Students for the Applied Leadership and Learning Department (LEAD Doctoral Programs).
- **Lowell “J.R.” Howard**, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, was nominated for the AY25 Civilian Instructor of the Year award, was selected to serve as a Staff Group Advisor, was appointed to a five-year term as Asst. Professor, and is currently serving on an interdisciplinary curriculum committee tasked with integrating generative AI into the Advanced Operations Course.
- **April Kidd**, Instructor at Chattanooga State Community College, recently published an article in the *Teaching and Learning Excellence through Scholarship* journal entitled, *Higher Ed in Half the Time: A Literature Review on the Shortened Course Format*.
- **Abby Wall** was pleased to be invited to lead a roundtable discussion with UTC's Executive Director of Housing at the annual TACUHO conference on the topic of Residence Life practices and advice for people wanting to stay in the field.
- **Marleah Payne**, Registered Dietician at CHI Memorial Hospital, co-published the *Food Science Lab Student Manual* she and her colleagues been working on for 2 years. It is now available through Cognella publishing for food science courses in higher education. It is also available on Amazon for anyone interested in purchasing and exploring the science of food in their own kitchen or food science lab.



Summer 2026 LEAD Admission Timeline

Applications will be accepted to our Summer 2026 PhD and EdD cohorts from **December 1, 2025, through February 27, 2026**. If your colleagues with a Master's degree (or higher) from a regionally accredited institution are interested in pursuing their terminal degree at UTC, please encourage them to contact our LEAD Program Office team at utclead@utc.edu for more information.



LEAD Participant/Candidate News (Continued)



In April, LEAD faculty members, Dr. Ashleigh Pipes and Dr. Cindy Williamson, joined a group of LEAD 7390 Research Seminar participants for the poster presentation session of the [UTC Spring Research and Arts Conference](#). Since that time, several of our LEAD scholar-practitioners have published their research in journals related to their professional practice. Congratulations and best wishes on the next stages of your research projects!

- **Brent Goldberg**, UTC Vice Chancellor for Finance & Administration, was recently appointed to the executive committee of the Board of Directors for River City Company and was appointed by Chattanooga City Council to serve as a member of the Industrial Development Board.
- **April Romero**, Sr. Enterprise Project Director with the State of TN, is pleased to report that her daughter is in her freshman year of college at Lipscomb University.
- **Hailey Flavin**, Director of Harm Reduction & Univ. Relations for Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity, received the Hazing Prevention Hero award through the Hazing Prevention Network. She was also awarded the Alpha Chi Omega Outstanding Fraternity/Sorority Advisor Award and currently works part time for the Piazza Center, a hazing prevention research center.
- **Rebecca Alcorn**, UTK Training Manager, has recently become a Gallup Certified CliftonStrengths Coach and has also published, *Developing Tradespeople in FM to Avoid the Loss of Institutional Knowledge due to the Looming Retirement Boom*, to the IFMA Knowledge Library.
- **Jalonda Thompson**, Adjunct Faculty Member at Salem College, has published articles in the *Journal of Higher Education and Student Affairs* and was an invited to discuss her article at the Gather with GCPA webinar.
- This year, **Peggy Reisser** is serving as President-Elect of the Staff Senate at the UT Health Science Center. She previously served as Communications Chair.



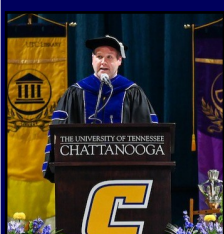
Please Share Your News!

If you have any professional or personal updates to share, we'd love to hear from you! Please visit the following survey link:

[Learning and Leadership Update Survey](#)



LEAD Alumni News



In May, President of TN Wesleyan University and LEAD program graduate, **Dr. Tyler Forrest**, was invited to deliver the Commencement address at the UTC Graduate School Ceremony.

Thank you for sharing your leadership perspective with the Mocs community, Dr. Forrest!



- In July, **Dr. Renard Miles**, Exec. Director of Career Development & Professional Engagement at William & Mary, began a two-year term on the National Association of Colleges and Employers Board as a Director-College.
- **Dr. Matt Johnson** has transitioned to a system-level position as the District Integrated Student Support Lead for Hamilton County Schools. Dr. Johnson has also joined the national board for the APA Division 15 (Educational Psychology) Policy Committee, as well as the Mental Health Literacy Collaborative's Mental Health Literacy-Interstate Workgroup as a TN representative.
- **Dr. Eva Lewis** plans to retire from the University of AL at Birmingham at the end of 2025. She is looking forward to some potential part-time or project work as well as spending time with her soon-to-be six grandchildren... her daughter will be having identical twins in January!
- This fall, **Dr. Rebecca Littleton** was recognized for 15 years of service to UTC in her role as Admissions Program Coordinator for Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy.
- **Dr. Brandy Schneider (Leffler)**, Athletic Training Program Director/Asst. Professor at Truman State Univ., has presented on teaching strategies and clinical education feedback for the Athletic Training community and has presented on psychological readiness to return to play to the ACSM regional conference.
- **Dr. James Abbott** graduated from the LEAD program in May, retired from the Murfreesboro Police Department after thirty years in law enforcement., and has started working full-time as a lecturer in the Criminal Justice Department at MTSU.
- **Dr. Gerry Stark** currently serves as Director of Clinical Operations and Technical Support at BionIT Labs and President for the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists. He has also contributed two chapters to the Prosthetic Atlas reference 5th edition.



LEAD Alumni News (Continued)

- **Dr. Lee Casson** recently received a Master of Liberal Arts (with honors) from Johns Hopkins University and was selected as an M.L.A. Fellow during his tenure. During this time, he also published scholarly articles in *The Journal of the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs* and presented at various colloquia. Dr. Casson continues to work at the Baylor School and serves as a Master Instructor and Team Lead.
- This spring, **Dr. Adlai Hurt** participated in the UT System Leadership Institute hosted at the UTC. The 2025 cohort was comprised of 50 selected leaders from across the UT System representing many departments and positions aiming to lead positive change (BE ONE UT values). This summer, Dr. Hurt was selected for the new role of Executive Director of Gift Planning at the UTK within the UT Foundation, Inc.
- **Dr. Joyce McPherson's** biography, "A Quiet Faith: The Story of Jane Austen," was published in July. In She has been speaking on Austen, George MacDonald, and C.S. Lewis at conferences in England, Romania, and the U.S.
- **Dr. Mandie Beeler** has transitioned from a staff role at UTK to a half time teaching role for the Haslam College of Business (Student Engagement and Leadership, focusing on strategic business leadership) and the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences (Leadership Studies Minor focusing on introduction to leadership theory and practice). She absolutely loves being a lecturer!
- **Dr. Rebecca Pennington** currently serves as an Education Specialist for the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. Her role is to support EPPs as they complete the program approval process, and to create policies and procedures for implementation of Georgia standards for program approval.



*The LEAD Programs Faculty & Staff Team
December 2025*