



2024 ANNUAL REPORT



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

BAKER SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC POLICY & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Dr. Marianne Wanamaker

Professor of Economics and Public Policy and
Dean of the Baker School of Public Policy and Public Affairs

WHAT A YEAR IT HAS BEEN FOR THE BAKER SCHOOL!

In April 2024, we came together for a truly special moment — the formal dedication of the Howard H. Baker Jr. School of Public Policy and Public Affairs. With a ribbon-cutting, a gala, and a heartwarming reunion of Senator Baker’s former staff, the weekend was nothing short of magical. It left our team energized, inspired, and more committed than ever to shaping the next generation of public problem solvers.

By August, we proudly welcomed our first class of extremely talented undergraduate students and an expanded group of graduate students, 145 students in total. It is hard to describe just how talented and eager these young people are.

Throughout the fall, our students embraced the challenges of a divisive presidential election with thoughtfulness and resilience. They watched debates together, engaged in respectful discussions across ideological lines, and came together post-election to process and analyze the results — an incredible testament to the values we instill at the Baker School.

The lessons from their Institute of American Civics courses are coming to life in real ways. One student has made it a habit to meet with an elected official they fundamentally disagree with — engaging in dialogue, not division. Meanwhile, another group is working on their own version of our signature podcast, “You Might Be Right.”

Looking back, 2024 was a landmark year — the year we launched our undergraduate major, welcomed more students than ever, and saw our mission in action like never before.

Thank you for being part of this journey. We can’t wait to see what’s next!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M Wanamaker".

145

BAKER SCHOOL STUDENTS

2024 IN NUMBERS

82
UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENTS



63
GRADUATE
STUDENTS

53
FACULTY
AND STAFF

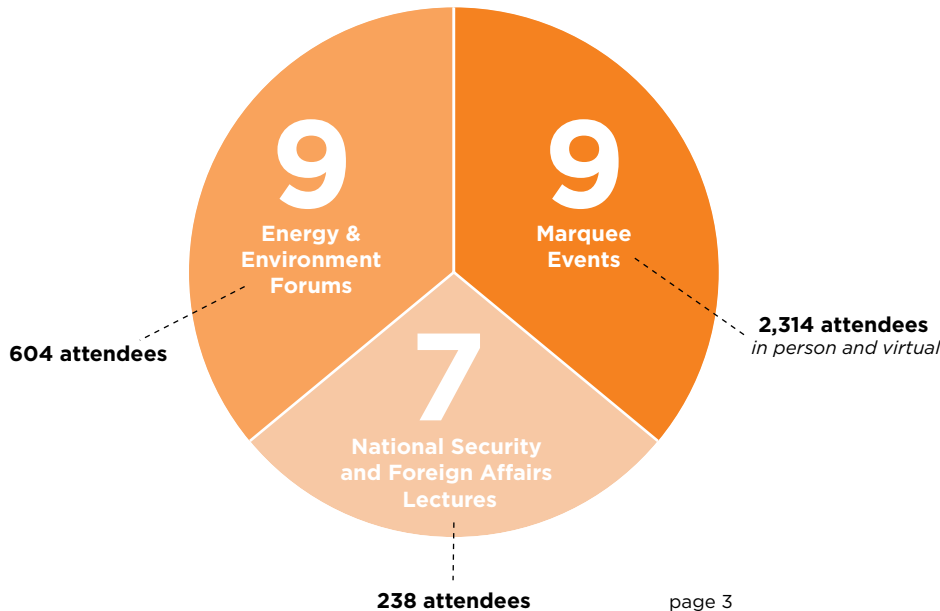


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**Named Baker
Scholarships
Established**



People served/reached through the Institute of American Civics



downloads of



podcast



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BAKER SCHOOL NEWS

PROMINENT TENNESSEANS ENDOW BAKER SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS

Six esteemed Tennesseans have pledged \$500,000 each to endow four-year undergraduate scholarships at the Baker School. The \$3 million in endowed gifts will support six named scholarships for four years of study. The founding donors include Tennesseans who have made a significant difference in public policy, public service, philanthropy, and education:

- Al Gore, 45th U.S. vice president, former U.S. senator, U.S. representative from Tennessee, and Nobel Peace Prize recipient
- Lamar Alexander, former Tennessee governor, U.S. senator from Tennessee, U.S. secretary of education, and president of the University of Tennessee System
- Natalie Haslam, philanthropist
- James A. Haslam II, Pilot Company founder, philanthropist, and Baker School board chair
- Heath Shuler, former U.S. Congressman, and his wife, Nikol Shuler
- Bill Powers, Tennessee state senator and former staffer for Senator Howard H. Baker, and his wife, Fran Powers



Sophomore Scotty Brown interned in Washington, D.C. with Senator Bill Hagerty

TWENTY-THREE UT STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN CONGRESSIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Sophomore Scotty Brown, a public affairs and economics major, interned for Senator Bill Hagerty through the Congressional Internship Program (CIP). “Honestly, one of the most exciting parts of being an intern is seeing politicians everywhere,” Brown said. “Politics aside, it’s surreal to work in a place where you’re surrounded by high-profile politicians all the time.” Supported by the Baker School and the Center for Career Development and Academic Exploration, 23 UT students participated in CIP. The program provides students opportunities to work with legislators in Washington, D.C. Students selected to participate are provided with housing at no cost to the student and work closely with legislative staff on various projects.

BOON & SCOTT COMPLETE PRESTIGIOUS SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

Baker School graduate assistants Aom Boon and Jackson Scott leveraged their education and experience to land prestigious summer internships. Boon, who works with the Center for National Security and Foreign Affairs, spent the summer interning for the East-West Center in Washington, D.C. Scott drew on his experience as a teaching assistant in his internship at the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu, Hawaii.

PI ALPHA ALPHA INDUCTION

Baker School graduate students Carsen Blake, Zachary Marlow, Maggie Lingle, and Brian Sekita were inducted into Pi Alpha Alpha on May 17. PAA is the Global Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration. To qualify for membership, students must have maintained a GPA of at least 3.7 and completed at least 50% of the required coursework. Blake and Marlow earned their Master of Public Policy Administration degrees in May. Lingle and Sekita are currently enrolled in the Master of Public Administration program.

FACING TENNESSEE'S GRAND CHALLENGES IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

The Baker School partnered with University Honors to host the semester-long Grand Challenges Program. The program offers students a unique opportunity to participate in expert-led discussions and peer engagements to better understand how Tennessee's Grand Challenges impact Tennessee and local communities. Knox County Schools Superintendent Jon Rysewyk joined UT College of Education, Health, and Human Services Dean Ellen McIntyre to discuss **advancing K-12 education**. Commissioner Marie Williams, who heads Tennessee's Department of

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, discussed **overcoming addiction** with Jennifer Tourville, executive director of the UT Institute for Public Service's SMART Initiative. Baker School Dean Marianne Wanamaker moderated a panel discussion on **strengthening rural communities**, including Anderson County Mayor Terry Frank, Roane County Mayor Wade Creswell, and Associate Professor Sreedhar Upendram from the Department of Agricultural and Resources Economics. Students found the sessions rewarding as they provided new insights into their communities.



Knox County Schools Superintendent Jon Rysewyk shared his first-hand insights on strengthening Tennessee's schools with the Grand Challenges program participants.

BAKER SCHOOL NEWS

VALLEY PATHWAYS STUDY PRELIMINARY RESULTS RELEASED

The Tennessee Valley Authority and the Baker School launched the Valley Pathways Study in February 2023 to evaluate the existing environmental landscape and explore opportunities to reduce carbon emissions and create a competitive, sustainable economy. The study defined commonly agreed-upon facts for causes of greenhouse gas emissions and examined what it would truly take to get to net zero by 2050. The study found that partnerships across all sectors of the economy will be crucial to success. Key insights:

- The region is home to about 3 percent of the U.S. population and 3 percent of U.S. emissions.
- Consistent with national data, the transportation sector is the largest source of emissions in the region.
- Electricity generation produces approximately 27 percent of emissions.

IAC'S WEAVER INVITED TO CLEMSON'S TEACHER-SCHOLAR PROGRAM

Dr. Frankie Nicole Weaver, educational outreach programs manager for the Institute of American Studies (IAC), was selected to join the second cohort of Clemson University's Civic Engagement and Voting Rights Teacher Scholars Program. The program allows faculty from across the country to work together to create classroom teaching materials to support a thriving American democracy. Weaver joined 23 other Teacher Scholars from institutions nationwide in the

program's second cohort, which kicked off with the 2024 Summer Institute in June. The program will continue with virtual meetings through May 2025.

UT ENHANCING NUCLEAR EDUCATION BY PARTNERING WITH ORNL

The Baker School has entered a strategic partnership with Oak Ridge National Laboratory. The collaboration aims to enrich UT's curricular offerings in nuclear policy and national security while enhancing the capabilities of ORNL's technical staff. "It is a natural partnership between the Baker School and ORNL to work together training students in nuclear policy, nuclear security, and national security," said Krista Wiegand, professor and director of the Center for National Security and Foreign Affairs. "We are excited to prepare undergraduate and graduate students for careers in these fields and to broaden the expertise of ORNL technical staff in public policy."

"YOU MIGHT BE RIGHT" PODCAST FOCUSES ON POLARIZATION IN SEASON FIVE

In September, the Baker School launched a new season of "You Might Be Right," a podcast hosted by former Tennessee Governors Phil Bredesen and Bill Haslam. In the new season, Governors Bredesen and Haslam spoke with experts on polarization. Through in-depth conversations with a variety of guests, they explored the impact of polarization on civic discourse and politics, seeking solutions to turn down the temperature and foster more constructive debate. In addition to the six new episodes, Bredesen and Haslam made presentations at Georgetown University and Davidson College.

STANTON FOUNDATION GRANT FUNDS DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR SECURITY COURSE

Baker School Professor and Director of the Center for National Security and Foreign Affairs Krista Wiegand developed HBS 456/556: Nuclear Policy and Deterrence with the support of a grant from The Stanton Foundation. Graduate Teaching Assistant Jackson Scott also contributed to the course, which aims to teach students to apply concepts and theories about nuclear politics, nonproliferation, and deterrence to the policy process.

“ The missions we serve constantly require creative new ways of looking at issues and a workforce prepared to address emerging challenges from many perspectives. We are thrilled to partner with the Baker School to launch new initiatives aimed at enhancing our workforce. ”

Moe Khaleel, PhD.
ORNL Associate Laboratory Director



Governors Phil Bredesen and Bill Haslam were joined by authors Hyrum Lewis and Verlan Lewis for a live taping of the “You Might Be Right” podcast in September.



NSFA Director Krista Wiegand joined Oak Ridge National Laboratory Associate Laboratory Director Moe Kaheel to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between UT-Battelle and the Baker School.

TEN NEW SCHOLARS JOIN THE BAKER SCHOOL FACULTY

Ten experts from across the country joined the Baker School Faculty on August 1, ahead of the start of the fall semester.

The new faculty's expertise ranges from public administration, political theory, and economics to environmental and energy policy. They include a former member of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, a Fulbright Professor, and highly sought-after researchers.

These experts accompany a diverse and robust faculty that advances the Baker School's mission to graduate skilled problem solvers, grounded in the legacy of Howard Baker and prepared to take leadership roles in their communities.

BAKER SCHOOL



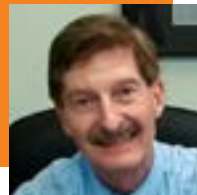
Tara Bryan, associate professor, has expertise in organization theory and behavior, planning and evaluation in public and nonprofit organizations, and the role of philanthropic foundations in building

nonprofit capacity. Bryan was previously an associate professor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha's School of Public Administration and spent a year as a Visiting Fulbright Professor at Masaryk University in the Czech Republic.



Timothy Fitzgerald, associate professor, has expertise in natural resource and environmental economics, focusing on energy issues. Fitzgerald was Chief International Economist for the

White House Council of Economic Advisers from 2017-2018 and currently serves on the Energy & Environmental Markets Advisory Committee at the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.



David Folz, adjunct professor, has expertise in public administration, American politics, and state and local government. Folz is a long-serving member of the UTK faculty with over 40 years of experience. He is a

former director of the Master of Public Policy and Administration program and is returning to UT to lend his expertise to the Baker School's graduate programs.



Jack Mewhirter, associate professor, has expertise in public policy and the study of complex governance systems. Mewhirter previously served as director of Graduate Studies at the University of Cincinnati's School

of Public and International Affairs. In 2021, he received a National Science Foundation grant for his research on public health and civil rights trade offs during the COVID 19 pandemic.

CENTER FOR ENERGY, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY



Andrew Balthrop, assistant professor at the Baker School and the Haslam College of Business. His expertise is in supply chain management and resource economics.

Balthrop was previously at the Sam M. Walton College of Business at the University of Arkansas.



Dale Manning, associate professor at the Baker School and the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. His expertise is in natural resource economics, environmental economics,

and development economics. Manning was previously an associate professor at Colorado State University's Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics.

INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN CIVICS



Tiffany Barron, assistant professor, has expertise in political theory, comparative politics, and international relations. Before joining the Baker School faculty, Barron was an assistant professor at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.



Kody Cooper, associate professor, has expertise in constitutional law, political theory, and American government. Cooper was previously the UC Foundation Associate Professor at the

University of Tennessee, Chattanooga.



Andy Busch, associate director of the IAC and professor, is an expert in American political institutions, elections, and public policy. Prior to joining UT, Busch was the Rose Institute of State

and Local Government director at Claremont McKenna College.



David Scott, lecturer, has expertise in American politics, judicial politics, and political theory. Scott has been with the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, since 2018 but is new to the Baker School.

RESEARCH ROUNDUP

“ Research serves as the primary means to generate new knowledge, advance understanding within a field, challenge existing theories, and contribute to developing solutions for real-world problems. Our Baker School faculty, fellows, and students are contributing greatly to the scholarly activity at UT, exploring topics from energy security to non profit management and much more. ”

Dr. Marianne Wanamaker

Dean of the Baker School of Public Policy and Public Affairs

David Greene and **Ben Leard** have published their work on vehicle scrappage in *Transportation Research: Policy and Practice*. The study examines how new vehicles replace the existing stock of used vehicles and explores the effects of the rate at which the benefits of regulations requiring safety technologies, controls on pollutant emissions, and energy efficiency improvements are fully realized.

Krista Wiegand's article was published in the *Journal of Peace Research*. The article introduces the Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) Identity Claims Dataset about identity claims—when two countries diplomatically contest the treatment of an ethnic group that both countries share across their borders. This data project was funded by a Minerva grant from the Office of Naval Research in the Department of Defense.


Andrew Balthrop published his work examining the impacts of marijuana legalization on safety in the trucking industry in the *Journal of Business Logistics*. The study tested whether legalization has affected crash rates by using a state-level panel of heavy truck crash statistics from 2005 to 2021 and a difference-in-difference estimation strategy.

Andrew Busch's *Ronald Reagan and the Firing of the Air Traffic Controllers* was published as part of the Landmark Presidential Decisions series from the University of Kansas Press. The book examines President Ronald Reagan's decision to fire striking air traffic controllers, prosecute their leaders, and decertify their union.

In 2024, **Charles Sims** published six papers in publications, including the *Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*, *Energies*, the *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism*, the *Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists*, *Land Economics*, and *Ecological Economics*. Sims' research covered a range of topics, from incentivization and rooftop solar adoption to how environmental policy uncertainty impacts the economy.

Dale Manning published research in *Review of Environmental Economics and Policy*, *Energy and Sustainable Development*, and *Water Resources Research*. His work examined environmental resource economics, price impacts of energy used for cooking in Rwanda, and water management.

Tara Bryan published a book chapter that considers the classroom a community laboratory and suggests pedagogical strategies for engaging students in helping solve community problems and issues. *The Classroom Laboratory* appears in *Engaged Learning in the Public Service Classroom* (Routledge, 2024). She also published an article in *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. The empirical piece examines how learning environments and practices influence how data is used in nonprofit organizations.



GRADUATE SCHOOL PROVES TO BE A DREAM COME TRUE FOR FEATURED TWIRLER FAITH BARRETT

From the time seven-year-old Faith Barrett found her mother's battered baton in the garage, she was hooked. Barrett began baton twirling at her local YMCA, and the medals and trophies stacked up as she competed in state and national championships.

Baton twirling is a discipline that combines gymnastics and dance while using a baton or batons. Performers who twirl batons are called majorettes and often perform with marching bands. Majorettes are expected to demonstrate both technical skill and artistic expression.

The Southeastern Conference (SEC) has a storied and rich history in football. Marching bands, many of which feature majorette lines and featured twirlers, are a celebrated tradition throughout the SEC. A native of San Diego, Barrett caught glimpses of SEC football Saturdays, and a dream took hold — to become a member of a majorette line at an SEC school.

In high school, Barrett won the national championship in her specialty of three batons. With the title of All-West Regional Miss Majorette in 2019, she seemed well on her way to making that dream come true. Then, the COVID-19 pandemic hit and prevented Barrett from traveling to visit colleges. She enrolled closer to home at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

Barrett's dream of twirling in the SEC remained, and she had a plan to make it happen. Taking an accelerated path through her undergraduate studies would allow her to pursue graduate studies at an SEC school and audition to become a majorette. She earned her undergraduate in public affairs in three years while performing as a featured twirler with the UCLA Bruin Marching Band.

In April of 2023, weeks before she graduated, Barrett flew to Knoxville to audition to become a featured twirler in the University of Tennessee's Pride of the Southland Band. She applied to graduate school at the Howard H. Baker Jr. School of Public Policy and Public Affairs (Baker School).

Serving as a youth ambassador for the City of San Marcos and working in the Parks and Recreation Department in high school, she developed interests in urban planning, social welfare, and policy. With an undergraduate degree in public policy, the newly established Baker School was the perfect place for Barrett to chase another dream - to work in local government.

Barrett was selected as a featured twirler and enrolled at the Baker School in the Fall of 2023.

"It was a culture shock, but in a good way," Barrett said when asked what it was like coming from the West Coast to East Tennessee. "The atmosphere here is completely different; the student body is like nothing I have ever experienced. The students here make the University what it is."

While the lure of Big Orange football traditions has met Barrett's expectations, she says her educational opportunities have even exceeded those. "It ended up working out where I could do research at the University and everything fell into place perfectly. I feel like this is truly where I was meant to be," Barrett said.

Barrett balances two graduate courses a semester with 20 hours a week as a research assistant, plus majorette practice with the band four times a week. That is all in addition to game days on Rocky Top. Her research, with Robert Kelchen, professor and department head at the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences' Postsecondary Education Research Center, focuses on higher education institutions' graduate studies, new master's programs and how much students put into college versus how much they get out.

Game day at UT is a thrill for Barrett, but her favorite part is marching through campus with the band during the pregame activities. When the band gets right outside the stadium after its winding horizontal route through campus, it stops briefly for the majorettes to take center stage with the "Salute to the Hill" routine and their batons dazzling the thousands of Vol fans who have assembled for another treasured football tradition, the Vol Walk.

As the featured twirler in her final year, Barrett was featured with solo and highlighted performances during football season. She is on track to graduate in May 2025 and is looking forward to returning to the West Coast, where she hopes to combine her education and experiences to work in event planning for her local parks and recreation department.



Masters of Public Administration degree candidate Faith Barrett completed her time as a featured twirler in the Pride of the Southland band with a featured solo during the 2024 Vol Football season. She will graduate in May.

And that seven-year-old with the battered baton, she's proud of where her twirling has taken her. She'll always remember the ground shaking beneath her as she steps onto the field. "When Rocky Top is playing, and you hear all the fans singing, it is one of the coolest things I've ever been a part of."

A photograph of three people standing in a museum or trophy room. On the left is a man in a blue blazer and orange polo shirt. In the center is a younger man in a blue suit and pink tie, holding a small trophy. On the right is a woman in a green quilted jacket. The background is filled with various trophies and framed photos on display cases.

CADE SIMMONS HOME SWEET HOME AT THE BAKER SCHOOL

Growing up in Tennessee's second-smallest county, Cade Simmons took every opportunity to get involved with his community. He served in national and statewide leadership roles in 4-H, was president of his high school's Future Farmers of America chapter, and was student council vice president. Simmons volunteered with community organizations, including Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, Students Against Destructive Decisions, and his county's UT extension office.

His leadership experiences allowed him to meet many elected officials, including Governor Bill Lee, Speaker of the House Cameron Sexton, and State Representative Ron Travis. He said those meetings inspired him to pursue policy as a career.

When choosing where to attend college, Simmons sought a sense of community and a place to collaborate with others. With aspirations of continuing to make a difference for his community through policy work, his choice came down to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and Harvard University.

"A lot of people might pack their bags and book a flight to Cambridge as soon as they see that acceptance notice from Harvard," Simmons said. "I always describe it like a twinkle in the eyes. When you talk to people at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, there is always that passion, that fire, that light that is lit behind their eyes. You could tell everyone was motivated by what they were learning and what they were working on, and that drove my decision."

In August, Simmons enrolled at UT and joined the inaugural class of public affairs majors at the Howard H. Baker Jr. School of Public Policy and Public Affairs. It was a big change to go from a class size of 60 people in high school to a major university where he was one of over 9,000 freshmen.

“There are so many incredible opportunities to get involved. I wanted to do everything, just like I had back in high school,” Simmons said. “I had to take a step back and learn time management. It’s been a place of growth for me, to make choices and prioritize rather than dive into everything.”

Another difference Simmons has had to adjust to is the diversity of perspectives he is exposed to. Coming from a small community, he has always been surrounded by people who share his life experiences and had the same perspectives.

“I have been challenged to get out of my comfort zone and meet new people,” Simmons said. I am very thankful for it. I think UT is a great place to do it because there is encouragement to have those conversations here.”

While the diverse perspectives were one of the biggest surprises he’s found at UT, the Baker School has been integral to processing and managing the change he is experiencing. He notes that respect for opposing viewpoints is a core value the school emphasizes.

“You come to a college campus and worry that your perspective might not be shared or valued. You have these ideas that are finished and done, but when you are here, you are encouraged to revisit them. The current belief on it may be right, but we should still re-examine them,” Simmons said.

In his first semester, Simmons took the Institute of American Civics (IAC) 101 course, Engaging Civically. Reading about different views from philosophers and leaders like Plato, John Stuart Mill, Aristotle, and Martin Luther King, Jr. gave Simmons and his classmates a broad overview of citizenship and the responsibilities of an engaged citizen.

While he has exercised restraint in getting too involved, he has still found ways to lean into leadership opportunities. Simmons joined UT’s Student Government Association and was appointed Student Government Chair for the First Year Council. He and members of the inaugural class established the Civic Engagement Roundtable as one of the first new student organizations at the Baker School. Simmons is also a part of the University Honors Program, a Haslam Leadership Scholar, and a Manning Scholar.

Another Baker School program that shaped his first semester at UT was the Grand Challenges Program. The University of Tennessee System has identified the state’s three grand challenges: advancing K-12 education, strengthening rural

communities, and overcoming addiction. The Baker School and University Honors partner to provide students with a unique opportunity to participate in expert-led discussions and peer engagements to gain an understanding of how these challenges impact Tennessee and local communities.

“The Grand Challenges Program was an incredible experience. I am really excited to see where that development takes me,” Simmons said. “The one I latched onto the most was rural connections. Growing up in a rural community and talking about what strengths those communities have made it very special. It motivates me to go out and apply that knowledge by developing policy and programs that will make a difference.”

Simmons looks forward to diving deeper into public affairs coursework and taking another IAC course as he moves into his second semester. He also plans to find new ways to engage with his classmates and Baker School Activities.

“Being a part of this first class of public affairs students has been really special. It feels like we are really being able to trailblaze our path. We get to determine how policy will be discussed here at UT. It’s been incredible,” Simmons said. “It’s just a great place to be. I just say come and find your home here at the Baker School.”



Freshman Public Affairs major Cade Simmons participated in a small group session with former U.S. Senator Bob Corker this fall.



INSTITUTE OF
AMERICAN CIVICS

NEARLY 80 TEACHERS FROM ACROSS TENNESSEE ATTEND TENNESSEE CIVICS ACADEMY



The Institute of American Civics presented the second annual Tennessee Civics Academy at the Baker School in June.

In June, the Institute of American Civics (IAC) welcomed nearly 80 K-12 educators from 31 counties to the Tennessee Civics Academy.

In its second year, the Tennessee Civics Academy is a two-day professional development conference that provides space for K-12 educators to discuss ways to foster and teach civic education topics and nurture civic engagement and viewpoint diversity among Tennessee's youth.

The program alternated between panel discussions and academic presentations. Baker School faculty presented on The Constitution of the United States, highlighting freedom of religion, the Fourth Amendment as it applies to education, and the Tennessee Constitution. Educator panel discussions covered topics including teaching during a presidential election year and strategies for getting students excited about civics. There was also a panel featuring community business leaders that discussed civics and the private sector and a presentation and moderated discussion by Tennessee State Board of Education Deputy Executive Director Michael Deurlein.

Baker School Dean Marianne Wanamaker and University of Tennessee, Chattanooga Probasco Chair of Free Enterprise Claudia Williamson Kramer presented a session entitled "Teaching Economics, Contemporary Issues, and U.S. Government using the 2024 Presidential Election." Wanamaker and Kramer opened their session with a blind taste test, comparing Coca-Cola produced in the United States with that produced in Mexico. The experiment illustrated how economic policy can impact daily life. In this case, U.S. government subsidies have made it cheaper to use corn syrup to sweeten products than sugar.

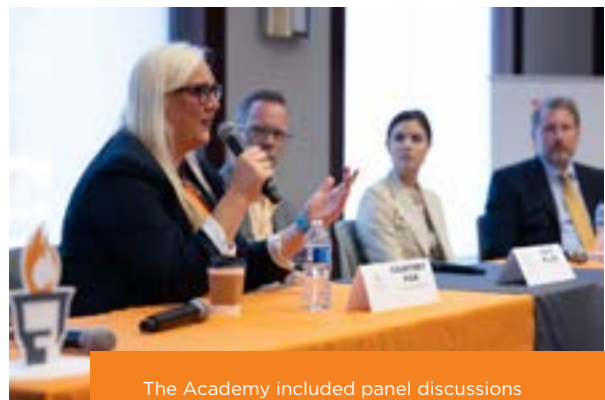
"The Tennessee Civics Academy is a lot different than other professional development for teachers. It is cool because you get to interact with other teachers, but you also get a lot of experts," said Staci Parvin, a teacher at Hardin Valley Academy. "I feel like we don't normally get a lot of content experts. I enjoy this the most because it is up-to-date government information that I can go and share with my students."



Educators representing 31 counties in Tennessee gathered at the Baker School for a two-day conference on civics education.

In addition to the sessions at the Baker School, attendees were also treated to an academy partner reception, dinner, and keynote talk by IAC Associate Director of Outreach Bill Lyons, who also served in Knoxville City Government for many years. Lyons discussed the rebirth of downtown Knoxville, specifically the private/public collaboration to redevelop Market Square. Fittingly, the dinner coincided with a perfect example of how this project has impacted the area as the parade and celebration for UT's College World Series Champion Volunteer Baseball team was taking place in Market Square at the same time. Following the dinner, attendees were invited to walk over to tour the Museum of East Tennessee History.

IAC Educational Outreach Program Manager Frankie Nicole Weaver developed and facilitated the program with the assistance of UT student leaders and 15 high school student interns.



The Academy included panel discussions and academic presentations.



TRANSPORTATION POLICY DRIVES BAKER SCHOOL'S RESEARCH IN ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

From fuel economy to EV adoption rates, the Center for Energy, Transportation, and Environment Policy (CETEP) studies the myriad ways energy and environment research provides critical insights for transportation policy decisions. Although transportation is a new word in the center's name, it does not suggest a new direction of research.

A prime example of how research informs policy is the landmark Valley Pathways Study published by the Baker School and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in 2023. The study explores ways to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the Tennessee Valley region by 2050. Electrifying all passenger vehicles and moving to low-carbon fuels for heavy-duty vehicles like trucks, trains, and planes – one of the study's many strategies – would cut GHG emissions by 90%.

Transportation policy also affects Tennessee's economy, supply chain, and workforce. CETEP Senior Fellow and Research Professor David Greene spoke this past summer at the Drive Electric Tennessee's Momentum Summit on the importance of the electric vehicle (EV) industry for Tennessee's economy, including the benefits of retraining the workforce with the skills needed to manufacture electric vehicles, their batteries, and other parts.

CETEP's research is accomplished through a network of faculty and affiliates whose research covers many topics. One duo has been responsible for much of the center's transportation policy research – Greene and Assistant Professor Benjamin Leard.

Over the last few years, Greene and Leard have been working on a research project for

Oak Ridge National Laboratory that can help policymakers understand how soon electric vehicles will likely make up most vehicles on the road. This information is key to estimating whether the U.S. can meet its goal to cut all GHG emissions from the transportation sector by 2050, using strategies that include a major shift to EVs. According to Greene and Leard, it is not just a matter of manufacturing more EVs. The pair has analyzed the used vehicle market and found that the longevity of cars and light trucks has increased for half a century. This means that even if an owner decides to trade in an older, gas-powered vehicle, it is now durable enough to stay in the used market longer before it is retired and scrapped.

It led Greene and Leard to ask how longer vehicle life affects the market for electric vehicles. Leard, an economist, wanted to explore how subsidizing EV purchases could affect the prices of used vehicles and their longevity. The two researchers developed a model and created a statistical estimation of trends in scrappage and the continued survival of light-duty vehicles. They have also begun researching how these factors may vary state by state.

Today, Greene has shifted his research focus from petroleum supply to addressing greenhouse gas emissions. Greene says this is the most exciting public policy issue for the next few years in the transportation sector. Leard is working with CETEP Senior Research Associate Jilleah Welch to build a forecasting model for TVA that will forecast EV registration in Tennessee counties using inputs such as household demographics and vehicle characteristics. This model will be helpful for anticipating the locations of future greenhouse gas emissions and electricity demand in the TVA region.



NSFA'S U.S.-JAPAN DIPLOMACY ACADEMY FULFILLS STATE DEPARTMENT'S GRANT REQUEST

In September, the Center for National Security and Foreign Affairs developed and presented a week-long U.S.-Japan Diplomacy Academy. The program was funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Embassy-Tokyo, and U.S. Consulate General-Sapporo. NSFA Director Krista Wiegand and UT lecturer Elis Vllasi traveled to Japan. They collaborated with faculty from host universities to present a unique learning opportunity to students in northern Japan.

The State Department requested proposals to produce a program that would expose northern Japanese students to U.S. and Japanese diplomacy and partnership. Wiegand, who has vast experience and knowledge of the region and a strong record of developing diplomacy courses and programs, developed a five-day intensive diplomacy academy, along with Vllasi and the participating Japanese faculty.

Having visited Hokkaido University in 2022 with a delegation from UT's Center for Global Engagement, she reached out to the local faculty, asking if they would be interested in participating. It was an easy ask. At Tohoku University, she didn't know anyone personally, but they were also very eager to participate. Both universities are prestigious, national public universities similar in size and scope to UT.

"When you bring together faculty and students from two different countries and cultures, the educational benefits are far richer than what students are normally exposed to," Wiegand said.

The lectures were taught in English, with the Japanese faculty interpreting when needed. Wiegand noted a significant improvement in the students' English by the end of the week, especially in their presentations.

The intensive program started with a foundation of international relations content, including classes on power politics, alliances, diplomacy, and hybrid warfare.

Students were instructed on the importance of strategic communications and its benefits in writing policy briefs and working within the Japanese government. They also interacted with U.S. diplomats from the U.S. Consulate in Sapporo and with Japanese Ground Self-Defense Forces (JGSDF) and visited JGSDF bases.

The Academy concluded with the simulation exercise. On the first day of the simulation, students researched and wrote policy briefs as if



The U.S.- Japan Diplomacy Academy in September was funded by a grant from the State Department.

they were briefing the Japanese prime minister. On day two, they presented their findings and recommendations in a formal briefing with JGSDF officers present.

Wiegand hopes that the students who participated continue their interest in international relations, no matter their chosen careers. She said the experience should help them become conscious of how foreign affairs affect their everyday lives.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT: **HEATH SHULER**

Heath Shuler is the model of the public problem-solver we aspire to develop at the Baker School. The Swain County, North Carolina, native served in the U.S. House of Representatives for three terms (2007-2013), representing North Carolina's 11th Congressional District. A Democrat who co-chaired the Blue Dog Coalition, a group of moderate Democrats from conservative-leaning districts, Shuler demonstrated bipartisanship, maintaining a voting record that reflected an even balance between Democratic and Republican positions.

Since leaving Congress, the former Volunteer and NFL quarterback has returned to Knoxville, where he has launched his own real estate agency while also working as a consultant and guest speaker. Shuler, a proud VFL, has also re-engaged with his alma mater, supporting the Baker School, the Department of Psychology, and Tennessee Athletics.

Shuler has emerged as a leading advocate for the Baker School. He regularly speaks to prospective and current students on behalf of the school, sharing his experiences in public service and his passion for mentorship.

Although the Baker School did not exist when he earned his psychology degree from UT, he did learn about Senator Howard Baker's career in a political science class. Baker's ability to negotiate and model civility are qualities Shuler believes are missing in today's politics. It is one of the reasons the Baker School's mission to educate the next generation of public problem solvers grounded in Baker's legacy resonates so strongly with Shuler.

Heath and his wife, Nikol, are among the distinguished Tennesseans who have generously endowed four-year undergraduate scholarships at the Baker School. Additionally, the Shulers have also hosted private, behind-the-scenes tours of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., providing a unique experience for Baker School donors.

Thank you, Heath and Nikol Shuler, for embodying philanthropy with purpose.

BIG ORANGE GIVE

The Baker School community came together in November during the Big Orange Give (BOG). One hundred and fifty-six donors contributed \$92,311 in support of the Baker School. The Baker School's BOG results ranked eighth out of the 14 colleges at UT, an impressive feat considering the Baker School is one of the newest and smallest units on campus. Thank you!



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