

# NEW BUSINESS COURSES EMPLOY REAL-LIFE MARKETING SKILLS



**Above:** The Sarah Kennedy family at her Master's degree graduation ceremony at UT-Martin.

## By Ron Barry

David Letterman used to call the leader of his late-night show band, Paul Shaffer, “the hardest working man in show business,” because he was seemingly everywhere a major music event was occurring in addition to leading the show band four nights a week.

There’s a teacher at Crockett County High School that we bet would make Paul Shaffer tired pretty quickly.

Meet Sarah Kennedy. She teaches new business courses at CCHS and also helps to prepare all the videos you see on the screens at football and basketball games. She’s also usually at every single game running the boards themselves, until her program progresses further enough to have dependable students doing that part of it. Oh, she also teaches early-morning exercise classes at Mosier Family Fitness. And she’s also frequently found among the sales people at Meri’s Boutique in Alamo.

She’s also a wife, mother of two kids, and recently received her Master’s degree in Education from the University of Tennessee at Martin after mostly taking online classes in whatever spare time she managed in between all the other stuff.

If you’ve noticed the word “also” a lot thus far, you’re beginning to understand how many hats have been piled on top of this lady’s head in recent years.

Even so, she’s tried to keep somewhat of a low profile about it until UT-Martin placed a Facebook post online December 6th in which it spotlighted Kennedy’s graduation. She thought it was going to be used for an in-house brochure they might give to prospective Skyhawk students who were considering taking online classes. Suddenly, she was being flooded with loving comments from her friends, so much so that she decided to lean into it as a teachable moment for her own children. And students. And any adults who might also be listening.

“I’ve been saying this really isn’t that big of a deal,” Kennedy wrote about her Master’s achievement. “But today I’m saying it is. I completed my Master’s in Education without having any background in that subject.”

She did it with an all-“A” average, a fact she attributes to, “I guess you get wiser with age. That’s the first time I have ever done that.”

But the real reason Kennedy decided to take advantage of her new “platform” was because this achievement is a statement of her faith as much as anything, and she wants others to know they can do it too, especially if God is leading them in that direction.

“I didn’t even want to walk when I graduated undergrad,” she said of her previous UTM degree in Marketing. “But this time I did. I wanted to show my kids what I’d been doing and what it means to follow God when he calls you to something. They didn’t include that part in the UTM quote. God showed me that this was the way and provided all I needed to walk the path. When God tells you to do something, you better get up and go! Even if you’re worried what people will say, even if you don’t know what is next, even when you’ve said never will I ever. Do the thing!”

“He will open every door. He will guide your steps when it’s so dark and uncertain you’re not sure where your foot is going to land next. Just get up and go. I promise it will be worth it.”

Where her feet landed “next” was the Crockett County School District, where she was hired to teach a new curriculum of Business & CTE courses. She started this semester with Intro to Business, which culminated this past week with a class project of teams developing food trucks, including the preparation of marketing plans, cost projections, inventory storage, and operating the business.

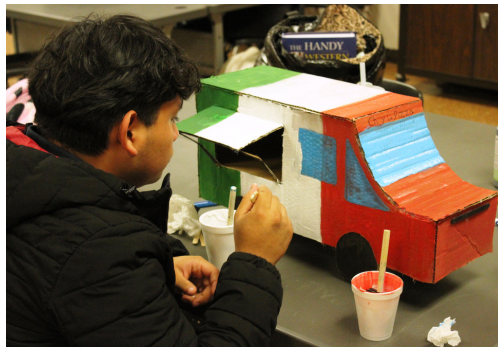


**Above:** Jody Bingham secures the underside of his team's meat-serving truck, which will feature ribs and other juicy cuts.

“The students have discovered all kinds of things that go into something like this they had not previously considered,” Kennedy said. “That’s what I like about teaching these students. It’s fun to see their eyes opened and their minds expanded to look at a business situation from all the angles it takes to be successful.”

In the process, for instance, Kennedy’s fourth-block class – composed of six teams – developed six individual food trucks: a taco truck, a pizza truck, a donut truck, a cupcake truck, a takoyaki (also known as Japanese octopus balls, similar to hush puppies) truck, and a meat-serving truck. They not only developed a business plan for each one, but last week they were actually building scale models of the trucks to gain even more insight into what it would take to get a food truck actually up and running.

Up and running – that sounds like a perfect description of their new instructor.



**Above:** Kennie Galvez Jimenez puts the finishing touches on the paint job for his team's pizza truck.

**Below:** Working on their cupcakes truck are (left to right) Sherlyn Sanchez, Presley Lewis, Alexza Gonzalez, and Lindsey Watson.



**Above:** The team behind the No-Nuts Do-Nuts concept: Ava North-Hall, Kaylei Porter, and Gabe Garduno.



**Above:** The finished product for the No-Nuts Do-Nuts truck, which will serve do-nuts that won't trigger allergies in those who are averse to nuts.

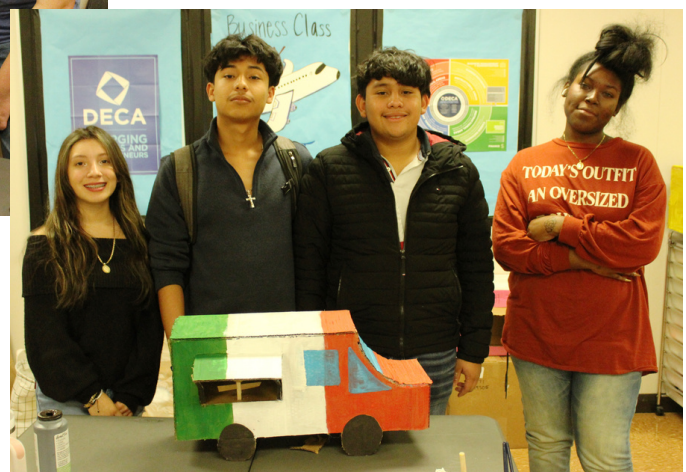


**Above:** Looking for tacos of all types? Sean Watkins (left) and Tyler Dinkins (right) have you covered.



**Left:** If you have a yearning for octopus chunks rolled up in a ball with other tasty things (a Japanese dish), 1st Class Takoyaki is the truck for you, prepared by (left to right) Maddie Ward, Leleh McCurrie, and Xander Sollis.

**Below:** If you're looking for ribs, or something else to grease up your palate, these guys will be ready for you (left to right): Alex Elmore, Nate McCoy, Jody Bingham, Brennan Bernard, and Jaylen Nelson.



**Above:** The pizza truck, to feature a special type of Mexican cheese, is the product of (left to right) Joana Aguirre, Kelvin Aguirre, Kennie Galvez Jimenez, and Brae-Ounce Webb.