



THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

Graduate Student Council

Graduate and Professional Students,

As most of you are aware by now, the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) Board of Trustees has come to the decision to not renew Chancellor Dan Jones' contract. In my years here at the University of Mississippi, much of that time overlapping with Dr. Jones tenure as chancellor, I have been witness to numerous decisions and progressive strides that I believe have greatly benefited this institution. Quite simply, I do not understand the IHL's decision, as I have always seen Chancellor Jones as a brave, compassionate, and competent leader. My personal experience with Chancellor Jones has been limited but my observational experience has not. The following is only a partial list of some of the successes seen under the leadership of Chancellor Jones and noted by various others:

- The University of Mississippi is at all time high enrollment, with more than 23,000 students.
- The freshman class of last year was nearly 50% larger than that of 2010 and the average ACT score and GPA is the highest in UM history.
- The University of Mississippi Athletics Programs have been propelled into the national spotlight with appearances in a New Year's Six bowl and the College World Series, as well as an invitation to the NCAA Basketball Tournament.
- Total endowment for the University of Mississippi has grown from approximately \$400 million to \$600 million since 2010.
- Compared to 2010, private gifts to the University of Mississippi have doubled in 2014 from just over \$50 million to over \$100 million.
- The Center for Inclusion and Cross-Cultural Engagement was created to deepen students' understanding of their own and others' identity and promote the UM core value of inclusivity.

Furthermore, while serving as GSC President I have had the privilege to sit on many administrative councils and interact with the leadership of the University. From my perspective, these administrators not only served at the pleasure of our chancellor, as they are required, but truly believed in his vision and considered it an honor to work with him.

Chancellor Jones has been a strong proponent of research and graduate education. He clearly understands the value that strong graduate and professional programs can add to our state and to our region. His vision includes the University rising to a Carnegie Very High Research University (the highest classification), increasing research expenditures, and increasing institutional support for graduate assistantships.

I encourage our graduate and professional students to voice their opinions, as it is our right to do so, but while maintaining a courteous and respectful attitude. Speak with your faculty members, advisors, and other administrators to become more informed of this situation and these types of processes, as many of us will be future educators ourselves.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Keeling
GSC President 2014-15