

## COMPARE THE QUALIFICATIONS

I have more than a passing interest in University of Southern Mississippi and University of Albany and I am familiar with both universities. Compare their recent choices for president: USM—IHL chose Rodney Bennett: SUNY Board of Regents chose Robert Jones. Bios are provided by each university. Draw your own conclusions.



### [“Rodney D. Bennett](#)

Rodney D. Bennett took office as the 10<sup>th</sup> President of The University of Southern Mississippi on April 1, 2013. Dr. Bennett came to Southern Miss from the University of Georgia, where he served as Vice President for Student Affairs. Dr. Bennett’s selection as President made history, as he became the first African-American president of a predominantly white higher education institution in the state of Mississippi. [[News release/video announcing Dr. Bennett's hiring.](#)]

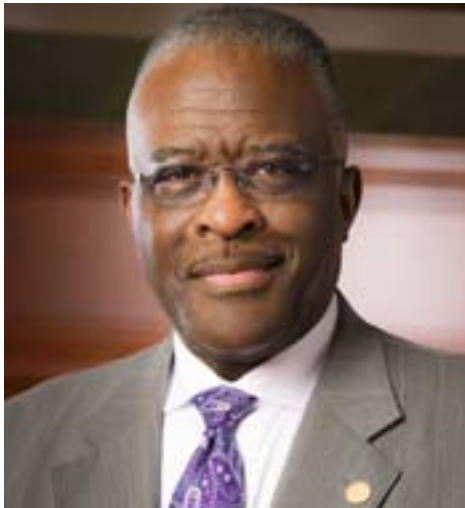
Appointed to the presidency by the Board of Trustees of the Institutions of Higher Learning, Dr. Bennett is charged with serving as both the chief executive officer and principal educational officer of The University of Southern Mississippi. In general terms, the President is responsible to the Board of Trustees for every facet of institutional operations.

Specifically, the IHL Board delegates to its university presidents administrative control of the universities over which they preside. This includes responsibility for the administration of the divisions and departments of each institution and for keeping its expenditures strictly in harmony with the budget authorized by the IHL Board.

The president also must take the initiative in shaping the University's educational policy and academic standards in cooperation with the State Commissioner of Higher Education. The president has final authority over all employees. The president also is charged with the responsibility of maintaining appropriate standards of student conduct...

As Vice President for Student Affairs at the University of Georgia, Dr. Bennett was actively involved in all facets of student life, from improving facilities to creating service learning opportunities and celebrating the spirit of diversity on campus. He helped raise funds to enhance student life on campus and improved communications with faculty, staff, students and parents on the Athens campus and three UGA extended campuses. Dr. Bennett served as Chair of the UGA Athletic Association NCAA Recertification process, including the institutional self-study. In addition, he was a member of the on-site committee for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, reviewing compliance areas related to student life and student affairs.

Dr. Bennett holds a Doctor of Education Degree in Educational Administration from Tennessee State University in Nashville, a Specialist in Education Degree and a Master of Education Degree in Educational Administration from Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Mass Communication from Middle Tennessee State.”



[Robert J. Jones](#)

Dr. Robert J. Jones was appointed by the State University of New York (SUNY) Board of Trustees on September 12, 2012 as the 19th president of the University at Albany. Previously, Dr. Jones had served as senior vice president for academic administration at the University of Minnesota System since 2004. Prior, Dr. Jones spent more than 15 years in key administrative leadership positions at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, including vice president and executive vice provost for faculty and academic programs, vice president for campus life and vice provost for faculty and academic personnel, interim vice president for student development and president of the

University of Minnesota Outreach, Research and Education (UMore) Park Development, LLC.

A native of Dawson, Georgia, Dr. Jones has more than three decades of higher education leadership experience as well as academic expertise spanning plant physiology and urban and international development. He earned a bachelor's degree in agronomy from Fort Valley State College, a Master of Science degree in crop physiology from the University of Georgia, and a doctorate in crop physiology from the University of Missouri, Columbia. After earning the Ph.D., he joined the University of Minnesota faculty as a professor of agronomy and plant genetics. He is an internationally recognized authority on plant physiology and has published numerous scientific papers, manuscripts and abstracts. His research focuses on the role of cytokinins in stabilizing grain yields of maize against environmental stresses and global climate change. Over his career, he has trained many students who have gone on to leading careers in higher education and the private and not-for-profit sectors.

Dr. Jones currently serves as Regional Council Co-Chair for the Capital Region Economic Development Council (CREDC) alongside Albany Medical Center President James J. Barba. In 2013, he was appointed a co-chair for Albany Mayor-elect Sheehan's transition committee. He is a fellow of both the American Society of Agronomy and the Crop Science Society of America. He has been a visiting professor and featured speaker in North America, Europe, Asia and Africa, and from 1984 to 1994 served as an academic and scientific consultant for Archbishop Desmond Tutu's South African Education Program. In 2010, he was awarded a University of Minnesota endowed chair in urban and international development; he was also named a recipient of the Michael P. Malone International Leadership Award by the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU).

Dr. Jones held a gubernatorial appointment as a commissioner of the Midwestern Higher Education Compact and served on the board of directors for the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities. Currently, he serves on the boards of the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities and the Bush Foundation, among other leadership roles. He was also a member of the Grammy award-winning Sounds of Blackness, a Twin Cities-based choral ensemble.

Dr. Jones and his spouse, Lynn Hassan Jones, M.D., have five children and two grandchildren."