

*DEAR USMNEWS.NET*

Dear usmnews.net,

Is the “You’re Really Not Going to Believe This” series a joke? Part of me says isn’t possible that the university is claiming (1) no one at the University has a copy of [soon-to-be] President Bennett’s curriculum vita and (2) if they did have a copy it is confidential. Another part of me says it is just more of the same needless, knee-jerk secrecy we have seen on this campus for far too many years.

I have called a number of colleagues at various schools and none of them have ever heard of such a thing [a university president’s CV being declared secret]. What is the IHL and the University Administration hiding? Faculty I have spoken with are extremely concerned about the mystery with which Dr. Bennett’s presidency is about to begin. I does not bode well for the University or its future.

If the faculty and the community are to embrace Dr. Bennett, we need to know more about his qualifications than the IHL’s breezy assurance that he [Dr. Bennett] is the right person for the job.

Name withheld

Dear Name Withheld,

The “You’re Really Not Going to Believe This” series is absolutely not a joke. The exchange between the University’s associate general counsel and one of usmnews.net’s volunteer lawyers really occurred. If you or anyone else would like copies, let me know and I will forward them to you. Since the University had previously provided resumes of various faculty and administrator’s requested under the Mississippi Open Records Act, everyone at usmnews.net was surprised by the response.

I don’t know what USM and the IHL are hiding other than Dr. Bennett’s CV. However, I believe that secrecy breeds rumor and speculation. And, from what I’m hearing from USM and other Universities, none of it is favorable.

Let me add a couple of questions. If no one on campus has a copy of Dr. Bennett’s resume, how did the various “constituencies” provide input? Why is a resume a confidential personnel record? After all, an academic’s vita memorializes activities done in public -- research, teaching and service.

My personal opinion is that “needless, knee-jerk secrecy” is one of the key factors that keeps USM firmly mired in the fourth tier.