



September 15, 2015

In light of the process by which the Iowa Board of Regents selected J. Bruce Harreld as the 21st University of Iowa President, we, the Graduate Student Senate, release the following statement:

Graduate students are critical, evidence-driven, and adaptive, and as a result often entertain radical ideas. Many of us have worked in corporate settings and are not against the idea of non-academic university leadership. Non-academic executive administration of universities is not uncommon: the University of Colorado president, for example, came from the corporate world but also had years of experience in philanthropic, political, and higher education initiatives. It is perplexing that Iowa Board of Regents ultimately selected a candidate whose résumé did not list such qualifications, while there were three other finalists whose résumés and public forums contained evidence of strong conventional qualifications and a good fit with the University of Iowa core mission¹. Thus we do not object to the selection of a candidate from the corporate world in principle, but rather the lack of transparency in this selection process. We are also very concerned about the effects of this selection process on the future of funding from our historically generous donors. Because of these factors it remains unclear how the Board, in the face of visible negative feedback from the university community², could have made this decision for the betterment of the University of Iowa.

The Graduate Student Senate stands with the University of Iowa Student Government, the Graduate and Professional Student Government, COGS, and the Faculty Senate. We hereby condemn the process by which the Board selected the incoming University President, and we have passed a vote of 'No Confidence' in the governing abilities of the Iowa Board of Regents.

We end by looking forward. We expect the incoming president to learn more about the University of Iowa community in the upcoming months, and to stand by the values and expertise of the faculty, administration, and students he serves. Although we disagree with the handling and transparency of this presidential search and selection process, we extend an invitation to the Iowa Board of Regents, the incoming president, administration, and faculty to work together to strengthen the university as a whole. As important members of the community, it is crucial we work together to meet the needs of graduate students and ensure that the University of Iowa embodies its core mission:

“...to advance scholarly and creative endeavor through leading-edge research and artistic production; to use this research and creativity to enhance undergraduate, graduate, and professional education, health care, and other services provided to the people of Iowa, the nation, and the world; and to educate students for success and personal fulfillment in a diverse world.”

The Graduate Student Senate is comprised of 83 members and represents over 5,000 graduate students at the University of Iowa. Contact us at grad-senate@uiowa.edu.

¹ <https://provost.uiowa.edu/ui-academic-mission>

² <http://aaup.org.uiowa.edu/files/aaup.org.uiowa.edu/files/AAUP%20pressurvey.0800.pdf>