

Date: February 12, 2016
From: MUW Faculty Senate
To: The MUW Community, Students, Alumni, Mississippi Legislators and the State of Mississippi
Re: The State Flag

Mississippi University for Women is proud to have students, faculty and alumni from all corners of our great state. Indeed, as a university, we have representation from across the United States and around the world. As the Faculty Senate, we represent quite an assorted group of faculty. To pen a letter to all those affected by the state flag controversy while adequately representing the faculty and what the university stands for has weighed heavily on our collective conscience. It is a difficult task to represent such a broad and diverse group. In order to do so accurately, a formal survey was disseminated to faculty. The following represents the results of that survey.

In our duty to represent the faculty, we would be remiss if we did not recognize the dissenting opinions. While the majority decides, we do represent all faculty, not simply those in the majority. There is a small percentage of faculty who support retaining the state flag. Their reasons for this support are wide ranging, and it is our duty to respect those opinions. There is a significant percentage of faculty who feel that the Faculty Senate should not be an active voice in politics, that it is our job as a senate to support the faculty in teaching and research endeavors. As MUW has long been considered a teaching university more than a research or service oriented university, this comes as no surprise. This group has chosen to keep their political opinions private, and we respect the choice of this group of faculty as well.

As a university that embraces diversity in every form, we value the beliefs of all those whom we represent. We will not tolerate those who cannot engage civilly in public discourse and honor the right of individuality. However, it is our duty as a Faculty Senate to represent the faculty as a whole. To this end, let us focus on the crux of this dispatch.

The majority of faculty at Mississippi University for Women support changing the flag of the State of Mississippi. As a group, we believe this is an important step in representing the citizens and ideals of the state. We recognize that the current flag invites controversy and division, two ideals that have played significant roles in our state's history but do not represent the state today. In order to better represent her people and to make our great home more inviting to those not fortunate enough to hail from here, we implore the legislature change the Mississippi flag!

The



Mississippi University
for Women

A Tradition of Excellence for Women and Men

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We come now to perhaps the second most controversial aspect of this topic. Should the flag be flown on campus at this time? As to this, the Faculty Senate cannot take a stance. There is no clear majority on this issue, and it would be irresponsible for us to recommend action without that. We respect both sides on this issue and acknowledge that flying the flag and removing it from communities as unrepresentative have both resulted in extensive dialogue on the flag issue.

The last issue the Faculty Senate would like to address is that our investigation into this issue has led to one very clear fact. While we have many faculty who would like to focus on teaching and academic mentoring, we have even more who believe that mentoring and supporting our students extends into all aspects of their lives. We encourage our students to look to our faculty for support and guidance on this and all issues. If there is a personal or political view you have, a grassroots movement you'd like to be involved in, or cause that you'd like to support, there is, and always will be, a Mississippi University for Women faculty member to whom you can look for support. We are proud of our students, our faculty, and our university.

It is always a privilege to represent The Long Blue Line.