

October 6, 2015

Mr. Hank Huckabee
Chancellor of the University System of Georgia
Suite 7025
270 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Chancellor Huckabee:

This is Bill Reese writing to you as University Advocate of Georgia Regents University. The faculty, staff, and administrators of Georgia Regents University acknowledge that on September 15, 2015, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia voted to change the name of Georgia Regents University to Augusta University. In order to represent the interests of all constituencies of the University--faculty, staff, administrators, students, and Augusta citizens—many of whom have contacted me, I beseech you to consider the following ramifications of your decision.

1. Our University has undergone three name changes in the past four years. Such indecision broadcasts a lack of commitment—or even wisdom—to all of our audiences including: students, potential students, student parents, the community at large, potential funding agencies, and potential recruits to our research, clinical, and educational staff.
2. Our University has undergone a merger of two very diverse institutions—an accomplishment that has generated national acclaim for our successes over the last two plus years. A name change now dismays and disheartens those of us who worked the most diligently to achieve this merger.
3. Our newly merged University has embarked on a most concerted effort to rebrand this new university as Georgia Regents University. Those efforts have been utterly and entirely negated by yet another name change.
4. Our newly merged University incurred exorbitant expenses—estimated as high as 46 million dollars-- in rebranding the enterprise. To speculate that re-signing the campus perimeter, even at 3.6 million dollars—insultingly underestimates the costs of this effort that now must be undertaken again.
5. All of these monumental changes were accomplished during a time of USG budget exigency. In effect, the merger and the resultant creation of Georgia Regents University were done to “save taxpayer dollars.” To the extent that we met such an austere goal, we did so at the expense of the normal and necessary budgets of a comprehensive, research institution.

Therefore, if yet another renaming of our University must persist, I respectfully request on behalf of many faculty, staff, and administrators of Georgia Regents University, none of whom who were consulted about the advisability of this name change, that the Board of Regents for the University System of Georgia, honestly acknowledge the unwarranted institutional costs incurred by such a poorly timed and reasoned decision. These costs—human and institutional—must be borne by the USG system and not absorbed by the institution and her constituents alone.

Respectfully,

William A. Reese, II
University Advocate
Georgia Regents University

Encl.

XC: University Senate of Georgia Regents University
President Brooks Keel
Provost Gretchen Caughman
Chair Juone Brown, USG Faculty Council