HISTORY

The Beginning

The people of a small northern Mississippi town named their town "Oxford" in hopes of attracting a university, and on February 20, 1840, the Mississippi legislature chose Oxford as the site for its new university. The University of Mississippi was chartered on February 24, 1844, and began its first session on November 6, 1848, with a four-member faculty offering a liberal arts curriculum to 80 students. While continually strengthening the College of Liberal Arts, the trustees and the faculty also sought to broaden the work of the institution by the creation of professional and specialized schools so as to build it into a university in fact as well as in name. Thus, the School of Law was opened in 1854 during the presidency of Augustus Baldwin Longstreet. It was only the fourth state-supported law school in the nation. Longstreet's successor, Frederick A.P. Barnard, who later achieved further renown as president of Columbia University, initiated a strong program of scientific instruction and research that was terminated six years into his tenure by the advent of the Civil War. The entire student body joined the Confederate army as the "University Greys"; most were killed or wounded, and none graduated.

Expansion

Reopening in fall 1865 after the suspension of classes for four years of war, the university resumed its growth and provided education for many Confederate veterans who sought instruction. Coeducation came with the admission of 11 women students in 1882, and the first woman, Sarah Isom, was added to the faculty in 1885. The university took its nickname "Ole Miss" from the title of the student yearbook of 1898.

Expansion was particularly notable under Chancellor Robert Burwell Fulton: The first summer session was held in 1893, the School of Engineering was established in 1900, and the schools of Education and Medicine were opened in 1903. Subsequently, the School of Pharmacy was created in 1908, the School of Business Administration in 1917, and the Graduate School in 1927. The School of Medicine moved to Jackson in 1955 to become the nucleus of the University of Mississippi Medical Center; the School of Nursing was established in 1958. Medical Center surgeons performed the world's first human lung and heart transplants in the 1960s.

Modern Growth

Like other Southern institutions that integrated in the 1960s, the university experienced turbulent times when James Meredith, the first African-American student, was admitted in 1962. The university now has evolved into a diverse community of students and scholars. Students from every background in Mississippi, across the United States, and around the world are welcomed to Ole Miss to pursue a quality higher education.

Over the past several decades, the university has expanded its services to the people of the state by enlarging its research facilities, developing its program of graduate studies, strengthening its off-campus services, and enhancing the quality and breadth of its fundamental liberal arts education. The School of Health Related Professions was established in 1972 and the School of Dentistry in 1973. The Center for the Study of Southern Culture was created in 1977. The School of Accountancy and the Sarah Isom Center for Women were established in 1979, and the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College was created in 1996. The School of Applied Sciences was established in 2001, and the Meek School of Journalism and New Media was established in 2009.

The university now has more than 16,000 students enrolled on the Oxford campus. Its faculty, staff, and students are pushing forward the frontiers of knowledge, imagination, and expertise necessary for a productive life in today's world. It is a center for Faulkner studies, offering a fine collection of the Nobel Prize winner's work and maintaining his Rowan Oak home as a literary shrine. The university is proud to have produced 24 Rhodes Scholars; only six public universities in the nation have produced more.

Chief Executive Officers

From its establishment in 1848 to November 21, 1859, the chief executive officers of the university were designated "president." Then, at the instigation of President Barnard, the title was changed to "chancellor." On July 27, 1886, the title of chancellor was abolished, and the head of the institution was known as "chairman of the faculty." The title of "chancellor" was restored August 6, 1889. The following have served as the chief executive officers of the university:

19th Century

- GEORGE FREDRICK HOLMES, LL.D., president July 1848-March 1849
- ALBERT T. BLEDSOE, acting president March-July 1849
- AUGUSTUS B. LONGSTREET, D.D., LL.B., president July 1849-July 1856
- FREDERICK A.P. BARNARD, D.D., LL.D., president August 1856-November 1859; chancellor November 1859-October 1861
- WILLIAM D. MOORE, acting chancellor June-September 1860
- JOHN NEWTON WADDEL, D.D., LL.D., chancellor August 1865-July 1874
- JOHN J. WHEAT, acting chancellor July-October 1874
- GENERAL ALEXANDER P. STEWART, chancellor October 1874-July 1886
- EDWARD MAYES, LL.D., S.C., chairman of the faculty July 1886-August 1889; chancellor August 1889-December 1891
- ROBERT BURWELL FULTON, A.M., LL.D., acting chancellor December 1891-June 1892; chancellor June 1892-June 1906

20th Century

- ALFRED HUME, D.Sc., acting chancellor June 1906-June 1907
- ANDREW ARMSTRONG KINCANNON, LL.D., chancellor June 1907-June 1914
- JOSEPH NEELY POWERS, LL.D., chancellor June 1914-July 1924
- ALFRED HUME, D.Sc., LL.D., chancellor June 1924-June 1930
- JOSEPH NEELY POWERS, LL.D., chancellor June 1930-August 1932
- CHRISTOPHER LONGEST, Ph.D., acting chancellor August 1930
- ALFRED HUME, D.Sc., LL.D., chancellor September 1932-June 1935
- ALFRED BENJAMIN BUTTS, LL.B., Ph.D., chancellor July 1935-June 30, 1946
- ALFRED HUME, D.Sc., LL.D., chancellor emeritus and acting chancellor July 1942-December 1943; July 1-14, 1946
- JOHN DAVIS WILLIAMS, Ed.D., LL.D., chancellor July 15, 1946-January 31, 1968
- PORTER LEE FORTUNE, JR., B.A., M.A., Ph.D., chancellor February 1, 1968-April 2, 1984

- R. GERALD TURNER, A.A., B.S., M.A., Ph.D., chancellor April 2, 1984-May 31, 1995
- GERALD W. WALTON, A.A., B.S., M.A., Ph.D., interim chancellor June 1-30, 1995
- ROBERT C. KHAYAT, B.A.E., J.D., LL.M., chancellor July 1, 1995—June 30, 2009

21st Century

- DANIEL W. JONES, B.S., M.D., chancellor July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2015
- MORRIS STOCKS, B.S., M.S., Ph.D., interim chancellor July 1, 2015 - December 31, 2015
- JEFFREY S. VITTER, B.S., Ph.D., M.B.A, chancellor January 1, 2016 - December 31, 2018
- LARRY D. SPARKS, B.A., M.B.A., interim chancellor January 4, 2019 – October 12, 2019
- GLENN BOYCE, B.A., Ed.D., chancellor Oct. 13, 2019 - present