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## Andrea Jekabsons Named UM Chief Human Resources Officer

**Experienced HR professional has led improvements to campus employee and wellness programs**

JANUARY 6, 2021 BY [LISA STONE](#)



Andrea Jekabsons

OXFORD, Miss. – Andrea Jekabsons, a longtime human resources professional with extensive experience in higher education, has been named the chief human resources officer at the **University of Mississippi**.

Jekabsons, who has worked at the university since 2006, has nearly 30 years of human resources and employee relations experience within various industries, including higher education, health care and technology. Besides her background in general human resources, focused areas of experience include recruitment, employee relations, learning facilitation and engagement.

"It has been an honor to serve in the interim CHRO role, and I accept this formal role with gratitude for the entire HR team and for our leaders' continued support and encouragement," Jekabsons said. "The role of CHRO is a great responsibility, and this is also a great opportunity for our team to demonstrate what we can accomplish with the support of the senior leadership group."

Reporting to the vice chancellor for administration and finance, Jekabsons will lead a team of 20 managers, generalists, front office staff, students and interns. In this role, she will provide overall guidance to the **Department of Human Resources**, develop and implement departmental policies and procedures and ensure policies comply with federal and state laws, as well as IHL policies.

Specific areas of responsibility include recruitment, onboarding, payroll administration, student employment, learning and development, worksite wellness, benefits and compensation.

"Andrea has been a valued leader on our campus for many years, and she has made significant contributions across our human resources function," Chancellor Glenn Boyce said.

"She is committed to advancing the university and is passionate about the success of our people. We are so pleased to have someone of her caliber and experience to lead our human resources team."

Since joining the university in 2006, Jekabsons has led many improvements and new projects including the implementation of recruitment, onboarding and performance management systems. She also led the successful development and execution of \$1.5 million campuswide wellness grant.

Jekabsons also played a key role in the redesign of employee orientation programs, employee communications and performance management systems, resulting in positive employee relations, improved customer service and increased program participation.

In 2012, she was selected by peers as the **Staff Council's** Outstanding Staff Member in the professional nonfaculty category, and in 2016, she was named the Staff Council's Overall Outstanding Staff Member.

Beginning in March 2020, Jekabsons has served as the university's interim chief human resources officer. During this time, she has played an essential role in the university's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This has included leading the HR team and employees across campus, developing and promoting effective return to the workplace protocols, promoting telecommuting and safe work practices, maintaining morale, and providing guidance on the regulations and nuances of the various leave options.

"This past year, our scaled-back crew focused much of our time and energy navigating COVID-19 in the

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OXFORD, Miss. – Eleven University of Mississippi students spent their winter break learning about the people who work behind the scenes of the American government in Washington, D.C. Lead by Jonathan Klingler, assistant professor of political science, the students of Pol 391: Applied Politics met not with candidates, but with the people who make candidates'

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most supportive manner possible,” Jekabsons said. “With an eye to the future and past COVID-19, the team is excited and energized to return our focus and expand upon employee satisfaction and engagement.

“I look forward to re-establishing a greater presence on campus by meeting with teams, facilitating live sessions and hearing from individuals simply by walking around campus and attending events.”

Before joining the university, Jekabsons worked at various technology and health care companies in California, including AT&T Wireless and Sutter Health. She holds a bachelor’s degree in industrial/organizational psychology and business administration from Humboldt State University.

Jekabsons credits much of her success to working with strong leaders and team members. In her expanded role, she remains focused on and committed to the vision statement of the university’s HR department: “We positively contribute to the well-being of others with every transaction and interaction.”

An avid recreation enthusiast, Jekabsons enjoys long walks, short runs, exercise programs, camping and traveling. Her husband, Mika Jekabsons, is an associate professor of biology at Ole Miss. They have two children: Mikayla, a UM alumna who recently returned from California to pursue a master’s degree in nutrition management, and Mateo, a junior in the UM School of Engineering.

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