

31st & Pearl

Thanksgiving

Did you know? Did you know that your president, Martha Saunders, [decided](#) to provide (1) raises to those USM colleagues of yours who were promoted to either associate professor or professor heading into this academic year (2010-11)? Well, she did. Imagine how low campus morale would be now *if she hadn't done that*. Given that she did, and campus morale has been stabilized, everyone owes her a debt of gratitude. And, there's more. If you examine your most recent pay stub, you'll notice that Saunders made sure that (2) your retirement contribution was at least partially matched by USM. She has also directed USM officials (3) to pay at least a portion of your health care premium each month. Not only that, USM is also (4) paying one-half of the social security tax that is attributable to your employment, and that one is also thanks to Saunders.

Added to these generous provisions are the (5) tenure raises and (6) "equity" raises that Saunders [provided](#), again heading into this academic year, to a segment of the USM faculty population. President Saunders is also allowing USM faculty to set aside (7) pre-tax dollars to spend on doctor visits and prescription medicines, thus saving everyone a nice chunk of change over the course of the year. For those USM faculty who have kids in daycare centers around the city, Saunders is allowing a similar (8) pre-tax set-aside to cover those bills, again saving you all a tidy sum of money in the process. How many of you enjoyed (9) the 14-Oct-2010 and 15-Oct-2010 fall break that Saunders provided? All of you? I figured as much. Add to all of the aforementioned (10) the faculty discount at the USM Barnes & Noble Bookstore, and (11) the other subsidized events tickets available to faculty and staff, both courtesy of the university president's generosity.

Lastly, let's not forget what is arguably the biggest item on the list – (12) the provision that children of USM faculty get a major discount on their tuition charges while attending USM. If not for president Saunders providing this one, your kids would be paying full freight to "ride all the rides." What you have before you is a veritable "12 Days of Christmas," and it's not even December yet. So, when you and yours sit down to a Thanksgiving meal in a few days, remember to include the items on the list above as part of the bounty you have received this past year. Better yet, just give thanks to having had president Saunders in your life, as that would be a more efficient way to acknowledge all of the items listed above. After all, *she* provided them.

31st & Pearl is a series housed at usmnews.net that features commentary on aspects of life in the CoB from a variety of columnists.