

31st & Pearl

Jocks at the Trough

Higher education reporter Ed Kemp's 19-Sept-2010 [news story](#) for *The Hattiesburg American* has opened some eyes about all of the propaganda surrounding debates over funding for USM athletics. Sports supporters have made a long-time habit out of shouting that athletics does not get monetary support from the academic side of the institution. Kemp's article tells the local and state community otherwise – pointing out that a whopping \$5.9 million goes to USM sports from student tuition. On top of that, USM president Martha Saunders transfers \$0.965 million into athletics from the education and general fund of the university on an annual basis. If you're counting, that's about \$6.9 million of the athletics department's \$19.7 million annual budget, representing about 35% of the department's total expenditures.

At a time when the university has cut \$10 million (FY 2011) and \$15 million (FY 2012), and is considering another \$10 million in cuts (FY 2013), learning that Richard Giannini, the USM athletics director, is taking money from classrooms all over Hattiesburg and Long Beach is not going over well. At the time of this writing, Kemp's article has generated about 40 comments from online readers.

USM Terminal Contracts . . . Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime

Perhaps Hal Greene's "lighter side" story about a [faculty bumper sticker business](#) was more serious than first thought. Do you think that a bumper sticker that combines elements from the current budget crisis with a Giannini's brainchild (though, not really since it has been around for some time), like that inserted above, would also generate some cash flow? With each passing day, USM becomes more and more bizarre, and keeping up with the ongoing drama is almost dizzying.

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