

# **From the Archives of Academic Administrative Yackety-Yak, Blather, Prattle, Jabber, and—for the Sophisticate Among You— Confabulation Part 4**

Part 4 of our series that highlights academic administrative blather continues with former USM President Martha Saunders' **"Innovation (Creative, Bold, Determined)."** (To catch up, see [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#) and [Part 3](#).)

In Part 3, we left readers with two questions: What, then, does Saunders mean by her discovered "five forces of innovation" ("Spirit of Humanity, Self-Efficacy, Collective Individualism, Connection to Heritage, and Commitment to Diversity")? How the h-e-double-l does she plan to measure success?

All too often we little people—faculty, staff, students, and Hattiesburg locals—are fed the hoopla of grandiose plans—in this case "Innovations"—but never are told how the plans panned out. What we usually get is a new administrator, after the old one is fired for some sort of incompetence or misconduct, and a new round of his/her version of "Innovations."

In Saunders' "Innovations," such high sounding "five forces of innovation" must surely lead the University of Southern Mississippi to ever higher academic performance and prestige. USM faculty's research, teaching, and service will be second to none. Get out of the way Harvard, here comes USM.

Saunders tells us how she proposes to accomplish the "five forces of innovation":

These five *forces of innovation* represent those intangible characteristics that make Southern Miss what it is while at the same time providing the energy to move Southern Miss toward its desired future.

What a disappointment! "Intangible characteristics?" So much for objective assessment of results and measurement of accomplishments. She's defined that prospect out of the realm of possibility. Saunders never intended the "five forces of innovation to be anything else but an opportunity for her to be the center of attention. All we get is blather about "intangible characteristics." After thinking for a few seconds, we have to conclude that this is typical bureaucratic public relations nonsense. That's what we got when Mississippi's Institutions of Higher Learning anointed as president someone who spent her career studying and practicing public relations.

In Part 5, we'll look at a few truly disgusting rewrites of history that Saunders foists on us in her public relations tour de force: "Innovations."