

Pep Band Members Lose Scholarships

HATTIESBURG – As Tim Doherty [reports for](#) *The Hattiesburg American*, the Martha Saunders administration of USM has revoked the scholarships of and dismissed five members of the pep band who were determined to have orchestrated the “racially-insensitive chant near the end of USM’s loss to Kansas State in 2012 NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament. These five unnamed band members are also required to “complete a two-hour, cultural sensitivity training course” before regaining normal standing as USM students.



As has been reported by national news outlets since 15-Mar-2012, members of the USM [pep band chanted](#) “[w]here’s your green card?” while KSU freshman Angel Rodriguez was shooting late-game free throws that would seal the win for the Wildcats. The chant was [picked up by](#) microphones broadcasting the audio portion of truTV’s nationally-televised broadcast of the game, which KSU won 60-54. Video of this portion of telecast was placed on YouTube, and almost immediately [went viral](#), prompting Saunders to issue an apology to the KSU [community via](#) a press release. Unfortunately for the USM family, Saunders’ news release misspelled Rodriguez’ name, further generating negative press for USM from CNN and other media.

USM vice president for student affairs Joe Paul [told the media](#) that the offending pep band members “. . . have been forthcoming, cooperative, contrite and sincerely remorseful,” and that they “. . . acted rashly and inappropriately, and now see the gravity of their words and actions.” Paul also noted that the incident provides USM a “teachable moment” that can benefit the entire student body in the future. Sources tell USMNEWS.net, however, that lessons about racism continue to prove difficult for the USM community. Since [the beginning](#) of the 2011-12 academic year, USM [has been scarred by](#) a [blackface incident](#) involving ΦM [sorority](#) members, [and allegations](#) of race-based on-campus housing policies.