

Saunders Establishes Ethics Hotline

HATTIESBURG – In one of her first moves of 2012, USM president Martha Saunders informed the USM community that the institution has partnered with [EthicsPoint](#) in establishing a hotline that members of the USM family can use to report ethics/legal violations that occur on campus. Saunders notified the campus community of this partnership via e-mail, a copy of which is inserted below:

Southern Miss has long maintained a strong commitment to our core values of integrity and ethical behavior. In order to maintain the highest standards of responsible behavior, I invite you to become familiar with the Southern Miss Hotline, scheduled to activate January 9, 2012. This new initiative, in partnership with EthicsPoint, provides an easy way to discreetly and confidentially report activities that may involve criminal, unethical or otherwise inappropriate violations of University policies.

Although the Southern Miss Hotline is not a substitute for established channels of responsibility, it does provide opportunities for reporting behavior when those mechanisms are not suitable. The Southern Miss Hotline is operated 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and can be accessed either through the website www.southernmiss.ethicspoint.com or by calling 877-310-0424.

Thank you for your constant support of right conduct.

Martha D. Saunders
President

According to Saunders' communique, USM "... has maintained a strong commitment to [its] core values of integrity and ethical behavior." As an extension of this "commitment," the *Southern Miss Hotline* will go live on 9-Jan-2012, providing "... an easy way to discreetly and confidentially report activities that may involve criminal, unethical or otherwise inappropriate violations of University policies."



Sources tell USMNEWS.net that Saunders may believe that USM faculty and staff (and perhaps students) may fear using the hotline, and will therefore be reluctant to do so. If such occurs, the USM president could claim to support the integrity/ethics mission and at that same time report that a little-used hotline is indicative of a moral administration. Those same sources also add, however, that the USM community will circumvent any holes, perceived or actual, in the anonymity of the EthicsPoint-based process by making use of internet/telecom aliases of one sort or another. Thus, with all of the "funny business" that regularly occurs at USM, the hotline is likely to be inundated with requests for investigations.