

'Saunders a Broken Record . . . Miles Made Things Worse'

HATTIESBURG – Speaking about USM at an 11-Nov-2010 luncheon with the Pine Belt Young Professionals (PBYP), [USM president Martha Saunders](#) said that “everything is up but the budget.” In outlining USM’s bright future, Saunders noted that expansion of the port facilities at Gulfport will lead to greater internationalization for south Mississippi and USM. Sources point out to USMNEWS.net, however, that [morale on the USM campus](#) continues to [plummet](#), with the institution preparing for a \$10 million FY2013 budget cut, which is one that will follow \$25 million in budget cuts from FY2011 and FY2012. With her speech to the PBYP, Saunders appears to be recycling prior statements regarding the so-called *important metrics* (e.g., “enrollment,” “student satisfaction,” and “faculty accomplishments”) that are supposedly up at USM. This statement was used in her [fall 2010 convocation](#) speech, her [Town Hall Meeting](#) with USM staffers, and elsewhere. Readers who have contacted USMNEWS.net in recent days echoed each other in stating that Saunders’ retreaded speeches are wearing thin.

Meanwhile, sources are also telling USMNEWS.net that USM sophomore [Daniel Miles](#) has probably done more harm than good now that he appears to be [opposing](#) his own proposal to shift one-half of the tuition-tax for athletics into academic affairs. As sources point out, part of the process of developing a proposal to address a crisis like the fiscal one now facing USM is anticipating potential criticisms of that proposal, and being prepared to deal with them head on. As USMNEWS.net has reported (see link above), Miles appears to have quickly surrendered in the face of what some are referring to as “very soft” criticism from USM athletics director Richard Giannini. It is as if, to sources at least, Miles succumbed to the “lure of hobnobbing with USM administrators” that USM student Charlie Davis seems to allude to in [his YouTube video rant](#) when he (Davis) speaks about “the SGA students.” Sources point out that, though it is a failing of USM faculty to rely on USM students to take on the burden of debating USM administrators about appropriate management of the institution, Miles’ apparent retreat from his own tuition-tax proposal has probably solidified USM athletics’ position “on base” in the ongoing political game of budget-cutting “tag.”