

Editorial

BigGoldNation sees only an abysmal football team
The legacy of Martha Saunders

The following is a comment offered on BigGoldNation website by slakfish:

“Player's coach??

Found this:

"Ellis Johnson has been described by one of his many noteworthy players as 'a player's coach,' " said Saunders. "He would likely be the players' choice for anyone who played under him and will no doubt connect with our players and fans. He's a great recruiter who understands the South Mississippi dynamics and the importance of filling seats at Roberts Stadium."

What? i can't imagine anyone being lesser a player's coach than Ellllllllos.

__FIRE BRITTON BANOWSKY! __
10/29 2:21 PM | IP: Logged”

Then-President Saunders was completely inept in many other decisions than hiring a football coach. However, she was exceptional, nevertheless, at puffing her image through public relations. She was the heroine of every USM picture, every USM video.

Was she simply too busy to attend to any substantive decisions? Let's look at [one example](#). As she told the media while she attempted to cover her posterior, in the wake of her very public "[Tablegate](#)" disaster, "I'm very, very, very saddened by the situation. I'm saddened by the fact that I had employees that have been caught up in this. ... "I was not unaware of the program. I assumed that all the details had been handled properly." The employees to whom Saunders refers are former USM provost Robert Lyman, former chief information officer Homer Coffman, and former procurement/contract services director Mike Herndon, all of whom were placed on administrative leave by Saunders. Dr. Lyman has returned to teaching and Mr. Coffman and Mr. Herndon are no longer employed at USM. What happened to the notion that the buck stops at the president's desk?

Of course, Saunders "was not unaware of the program". She cheerfully handed out tablets to a select group of students as part of a photo op. (See photo below.)



Unfortunately, USM sports fans understand Saunders' incompetence from the perspective of Golden Eagle Football. Too bad they didn't pay better attention to all the other poor decisions before her decision to hire Ellis. They might have headed off that decision. The problems created by Saunders remain in the wake of her presidency at USM in many more ways than an abysmal, losing football team.

USM sports fans must recognize that a football team cannot survive without attending to other aspects of a university. They must learn how to insist on quality education, just as they insist on a quality football team. Higher education is changing too quickly to continue to be ignorant about its mission and how it actually functions.

In any event, if usmnews.net's sources at the University of West Florida are right, it looks like USM will be passing its problem on to be provost at UWF. As one of our readers said, "[good riddance](#)."