

A Brief History of Saunders' "Lease" of Airplane N777AQ During a Recession

Part 6

Why Is There So Little Trust In Leaders?

We organize the history by documenting representations made by President Saunders and Provost Lyman in their report to a Faculty Senate meeting on [December 5, 2008](#) (page 2, para. 7). See [Parts 1 through 5](#) which provide a context for Part 6 and the documents obtained from USM in a Mississippi Open Records that are the sources of information concerning the plane and passenger usage, costs, lease agreements, etc.

Part 6 advances an idea about how we might encourage leaders, administrators among them, to accurately represent their expectations with regard to their expenditures of taxpayer resources.

At the Faculty Senate meeting on December 5, 2008, "The Provost admitted that the cost might be slightly more expensive (about \$800 per hour) than commercial rates; the savings will be in volume, responsiveness, and flexibility. More passengers will, of course, share the cost. Heavy use means lower rates. Athletics and the Advancement Office will be assessed at the same rate as other units of the institution."

Now this admission is rich. As discussed in [Parts 1-5](#), the admission that the costs of President Saunders' plan "might be slightly more expensive (about \$800 per hour) than commercial rates" is amusing, if the joke wasn't on us—taxpayers, students, faculty and staff who are about to lose their jobs. Try "slightly more expensive" by a factor or more than five times the projected flight hour cost or \$5,387.67 (\$6,187.67 actual cost per flight hour - \$800 Saunders'/Lyman's budgeted/expected cost per flight hour.).

Do you think spendthrift administrators would be more attentive with regard to our money, if they had to pay the difference between their publicly represented estimates and the hidden actual costs? We could consider their estimates as honest, if they paid the difference. Call it a cost of administrative integrity.

Applying this cost of administrative integrity, the first 17 months of N777AQ's life at USM should cost Saunders and Lyman \$5,387.67 (see Part 1) times 95.55 actual flight hours, that is:

\$514,791.86.

So, here we have an opportunity for President Saunders and Provost Lyman to

reimburse USM, taxpayers, and students \$514,791.86 in an act of integrity. And, as a consequence, they will be more attentive to their duties with regard not only to their plane but also other duties to be explored in future reports.

Perhaps we should ask legislators to enact an Administrative Integrity Act which, in part, would insure that administrators were honest with our resources by making them personally responsible for grossly misrepresenting expected expenditures.