

CoB News, 11 June 2008

Martha, is that You?

Valerie Wells' [8-June-08 story](#) for *The Hattiesburg American*, entitled "Saunders feels at home," revealed (1) some interesting statistics about the Martha Saunders administration of USM and (2) what sources call Saunders' strange views on USM's mission. First, Wells interviewed a number of USM students about Saunders' presidency of USM, and most of these students could not link Saunders' name to the presidency of USM.

Table 1
Are USM Students Familiar with Martha Saunders?

Name	Major	Familiar with Saunders?
Laura Smith	Marketing	No
Christopher Bunkley	Computer Science	No
Grant White	Chemistry & Psychology	No
Travis Whaley	not reported	Yes
Kelsea Baker	Information Systems	No

Table 1 above shows the names and majors of the five students interviewed about Saunders by Wells. Of these, only one (Whaley) was able to name Saunders as USM's current president. The other four (80%) could not. Two of these are CoB students (Smith and Baker). So, after about 13 months at the helm of USM, and despite Saunders' "students are first" philosophy, very few USM students seem to be able to place Saunders (by name) in the Aubrey K. Lucas Administration Building.

In addition to this aspect of Wells' report, *THA* readers also learned about USM's growing financial strains. It is here that Wells reports an incredulous comment made by Saunders:

"'We are scouring our expenditures,' Saunders said. The university is compiling 'a very long list' of cuts, things that are not central to its mission. For example, Families First Children's Center, an inclusive daycare service for children with and without special needs, is closing in August because it is losing money and doesn't fit the university's mission, Saunders said. The center is run by the Institute for Disability Studies and has 26 children enrolled. The center, which opened in 2004, has seven employees."

Saunders' comments above are nothing short of amazing. According to sources, if they had been made by former USM president Shelby Thames the USM Faculty Senate would have likely called an emergency meeting to consider Thames' future. Not so for Saunders, who will likely get a pass on the comments. Finally, Wells' story concludes by providing Saunders' comments on proposals to outsource USM's Physical Plant -- a proposal Saunders seems to support.

Dear USMNEWS.NET, . . .

In recent days our readers have responded to a number of reports here at USMNEWS.NET. Below is a selection of excerpts from those responses:

Thanks for the "Carrying HoDo" series. It was an eye opener that many of us enjoyed reading and learning about. People who know Harold appreciate this one for sure . . .

[Regarding Harold Doty's mass e-mail to MGT 400 students], do I smell something fishy going on with Dr. Doty? . . .

I enjoyed the deposition of Martha Saunders. USM news just gets better and better. Thanks for everything.

Reporters at USMNEWS.NET will continue to provide readers' comments in future additions.