

Equal and Opposite Reaction

A Guest Editorial by Susan Green-Lewis

Again and again USM president Martha Saunders responds to criticism that she is anything but serious, and that her presidency has been little more than superficial fluff, with more of the same – superficiality, puffery, and all the rest. Again and again she responds to critics by being exactly who they say she is, and with the latest iteration of her USM webpage, we have yet another instance of it. Consider, for example, the insert below.



Once again Saunders finds another way to trot out the “ride all the rides” mantra, this time with a whimsical photo of herself, probably somewhere near the USM rose garden or out back at the president’s mansion, where just a few years ago a \$330,000 renovation, **using university funds**, to the master bedroom suite took place. Once more the “I’m a university president” closes with the claim that USM is the premier research university of the Gulf South. It’s as if she thinks we believe that a Gulf South university that she is the head of *could ever be* the premier research university. There’s a reason other Gulf South institutions don’t also make this claim – doing so reeks of desperation, and conventional wisdom tells us that if you feel the need to proclaim it, there’s likely little reality to it.