

## Following the Boards

The news and discussion surrounding the USM financial crisis is heating up daily, and more and more USM faculty are chiming in about the Martha Saunders administration's lack of transparency concerning the situation. In his [24-July-09 article](#) for *The Hattiesburg American* entitled "USM prepares for budget cuts," *THA* higher education reporter Ed Kemp spoke with USM philosophy professor Andrew Haley, who told Kemp that the last communication from Saunders, which came near the beginning of July-09, indicated that things were okay. Since that time, according to Haley, there have been no official communiqués from either Saunders or USM provost Robert Lyman.

Over at the [USM Forum -- Message Board](#), in the thread "Saunders/Public Relations," long-time, respected poster *ram* recently wrote (on 23-July-09) that ". . . Pres[ident] Saunders did not create 'communication breakdown' . . . but at some point she has to take ownership of the present. Which is to be preferred, bad leadership or no leadership at all? Maybe y'all have a better apprec[i]ation of her 'vision.' Maybe y'all see how she demonstrates sacrifice before demanding it. Me, I'm missing it." In addition to supporting Haley's sentiment about the lack of transparency, *ram* includes a veiled reference to Saunders' recent decision, in the midst of a multi-million dollar budget cut, to execute a \$2 million lease for a University airplane. As reported months ago by USMNEWS.net, Saunders defended that decision by saying that it was paid for by cuts to her executive cabinet.

Given his habitual and lengthy absences from the CoB's Joseph A. Greene Hall, CoB dean Lance Nail is also not likely to score highly (from CoB faculty judges) on a transparency scorecard. Sources tell USMNEWS.net that there is a good deal of talk around JAG about how high Kirby E. "Skip" Hughes' new administrative salary likely is, and how Hughes' prior relationship with Nail may have influenced the decision to hire him (Hughes). Some CoB faculty believe that Hughes should be more up front by admitting just what his new compensation level is as the CoB's new School of Accountancy director. That information will soon be made public in any regard, and as it stands speculation has Hughes' salary in the \$140,000 to \$175,000 range. Even the low end of this range accounts for 7% of the budget cut that Saunders and Lyman are now requesting from Nail.