

Foundation of Sand

A Guest Column

USM sophomore Daniel Miles' [plan to save several of USM's academic programs](#), by splitting in half each student's "athletics assessment" and giving one half to academic affairs, will work. It will, as pointed out, also expose Richard Giannini's athletics department, which will, under Miles' proposal, have to generate at least \$3 million in ticket sales to cover the lost tuition taxes. The exposure of "Mr. G's" athletics house to the whims and pleasures of USM's students will be similar to the same test that the Martha Saunders administration has been applying on the academic side. In Saunders' world, those academic programs that students are not interested in are, one by one, falling out of the *USM Bulletin*.

Where will students take their athletics dollars? The photos below show that it will not be Reed Green Coliseum on volleyball night. As Susan Green-Lewis so [deftly explained](#) to Lindy Tolar, Reed Green will also be missing student dollars on women's basketball nights. I'm also betting that Larry Eustachy won't see many student dollars, nor will most of the other USM sports programs/coaches.



The USM baseball program will be just fine – USM is “a baseball school,” like it or not. The real wildcard here is the USM football program. Students will continue to attend some of the games, tuition tax or no tuition tax. Their attendance will, however, become more performance sensitive than it currently is with the tuition tax. It will also become a little more opponent sensitive. Thus, when a USM team with a 0.500 record (or worse) lines up on Carlisle-Faulkner Field against a bad Rice team, students are as likely to be somewhere *other than* M.M. Roberts Stadium as they are to be there.