

It's Official Another Tuition Hike Approved by Mississippi IHL

The [Hattiesburg American](#) reported in April, 2012, that the IHL had approved 15 tuition hikes in a 16 year period. According to other reports "[since 2000](#), average [tuition](#) among the eight [Mississippi] universities increased 96 percent, an average of 8 percent a year." In 2012, [USM students endured](#) an 8.7% tuition increase for 2012-13, with an additional 6.4% increase for 2013-2014. And, as reported below, the IHL has now approved 7 percent more for the next two years.

On [October 16, 2013](#), the IHL gave first vote approval of yet another round of increases in tuition. USM proposed a pair of 3.5 percent increases for a total of 7 percent over the next two years. [Yesterday](#), the IHL approved the proposed tuition increases, meaning annual tuition at USM will climb from \$6,336 to more than \$7,000.00. Sources have told usmnews.net's reporters that of further concern to USM's student body is [the claim](#) that "if much more or much less money was appropriated, university presidents would probably revisit their proposals." Since no one expects "much more" money to be appropriated by the Legislature, students should expect even more increases in tuition.

The solution? According to [Ann Marie Chilcutt](#), USM's Student Government Association President -- and beneficiary of a trip on [Airfarce One](#) to a football game in Nebraska -- the solution is to borrow more money. Ms. Chilcutt explains "I think the return on our investment at the end of the day will be just as good or better."

However, the facts simply do not support Ms. Chilcutt's "thoughts". Six year graduation rate for Southern Miss, for example, is less than an even bet. The 2013 edition of *Best Colleges* from *U.S. News & World Report* reported a 22% 4-year graduation rate for Southern Miss. (In the 2012 edition, Southern Miss' 4-year graduation rate was also 22%.) After six years, Southern Miss manages to graduate only 47% of its students.

Last year, [the Wall Street Journal](#) reported "total student debt outstanding appears to have surpassed \$1 trillion last year." Burdened with historic amounts of debt, college grads are [moving home](#). Many of those who are not moving home are unable to [qualify for a mortgage](#) because of their student debt. Making this situation worse, is the fact that "nearly 14 percent [of student loan borrowers default](#) within three years of making their first loan payment." And, the situation has only gotten worse as "[Surging student-loan debt is crushing the system](#)." According to Equifax, "\$3.5 billion in government and private student loans went bad in the first three months of 2013, the most since the company began keeping track."

Perhaps President Bennett and the IHL should consider cutting costs. President Bennett clings to a **\$2 million** [airplane](#) lease improvidently entered into by former President

Saunders. [Administrative bloat](#) and its attendant salaries, costs and benefits are rampant. Money is [poured](#) into a [failed](#) sports program. Money is [poured](#) into [construction](#) that adds little value, but huge costs. (For many more examples, please use usmnews.net's custom search box.)

Unfortunately, no one really expects Dr. Bennett or any other administrator to part with his/her toys.