

## University of Southern Mississippi Airplane Taxpayer and Student Waste Continues

Documents from a recent Mississippi Open Records Act request are arriving at usmnews.net. Among the documents are the flight and cost records for USM's N777AQ airplane. We will continue our series reporting the costs and uses of N777AQ. We begin the continuation with a review, *i.e.*, our last report: [President Saunders' Last Days Squandering Students' and Taxpayers' Money, Part 6](#), "One more scandal for the road."

### President Saunders' Last Days Squandering Students' and Taxpayers' Money

Part 6 2012

**"One more scandal for the road."**

On April 27, 2012, President Martha Saunders announced her "resignation." Whether it was voluntary is a matter of debate given the secrecy and suddenness of the "resignation." Interim President Aubrey Lucas immediately took over even though Saunders' "resignation" was not effective until June 30, 2012.

President Saunders presided over many scandals as USM's president and they did not abate with her "resignation." The waste of taxpayer and student money continued right up to the end.

Recent documents obtained via open records requests reports a pilot's log for June 18-21, 2012, in which Saunders flew USM airplane N777AQ from Hattiesburg to Knoxville, TN to Washington, D.C. back to Knoxville and Hattiesburg. She was the only passenger. **USM refused to provide a purpose for Saunders' trip.** So we don't know the purpose of the flight. One thing is certain, though, it was a very, very expensive trip.

The number of flight hours reported in the pilot's "King Air N777AQ Trip Log" was 6.7. USM documents show that the cost per flight hour is \$7,226.19. So, the cost of this flight to taxpayers and students is **\$48,415.47**.

Let's repeat that: it cost Mississippi taxpayers and USM students **\$48,415.47** to transport neutered, lame-duck Martha Saunders to Washington, D.C. **for reasons unknown.** We can safely assume that this expensive use of N777AQ was not for the benefit of USM students or Mississippi taxpayers.

What is USM hiding? What is Martha Saunders hiding?

More secrets.

**Why?**