

Rodney Bennett's Extravagance

Part 6 – While we witness yet another increase in tuition... “TTT” of USM football...

Let's also witness costs of sports at USM. The details that USM does not volunteer. And wonder if public representations about the cost of USM sports is as inaccurate as the public representation of cost per flight hour and total cost of President Bennett's airplane. Let's also witness the another increase of tuition at USM, while we review another of President Bennett's extravagance.

Via a Mississippi Open Records Act request, usmnews.net recently obtained a large batch of documents from USM relating to USM president Rodney Bennett's university aircraft. This series provides analysis of these documents.

This installment examines the June 10, 2013 flight, another sports related flight that is not charged to USM's Athletics department or USM Athletic Foundation.

The flight is from Hattiesburg to Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas and back to Hattiesburg. The flight took 3.6 flight hours. The cost per flight hour as reported in USM's records is approximately \$6,712. (Where did this amount come from? It's simple. Just add up all the airplane costs as reported in USM's records and divide them by the number of reported flight hours as reported in USM's records.)

The total cost for this trip was:

$$\text{\$6,712 X 3.5 = \$23,492}$$

The purpose of the flight: “C-USA Board of Directors Meeting. The passenger is Dr. R. Bennett.

Was it worth it? Did it advance the educational mission of USM?

Here's the bottom line: What's wrong with flying commercially? If the trips are necessary, Dr. Bennett and his many administrators can plan trips to be flown via commercial planes. Nothing, and I mean nothing Dr. Bennett does in his job as president of USM necessitates travel by way of a private airplane purchased with student and taxpayer money for millions of dollars. There's a lot wrong, even obscene, with a local bureaucrat spending millions on extravagance wrested from debt ridden students.

The IHL Board just announced final approval for tuition increases at USM. Congratulations, IHL and Dr. Bennett. Here's more money for you to waste.

The money wasted on this trip of convenience could have paid a full year's tuition for approximately **three students** and their families struggling to pay the increasing

costs of education. Do you think these kinds of thoughts ever crossed Bennett's mind?

Also note that the cost of this flight of convenience was not assigned to sports programs. So, just how accurate are administrators' public representations of the costs of USM sports programs, like football? Like the airplane, the costs may be a lot more than they represent.

We'll report more of these wasteful flights over the next few weeks. This expenditure signals the way President Bennett squanders taxpayer and student money. After all, it's not his money. So, it's easy to spend and it appears he is quite willing to waste your hard earned dollars.