

President Saunders Continues to Squander
Student and Taxpayer Money on Her Airplane

PART 1

We at www.usmnews.net, recently received another set of information related to President Saunders' airplane, N777AQ. We now have two years of actual costs of N777AQ. As you may recall, it is owned by the University of Southern Mississippi Foundation in name only because all costs are paid by University of Southern Mississippi. That is, taxpayers and USM students pay all costs associated with President Saunders' airplane. (See, [lease agreement](#) obtained through a Mississippi Open Records request.)

We can now update the actual cost per flight hour for the first two years of operations:

\$737,133.72 total actual cost / **123.45** actual flight hours = **\$5,971.11 actual cost per flight hour**. (See [cost information](#) obtained through Mississippi Open Records request.)

The high cost per flight hour has been known for at least a year and a half of the first two years of use.

Please note that when the **\$907,053.85 balloon payment**, which is due at the end of the five year lease, is amortized over the five years of the purchase/lease, the cost per flight hour is **\$8,910.28**.

USM officials represented that their estimated cost of \$800 per flight hour might be slightly more expensive than commercial rates. They have not corrected this material misinformation. The difference between the actual cost per flight hour of **\$5,971.11** and the estimated cost per flight hour of \$800 is material by any measure. A question to consider is, When does incompetence become fraud?

This series entitled, "President Saunders Continues to Squander Student and Taxpayer Money on Her Airplane" will detail the actual cost of each flight since the last series entitled "[MS Open Records Request Reveals USM's Actual Costs of President Saunders' Plane](#)". The first report in this series follows:

September 25, 2010

Pilots Allen and Price flew N777AQ round trip from Hattiesburg, MS to Rustin, LA. Passengers were President Martha Saunders and her husband Joe Bailey and IHL Board Member Doug Rouse and his wife Pam Rouse. Actual flight hours were 1.8. Applying Saunders' inaccurate estimate of \$800 per flight hour, USM charged \$1,440 to the President's Office. The actual cost to fly N777AQ was 1.8 actual flight hours times **\$5,971.11** actual cost per flight hour equals **\$10,747.99**.

If the cost per flight hour includes the balloon payment that USM must pay at the end of the five year lease period, the cost of the flight was 1.8 times **\$8,910.28** equals **\$16,038.50**.

THE PURPOSE OF THE FLIGHT WAS TO ATTEND USM VS. LA TECH FOOTBALL GAME!

The question is well worth asking again: When does incompetence become fraud?