

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

PART 10 [Dumb gets dumber but the dumbest is yet to come.]

www.usmnews.net recently received another set of documents related to President Saunders' airplane, N777AQ, through Mississippi Open Records Act (MORA) requests. MORA documents, USM's own records, provide verification of misrepresentations made by President Saunders and Provost Lyman about N777AQ. What would happen to your career if you made the same financial misrepresentations with taxpayers' and students' money?

We now have two years of **actual** costs of N777AQ. Although the airplane is owned by the University of Southern Mississippi Foundation, all costs are paid by University of Southern Mississippi. That is, taxpayers and USM students pay all costs of President Saunders' airplane.

See [PART 1](#) to access documents acquired through MORA requests. With these records, you can verify **actual** costs of N777AQ. As reported in **PART 1**, **actual** cost per flight hour is **\$5,971.11**.

The tenth report in this series follows:

November 30, 2010 and December 1, 2010

In this report, it's hard to characterize President Saunders' actions as anything but really, really dumb. President Saunders charged the Institutions of Higher Learning for the use of N777AQ for two trips by several of its members. The two trips took a total of 3.1 flight hours. President Saunders billed the IHL for **\$2,480** [(3.1)(Saunders' estimated—and, according to her own records, wildly inaccurate--cost per flight hour, \$800)]. The IHL paid, and I would suspect gladly paid, the invoice. (See, [Invoice No.: 001-102](#) and [pilots log.](#))

Two important facts make this transaction an incredible stupid act.

1. The actual cost to USM and its students was 3.1 actual flight hours times \$5,971.11 actual cost per flight hour, namely, **\$18,510.44**. That is a loss of **\$16,030.44**. (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**. So, including the balloon payment, this trip cost **\$27,621.87**. **USM and its student were screwed to the tune of \$25,141.87**)
2. IHL members have used N777AQ many more times than the two trips and have not reimbursed USM. Why was IHL charged for two trips but not the many other trips they took on N777AQ? The bottom line is USM students

are out tens of thousands, probably hundreds of thousands, by President Saunders' stupidity.

Dear USM Colleagues,

If you were this incompetent in teaching, research, or service duties, how long do you think President Saunders would quietly stand by not passing judgment in an evaluation of you?

President Saunders has you focused on evaluating each other as if your careers depend on it, and it does. Try a different path. Evaluate her performance. To continue a one-sided evaluation will never cure a significant problem: USM leadership, including IHL Board Members. Of course, you'll need to gather facts and exercise a bit of courage to put the facts to good use.

Marc DePree, Editor
www.usmnews.net