

QUESTION: WHAT SHOULD TWO ROUND TRIPS TO OMAHA NE COST?
USM'S ANSWER: \$72,395.74

AS TROUBLING AS THE EXTRAVAGANT COST IS, THE INCLINATION TO HIDE ADMINISTRATIVE MISCONDUCT IS MORE TROUBLING. READ ON AND YOU'LL SEE WHY USM PREFERRED DECEPTION TO TELLING THE TRUTH.

If you are just beginning this series with this report, you may wish to read the introductory materials in the initial report [What Does A Trip From Hattiesburg, MS, To Gulfport, MS Cost?](#) That report provides background information concerning the actual costs for the past 17 months of an airplane N777AQ leased by President Saunders.

USM has identified a total actual cost of **\$591,231.71** for 30 round trips during the past 17 months of operations.

To Omaha, NE And Back

On June 14 and 16, 2009, the Interdepartmental Invoice below represents that "Dr. Saunders & **guests**" and "Chad Driskell & **guests**" flew on N777AQ to Omaha, NE to watch the **College World Series**. The Interdepartmental Invoices were the initial response from USM to a Mississippi Open Records Act (MORA) request concerning the multi-million dollar plane President Saunders leases and pays for with Mississippi taxpayer and student money. They were incomplete. For example, who are the "**guests**"? We requested the details in our original MORA request. We recently received more details. (We may not have all the details, yet. USM administrators are inclined to hide what they do. See past-Dean Doty's characterization of USM's Foundation as a "booze account.") Let's see what details President Saunders had left out of our original MORA request.

We now have the pilot's log. The pilot's log of the Omaha flight provides the passenger list. "Guests" included: Joe Bailey (President Saunders' husband), Jack Driskell (a relation of Chad Driskell?), Doug Rouse, Joe and Connie Morgan (former Chief Financial Officer at USM and spouse), Bob Pierce (Vice President for Advancement at USM), Johnny Atherton (vice president of external affairs for Mississippi Power Company and member of a USM steering committee comprised of alumni association board members working in the marketing and public relations fields), Billy Hewes (MS state senator and contributor to Southern Society in an amount between \$1,000 and \$2499 and an associate for excellence in The USM Foundation in an amount between \$10,000 and \$49,999), Jay McDowell (former assistant athletic director), Richard Giannini (athletic director), John Brown (unknown but possibly football prospect), and **Johnny Dupree**

(mayor of Hattiesburg, contributor to the Southern Society in an amount between \$500 and \$999 and an associate for excellence in The USM Foundation in an amount between \$10,000 and \$49,999). (In the interest of full disclosure, the editor of usmnews.net is an associate for excellent in The USM Foundation in an amount between \$10,000 and \$49,999, but was not invited to fly with President Saunders to Omaha to watch the College World Series.)

Why are these people flying to a baseball game at the expense of taxpayers and students? What is President Saunders doing flying these IHL Board Members and politicians around the country? Saving faculty jobs and students majors? Or is she using taxpayer and student money to advance her personal interests?

The Interdepartmental Invoice shows the flight was charged to the "President's Office." The flight time was 5.8 hours x 2 according to the Interdepartmental Invoice but the pilot's log shows that the plane made two trips back from Omaha on June 16 to bring back all the passengers, one showing 3.3 flight hours and the other showing 5.7 flight hours. (See pilot's log below.)

See, Interdepartmental Invoice inserted below:

Original ☐

Department Copy ☐

Date: 5/22/2009

CHARGE: President's Office
(DEPARTMENT NAME)

0001 298-0001
(CITY) (PHONE NUMBER)

CREDIT:	Airplane Operations	
	DEPARTMENT NAME	
	5053	255-4135
	BOX	PHONE NUMBER

[illegible]

SPA
APPROVAL
IF REQUIRED _____ SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

PROVOST APPROVAL IF REQUIRED	SIGNATURE	DATE
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ACCOUNTING INFORMATION	ACCOUNT	FUND	DEPTH	PROGRAM	PROJECT/GRANT	AMOUNT
BUDGET STRINGS TO CHARGE FOR SERVICES OR MATERIALS RECEIVED	604021	10H10	100001	06000		4680.00
	604021	10H10	100003	06000		4680.00
AUTHORIZED DEPARTMENT SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____						
BUDGET STRINGS TO CREDIT FOR SALES OF SERVICES OR MATERIALS	604021	10H10	100011	06000		9360.00
AUTHORIZED DEPARTMENT SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____						

JOURNAL NUMBER: _____
JOURNAL DATE: _____

King Air N777AQ Trip Log

<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Destination(s)</u>	<u>Passenger Name(s)</u>
12-14-69	Omaha, NE	Doug Hewes, Joe / Sonnie Morgan, Bob Pierce, Jay M. Davis II Sherry Atherton, Billy Hewes
Ldgs <u>2</u> Cycles <u>2</u>	Pilots <u>Delloway, Price</u>	Bus. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trng <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance <input type="checkbox"/>
Hobbs Mtr In <u>1655.6</u>	Out <u>1644.9</u>	= <u>5.7</u> hrs total

<u>Date</u>	<u>Destination(s)</u>	<u>Passenger Names</u>
6-16-69	Omaha, NE	Johnny Dupree, John Brown
Ldgs <u>1</u> Cycles <u>1</u>	Pilots <u>Benningham, Price</u>	Bus. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trng <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance <input type="checkbox"/>
Hobbs Mtr In <u>1652.9</u>	Out <u>1652.6</u>	= <u>33</u> hrs total

<u>Date</u>	<u>Destination(s)</u>	<u>Passenger Names</u>
6-16-69	Hattiesburg, MS	M. Sanders, Joe Bailey, Chad & Jack D. Smith, Joe Morgan, Carmel Morgan, Richard G. Gahan
Ldgs <u>1</u> Cycles <u>1</u>	Pilots <u>Cummins / Price</u>	Bus. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trng <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance <input type="checkbox"/>
Hobbs Mtr In <u>1661.6</u>	Out <u>1652.9</u>	= <u>8.7</u> hrs total

Given the actual costs provided in USM's records, consider the following calculation.

At an average cost per flight, a trip costs **\$19,707.72**, i.e.,
 \$591,231.71 actual total cost/30 actual trips over the 17
 months period. Two flights are listed, so the cost was **\$39,**
414.44.

How did USM arrive at \$9,360.00 for the flight? They used an estimated \$800 cost per flight hour based on a wildly inaccurate usage rate of estimated total cost per year of \$200,000 and estimated 250 passengers (A future report will show these estimates were made by Provost Lyman at a Faculty Senate meeting.) Our cost numbers use actual costs incurred by USM over an extended period of 17 months. USM is not using their own actual costs, but we are. [USM is using a budgeted usage rate that is based on a wildly inaccurate estimation of the actual costs and usage. USM should have corrected their estimates to reflect the true usage and costs of the airplane long ago.]

The ACTUAL cost per flight hour = \$591,231.71 total actual cost / 95.55
 actual flight hours = \$6,187.67. The trips to Omaha cost at least 5.85 x 2 =

11.7 flight hours x \$6,187.67 = **\$72,395.74.**

\$72,395.74 of taxpayer and student money was spent so that President Saunders can chauffeur her husband, politicians, IHL members, upper administrators, and spouses to a BASEBALL GAME!?

WHO'S MONITORING THESE "PUBLIC SERVANTS"?

What is the difference between Meredith's taxpayer-paid plants and shrubs that cost him his job and Saunders' taxpayer-paid plane trips for her husband and guests like IHL Board Members and Mayor Dupree? (Except for the fact that the cost of the gardening at Meredith's home cost a lot less than the Saunders' and guests' flights.) It may be instructive to review the [history of a previous IHL Commissioner Meredith](#).

We all know that costs of higher education are skyrocketing. Is anyone in authority holding USM and IHL administrators accountable? IHL members blessed the purchase of the plane. IHL members are enjoying the use of the plane (see the above list of passengers and past and future reports in this series.) So, do not expect the IHL to do its oversight responsibility and hold President Saunders accountable for this extravagant expenditure of taxpayer and student money. A corollary is to expect costs of higher education to continue to unnecessarily increase.

Stay tuned to usmnews.net for cost analyses of the remaining 19 flights aboard President Saunders' plane.