

QUESTION: WHOSE PLANE IS THIS?

Why do USM students and faculty pay for N777AQ while IHL members seem to use it more than anyone else?

To Starkville, MS

On October 16, 2009, a USM Pilots' Trip Log reported that Dr. Saunders, Robin Robinson—IHL member, Doug Rouse—IHL member, and Ed Blakeslee—IHL member flew on N777AQ to Starkville, MS and back to Hattiesburg, MS. No Intradepartmental Invoice was provided to usmnews.net for this trip. The Trip Log shows the round trip took 1.4 flight hours. Missing information, such as the Interdepartmental Invoice for this flight, has in the past signaled information the Saunders administration is hiding. Be that as it may, no purpose was given for the flight.

King Air N777AQ Trip Log						
Date(s)	Destination(s)	Passenger Name(s)				
10-15-09	Hattiesburg, ms	M. Saunders, Robin Robinson, Kristy Pickering, Doug Rouse, Ed Blakeslee, Joe Aronson, Lee Gore, Chad Driskell				
Ldgs 1	Cycles 1	Pilots Kitter, Price	Bus. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trng	Maintenance	
Hobbs Mtr	In 1669.3	Out 1668.8	= 0.5 hrs total			
<hr/>						
Date	Destination(s)	Passenger Names				
10-16-09	Starkville, MS	M. Saunders, Robin Robinson, Doug Rouse, Ed Blakeslee				
Ldgs 1	Cycles 1	Pilots Cunningham/Price	Bus. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trng	Maintenance	
Hobbs Mtr	In 1670.0	Out 1669.3	= 0.7 hrs total			
<hr/>						
Date	Destination(s)	Passenger Names				
10-16-09	Hattiesburg, ms	M. Saunders, Robin Robinson, Doug Rouse, Ed Blakeslee				
Ldgs 1	Cycles 1	Pilots Cunningham/Price	Bus. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trng	Maintenance	
Hobbs Mtr	In 1670.7	Out 1670.0	= 0.7 hrs total			

Note, again, that the majority of passengers [three of the four passengers] were IHL members, not USM personnel. Why should USM students and faculty pay for a plane used by IHL for IHL purposes, whatever they may be?

The costs are not trivial. For this flight alone, USM students and faculty paid 1.4 flight hours x \$6,187.67 cost per flight hour = **\$8,662.74** actual cost for the flight. **(Remember, usmnews.net's computation of cost per flight hour does not include or amortize the \$907,053.85 balloon payment due on the 60th month. If that amount is included, the cost is substantially higher than \$6,187.67 per flight hour.)**

Just what does **\$ 8,662.74** mean to President Saunders? Ask her. She's not thinking clearly about it and may need to be jarred from her apparent stupor. Remember, it's not her money she's spending. It's taxpayers' and students' and has adverse consequences for faculty. What does **\$8,662.74** mean to a student? A faculty member – particularly one who has recently been handed a terminal contract?

IHL members seem to fly airplane N777AQ more than anyone else. Why should USM students and faculty pay for it?

Context

If you are a new reader of this series, catch up by reviewing [A Brief History of Saunders' "Lease" of airplane N777AQ During a Recession, Part 1](#). That report provides background information concerning the actual costs for the first 17 months of an airplane N777AQ leased by President Saunders for a 60-month period. For example, USM documents report total actual cost of **\$591,231.71** during the first 17 months of airplane N777AQ operations.

Interdepartmental Invoices for 30 flights were provided in an initial response from USM to a MORA request concerning the airplane President Saunders leases and pays for with Mississippi taxpayer and student dollars. Although the MORA request was for all records related to the plane, USM's response was incomplete. When legal counsel followed up concerning the inadequate response, the University produced more documents. usmnews.net reporters are currently reviewing the additional documents and there are reasons to believe the response was again incomplete.

WHO'S MONITORING THESE "PUBLIC SERVANTS"?

The incomplete response to our MORA request, as exemplified above, signals irresponsible accountability and questionable use of taxpayer, student, and faculty resources.

Is anyone holding USM and IHL administrators accountable? IHL members blessed the lease/purchase of the plane. Why not? IHL members are

enjoying the use of the plane **at no cost**. So, do not expect the IHL to do its oversight responsibility and hold President Saunders accountable for this extravagant expenditure of USM student and faculty resources. **And, she's giving it away at the same time she's terminating USM academic programs and faculty.** Unless USM faculty and students take charge of their destiny, President Saunders will continue to implement her own vision which, increasingly does not include them.

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