

**What's this business of not having a purpose for spending so much money? President Saunders, are you above accountability?**

**Hey, let's fly to West Point!**

On March 15, 2010, USM Pilots' Trip Log reported that a couple of **minor USM bureaucrats** boarded N777AQ for a 1.5 hour flight to West Point, MS then back to Hattiesburg, MS. The cost? \$9,281.51 (1.5 x \$6,187.67). Chad Driskell—Executive Assistant to President Saunders for External Affairs and someone named either Rick Lambert or Mike Lambert, depending on whether the Interdepartmental Invoice or the pilot's log is correct were the passengers. (Rick Lambert is a part time attorney in the University Counsel's office with a local private practice. We have been unable to identify anyone named Mike Lambert as working for the University or the IHL.) The charge for the flight according to the Interdepartmental Invoice was the to "President's Office"—that is, taxpayers and USM students and faculty paid.

**NO PURPOSE** was given for the flight. President Saunders offers no reason for spending \$9,281.51 of our money. Doesn't \$9,281.51 rise to a level of importance that Dr. Saunders' records should provide some explanation for the trip? Do students think \$9,281.51 is a lot of money? Do taxpayers think \$9,281.51 is a lot of money? Do faculty -- particularly those who don't know if they will have a job next year -- think \$9,281.51 is a lot of money?

Why were these two minor USM functionaries spending \$9,281.51 of our money without accountability? Why should President Saunders and her bureaucratic minions care? The answer is, they don't. After all, it's not their money.

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CHARGE: President's Office  
DEPARTMENT NAME

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PROVIDE  
APPROVAL  
IF REQUIRED

ACCOUNTING INFORMATION	ACCOUNT	FUND	DEPT	PROGRAM	POLICY/TITLE#	BUDGET
BUDGET STRINGS TO CREDIT FOR SERVICES OR MATERIALS RECEIVED	804021	10H12	100001	06000		\$00.00
	804021	10H15	100003	06000		\$00.00
CUMULATED DEPARTMENT BUDGET LINE	NO YR					
BUDGET STRINGS TO CREDIT FOR SALES OF SERVICES OR MATERIALS	804021	10H15	100011	06000		\$200.00
CUMULATED DEPARTMENT BUDGET LINE	NO YR					

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King Air N777AQ Trip Log

Date(s)	Destination(s)	Passenger Name(s)
3/8/10 - 3/10/10	Washington DC (KHEF) <small>Manassas, VA</small>	M. Saunders, C. Bunge, C. Driskell, C. Newell
Ldgs 2	Cycles 2	Pilots Cunningham, Allen
		Bus. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trng <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance <input type="checkbox"/>
Hobbs Mtr	In 1699.3	Out 1692.6 = 6.7 hrs total

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Date	Destination(s)	Passenger Names
3/10/10	Golden Triangle/West Point	Chad Driskell, Mike Lambert
Ldgs 1	Cycles 1	Pilots Cunningham, Price
		Bus. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trng <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance <input type="checkbox"/>
Hobbs Mtr	In 1700.1	Out 1699.3 = 0.8 hrs total

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Date	Destination(s)	Passenger Names
3/15/10	Hattiesburg, MS	Chad Driskell, Mike Lambert
Ldgs 1	Cycles 1	Pilots Cunningham, Price
		Bus. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trng <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance <input type="checkbox"/>
Hobbs Mtr	In 1706.8	Out 1700.1 = 6.7 hrs total

(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.)

### 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 and 95.55 flight hours** during the first 17 months of airplane N777AQ operations. Therefore, the ACTUAL cost per flight hour is **\$6,187.67**, i.e., \$591,231.71 total actual cost divided by 95.55 actual flight hours.

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.