

QUESTION:
WHAT SHOULD A TRIP FROM HATTIESBURG, MS
TO CLEVELAND, MS COST?

For those of you commencing your readership of the 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 for 60 months.

USM has identified a total actual cost of \$591,231.71 for 30 round trips during the past 17 months of operations. Based on USM's numbers, the actual cost per round trip is \$19,707.72 (total actual costs divided by number of trips). Alternatively, USM reports a total of 114 passengers over the 17 month period. The cost per passenger round trip flight would be \$5,186.24 (total actual cost divided by the number of passengers).

To Oxford, MS And Back

On June 15-16, 2010, President Saunders, Denise Wiesenburg, Robin Robinson, Chad Driskell, Doug Rouse, C.D. Smith, and Ed Blakeslee flew round trip from Hattiesburg, MS, to Cleveland, MS on airplane N777AQ. The Interdepartmental Invoice shows the flight charged to the "Assistant to the President." The flight time was 2.1 hours. The stated purpose was to "attend June IHL Board Meeting at Delta State University."

See, Interdepartmental Invoice inserted below:

Item # 1113
 Original ☐
 Department Copy ☐
 Order to Fly ☐

INTERDEPARTMENTAL INVOICE
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
 (FOR CAMPUS USE ONLY)

CHARGE: Assistant to the President
 DEPARTMENT NAME: _____
 5001 256-5001
 BOX PHONE NUMBER

CREDIT: Airplane Operations
 DEPARTMENT NAME: _____
 5003 256-4134
 BOX PHONE NUMBER

Date: 5/17/2010

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION OF GOODS OR SERVICES, INCLUDING DATES OF SERVICE	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT
1	2.1 Hour Round trip to Cleveland, MS for Dr. Saunders, Denise Wiesenburg, Chad Driskell, Doug Rouse, Robin Robinson, C.D. Smith, & Ed Blakeslee	1,680.00	1,680.00
TOTAL →			1,680.00

SFA APPROVAL, IF REQUIRED

 SIGNATURE DATE

PROVOST APPROVAL, IF REQUIRED

 SIGNATURE DATE

ACCOUNTING INFORMATION	ACCOUNT	FUND	DEPTD	PROGRAM	PROJECT/GRANT	AMOUNT
BUDGET STRINGS TO CHARGE FOR SERVICES OR MATERIALS RECEIVED	604021	10H10	100003	00000		1680.00
AUTHORIZED DEPARTMENT SIGNATURE DATE						
BUDGET STRINGS TO CREDIT FOR SALES OF SERVICES OR MATERIALS	604021	10H10	100011	00000		1680.00
AUTHORIZED DEPARTMENT SIGNATURE DATE						

JOURNAL NUMBER: _____
JOURNAL DATE: _____

Formet optional - Controller's Office Box 5545

Given the actual costs provided in USM's records for President Saunders' plane, you can view the cost of the trip from a couple of perspectives.

At an average cost per flight, the trip cost **\$19,707.72**, i.e.,
 \$591,231.71 actual total cost/30 actual trips over the 17
 months period.

At a cost per passenger trip flight, the trip was **\$36,303.68**, i.e.,
 (\$591,231.71 actual total cost/114 passengers = \$5,186.24 x 7
 passenger)

How did USM arrive at \$1,680.00 for the flight? We are provided no guidance. Therefore, we use actual costs incurred by USM over an extended period of 17 months. Whatever costs USM is using to calculate the \$1,680.00 number, they are not using its own actual costs. [If USM is using a budgeted usage rate, it is a wildly inaccurate estimation of the actual costs and should be corrected to reflect the true usage and cost of the airplane.] We challenge USM to explain in detail why its cost allocation is accurate. Dr. Saunders will need to begin with the actual costs contained in University records.

We all know that costs of higher education are skyrocketing. Is anyone in authority holding 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 23 flights aboard President Saunders' plane.