

A Psychiatric Exam for Martha Saunders  
*Martha Saunders Should Be Subject to the Same Standards  
She Imposes on other Faculty*

*A Guest Editorial*

Martha Saunders should assign herself to undergo a psychiatric exams based on her disagreeable behavior toward students. I am suggesting nothing more than she apply the same standards to herself that she has insisted on applying to faculty.

A few months ago, Ed Kemp, the higher education reporter for *The Hattiesburg American*, describe in a September 15, 2010 report, 200 USM students who assembled on [14-Sept-2010](#) to have questions about budget cuts answered by USM's top administrators, including Martha Saunders. During the meeting, junior sociology major Henry Hirdes asked about the airplane that "the university owns," and how much it would cost to get rid of it since USM is "not using it." Although USM vice president for student affairs Joe Paul was holding the microphone and was beginning to speak to the matter, Saunders took the microphone and stated: "The university does not own an airplane. The university leases an airplane and in about two, two and one-half years when the lease is up, we'll certainly review the efficacy of that decision." Then, after explaining to Hirdes that the plane was leased in order to "maximize administrative time," she added: "I don't know why you're saying it's not in the air. It's in the air two or three times a week, so I think you may have to check your references on that one."

As [usmnews.net](#) has reported based on information provided by USM in open records requests, USM's and Saunders' own records show the airplane is NOT in the air two or three times a week. In fact, according to those records, the plane probably does not average being in the air two or three times a month! The costs to the university of providing a private airplane for Saunders and her friends is thousands of dollars an hour – not counting the upcoming balloon payment of nearly a million dollars. Is she delusional? And, Saunders' ridicule of a student with information her own records showed to be false, clearly warrants a psychiatric evaluation.

Since Saunders is capable of irrational outbursts directed at a student, there is evidence from which the USM community, including students, parents and faculty, can conclude she is a clear danger and should be suspended as president until she successfully completes a psychiatric examination and appropriate treatment.

We have seen Saunders impose the psychiatric evaluation criterion against faculty and when she is confronted with evidence that clearly contradicts her decision. In fact, by her own admission she has ignored the evidence. Furthermore, she has removed faculty from their classrooms and professional duties for far less than she has exhibited in her behavior cited above. Clearly, applying Saunders' criterion used

to punish faculty, she should be suspended as president until she successfully completes a psychiatric evaluation.