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If a Fedora Donation would be Classy, How about a Willis One?

The \$35,000 raise received this year by USM head football coach Larry Fedora has generated a firestorm on the USM campus (and beyond). The [most recent chapter](#) in the stormy story is the challenge put to Fedora at the 5-Nov-2010 faculty senate meeting, wherein “Senator A” argued that Fedora should donate the entire \$35,000 raise to USM’s Centennial Scholarship Fund (CSF).¹ When “Senator A” posed the challenge to Fedora, the faculty senate spontaneously cheered the idea, which also prompted USM chief financial officer/human resources director to remark that such a move would indeed be a classy one. Though this point in the 5-Nov-2010 meeting was exciting, at least as far as faculty senate meetings go, what was completely [missed in the moment](#) is the fact that Willis got a \$26,550 raise *at the same time* Fedora’s raise was awarded. And, though USM athletics director Richard Giannini [dissembled in his explanation](#) to *The Student Print* about the funding for Fedora’s raise, there is no doubt that Willis’ raise is being funded by Mississippi taxpayers, who are struggling in the worst economic situation faced in the U.S. since the Great Depression.



Willis answers questions at the staff town hall meeting on 26-Oct-2010.

Throughout the budget crises of FY2011 and FY2012, some USM faculty have come to believe that Willis is [effectively running the institution](#), not USM president Martha Saunders. As a result of this impression, Willis’ stock has been falling as budget cuts of \$10 million and \$15 million, respectively, have taken hold. Though most eyes will be on Fedora now that the faculty senate has challenged him to “give back” to USM in its time of need, sources tell USMNEWS.net that it would be a positive move for Willis to accept his own “CSF Challenge,” and donate \$25,000 of his \$26,550 raise to USM’s Centennial Scholarship Fund. As always, only time will tell if either of these challenges are met.

¹ As USMNEWS.net reported, USM’s head basketball coach, Larry Fedora, donated a \$25,000 bonus (in 2009) back to USM, citing his poor performance and financial struggles being faced by the institution as reasons for relinquishing his bonus.