

Special Report

Former Faculty Senate President Speaks Out

With the turmoil engulfing USM in the wake of president Martha Saunders' [sudden resignation](#) (on 27-Apr-2012), [former](#) USM faculty senate president [Stephen Judd is speaking out](#) after a relatively lengthy hiatus from the public eye.



Stephen Judd

Judd, who gained a reputation as an opponent of the Shelby Thames [administration](#) of USM (2002-07), recently addressed what *The Hattiesburg American* higher education reporter Ed Kemp characterized as “[a] loss of university direction” and “a sense of powerlessness that unknown forces could bring [USM president Martha] Saunders down.” According to Judd,

“It’s appalling to me that the faculty clearly had nothing to do with [the departure of USM president Martha Saunders]. This came from somewhere else, and my question is, ‘what is the primary mission of this university?’ Is it what we do - teach and research? Did anyone ask the question, when these decisions were being made, about how not only would it affect us as faculty members, but how what we do affects students? Just as we’re beginning to kind of recover and start to put the (strategic) plan into effect, now suddenly she’s gone. And now we face another two years, I mean I’m sorry, we are not going to move forward very far in the next couple of years without a president and without some sense of direction.”

Sources tell USMNEWS.net that Judd’s sentiments are likely in line with those of many other USM faculty, but his public outcry is not likely to have any impact on the current situation at USM. Judd’s reappearance does, however, fuel reports that Thames and his allies in the broader USM community are possibly behind some of the current events at USM, particularly Saunders’ sudden resignation. As a veteran faculty member who often opposed Thames, especially during [the tumultuous early years](#) of that administration (2002-05), Judd likely has a wealth of information that could serve current, less-experienced (at least politically) members of the USM faculty in reacting to what many on campus believe is meddling on the part of outside forces in USM’s operations.