

# USM Students Provide Financial Support to the IHL Board

## USM Is Still Squandering Millions on Airplane N777AQ, Part 8

Isn't USM an educational institution? Dear USM administrators and IHL members, what are you doing to advance the education of USM students?

The answer is that their activities—as previously reported in this series and in today's report, too—are so far removed from education, they seem to be living in their own little, but expensive, administrative world.

### Here's what their world looks like from their own records

On March 11, 2013, we returned to reports about USM's airplane because usmnews.net recently acquired through a Mississippi Open Records Act request another set of information about N777AQ. As a matter of fact, with regard to the [current series](#), reporting the use and actual cost of airplane N777AQ, USM administrators have continued to [materially misrepresent](#) information about the cost of N777AQ. Former-president Martha Saunders and former-provost Robert Lyman publicly and repeatedly reported the cost per flight hour of N777AQ as \$800. They were eager to boast about what a cost-effective deal Mississippi taxpayers and USM students were getting with their lease/purchase of N777AQ. Adding insult to injury is the fact that the IHL pays but a small portion of the actual cost per flight hour for taxiing IHL members on flights. Specifically, the IHL pays the \$800 per flight hour thereby screwing USM students out of **\$6,141** per flight hour (\$6,941 – 800)!

Several years ago, we began reporting details of USM's costs as reflected in its internal records to expose the \$800 per flight hour lie. Saunders and Lyman probably believed they could get away with it -- that no one would ever take the time and/or trouble using the Mississippi Open Records Act to obtain detailed cost and usage records, total the actual costs and the actual number of flight hours, and determine the real cost per flight hour of N777AQ. Of course, simple incompetence--Saunders' and Lyman's incompetence--could explain their \$800 cost per flight hour claim, if it were not for the fact that usmnews.net reported in detail the actual cost per flight hour for years and people from the IHL have for years monitored usmnews.net regularly.

The updated actual cash cost per flight hour is \$4,840. If the nearly one million-dollar balloon payment is included, the total actual cost per flight hour is **\$6,941**. Think of the \$800 misrepresentation this way: If someone sold you a car for \$20,000 then handed you a bill for \$173,525, what would you call her?

On December 7, 2012, Mississippi taxpayers and USM students paid a small fortune to taxi IHL members Robin Robinson and Christy Pickering aboard N777AQ from Hattiesburg to Laurel to Columbus and back to Hattiesburg. The purpose of the flight was stated on USM's Invoice as "IHL Board Support." They got that right! USM students supported the IHL Board on this flight. Let's see how that worked. This 2.8 flight hours actually cost USM students **\$19,434.80**. for the use of N777AQ. Not only did the IHL screw USM students out of any profit, they also paid only

a small portion of the cost per flight hour. The IHL reimbursed USM a measly **\$2080**. screwing USM students out of **\$17,354.80!**

No problem, though, USM students can borrow more money to cover the wasted resources and USM students get the pleasure to pay more than their share in “support” of taxiing IHL members for UM, MSU, JSU, etc students.

USM students, feeling good about your cost of attending USM?

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To date, although the IHL visits usmnews regularly and only on weekdays during work hours, never has anyone from the IHL or USM provided any corrections to our news reports. Of course, USM and the IHL have the same records and documents that they provide us in our Mississippi Open Records requests. Also note that at the top of the front page of usmnews we offer readers an alternative to the public relations reports published by USM: **“Over the past several years, usmnews.net has published literally thousands of reports from current and former faculty who share my belief that USM has ineffectively and inefficiently employed far too much of its resources, both in terms of money and people. The purpose of usmnews.net is not to provide a public relations view. That is amply supplied by [The University of Southern Mississippi's public relations department.](#)”**