

The Farm

News Briefs from Southern Miss

10-February-2012

Round-Trip Ticket

According to new paperwork obtained via the *Mississippi Open Records Act* by USMNEWS.net regarding the USM Beechcraft King Air, the lease between USM and the USM Foundation for the Beechcraft airplane appears to have been extended through 2019. The lease was originally set to expire in 2014 with a sizable balloon payment. Now, the nearly \$17,000 monthly lease payment will continue five years beyond original expectations. Regular readers of USMNEWS.net are aware that ongoing investigative reports series on the USM plane have revealed that ancillary expenses regarding the plane are massive, and include salaries and benefits being paid to a stable of pilots and co-pilots affiliated with the Airplane Operations USM auxiliary. These expenses are added to repair costs, hangar fees, fuel expenses and other outlays related to lodging, meals, etc. Stay tuned for more on this situation in the weeks and months to come.

More Budget Cuts Coming USM's Way

As Tyler Hill [reports in the](#) 9-Feb-2012 issue of *The Student Printz*, the State of Mississippi is looking at a \$26 million budget shortfall in FY2013. Newly-inaugurated Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant announced plans to sell the state jet, a move that will initially raise \$2 million and later lead to additional annual savings of \$0.5 million. Sources tell USMNEWS.net that this move is both laudable and ironic, given that USM president Martha Saunders has just stretched the lease on her USM airplane another five years, through 2019 (see story above).

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STATE

Bryant announces budget cuts

Tyler Hill
Printz Writer

Gov. Phil Bryant unveiled his budget recommendation for fiscal 2013 last Tuesday to cut state spending by \$26 million, bringing the total budget to \$3.49 billion.

In his address to lawmakers, Bryant characterized his budget as having "lots of cuts" while reassuring the necessary steps to a balanced budget, saving for a "rainy day" fund and no new taxes under his administration.

In a written budget recommendation, Bryant states, "As a true fiscal conservative, I am committed to doing more with less and will make necessary cuts before raising taxes."

Bryant said that he'd sell a state jet in order to raise \$2 million dollars initially, saving \$500,000 a year in annual maintenance costs.

According to his budget, most state agencies will receive 5.53 percent less than they have in years past. One of those department budgets will be education, which includes K-12, community colleges and universities.

Last year, the University of Southern Mississippi received approximately \$78 million in government appropriations for the Hattiesburg and Gulf Coast campuses.

However, if Bryant's budget passes as currently recommended, Southern Miss will receive \$4.3 million less starting in 2013.

If USM were to rely on tuition increases to make up for the difference, students would most likely see an increase of \$250 per year.

Bryant said that colleges should be weary of relying on tuition increases and instead utilize the cash reserves on hand to help them weather cuts.

However, some lawmakers, including the House's chief budget writer Rep. Herb Frierson, said that it could spell big tuition increases next fall.

Bryant's budget proposal most likely won't pass as it's currently written. Two recommendations are written in the fall and proposed in the spring session. One of which is the Executive Budget, Bryant's plan, and the other is proposed by Senate and House representatives.

Rep. Toby Barker, R-Central Hattiesburg, said that tuitions

PHIL BRYANT, 3

PHIL BRYANT SPEAKS TO SUPPORTERS AFTER HE WAS ELECTED GOVERNOR IN NOVEMBER. ON TUESDAY HE PROPOSED THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013.

Bryant's budget also calls for state agencies to cut 5.53%, a move that will cost USM \$4.3 million in FY2013. Saunders has responded to past budget cuts by eliminating academic programs and terminating tenured and tenure-track faculty. These moves have eliminated the CoB's economics and information systems programs. As a result, USM no longer employs any tenured or tenure-

track economics faculty, an outcome that separates USM from other institutions in big-time higher education. Finally, Hill's report indicates that USM's tuition would have to increase by \$250 if Bryant's fiscal plan is to be budget-neutral for USM. Of course, this figure assumes that Saunders decides, unlike Bryant, to maintain her aircraft and its support staff/ancillaries.

Will 2011-12 be a Banner Year?

USM Athletics: 2011-12 Performance

Sport	Wins	Losses	Ties	Win %
Volleyball	17	15	0	53.1
Soccer	4	13	3	27.5
Football	12	2	0	85.7
Women's Basketball*	8	15	0	34.8
Men's Basketball*	20	4	0	83.3
Softball*	0	0	0	0.0
Baseball*	0	0	0	0.0
Women's Tennis*	1	2	0	33.3
Men's Tennis*	2	1	0	66.7
Women's Golf*	0	0	0	0.0
Men's Golf*	0	0	0	0.0
Women's Track*	0	0	0	0.0
Men's Track*	0	0	0	0.0
Totals	64	52	3	55.0

* Season not yet completed

Source: southernmiss.cstv.com

USM CCO to USM Faculty Senate: *You're Powerless*

Ed Kemp, the higher education reporter for *The Hattiesburg American*, filed [an interesting report](#) for the 8-Feb-2012 issue of the paper that examines the importance of shared governance at USM. In it, Kemp provides more on the faculty senate's role on the USM campus, and whether or not the faculty senate president should have a seat on the executive cabinet at USM. As [reported earlier by](#) USMNEWS.net, the faculty senate is currently drafting a resolution requesting that USM president Martha Saunders consider allowing the senate president to join the institution's seven-member inner cabinet. One faculty senator – history professor Andrew Haley – voiced to

Kemp the opinion that shared governance at USM tends to be a hollow phrase. Haley is one of three members of the faculty senate now working on drafting the resolution. Faculty senate president Tim Rehner supports the resolution, telling Kemp that “the faculty senate ‘should have more of a voice’ and ‘more of a presence’ [regarding shared governance].”



Jim Coll

Interestingly, Kemp’s attempt to contact Saunders about the resolution and the campus sentiment that shared governance is a hollow concept at USM failed. According to Kemp, “Saunders could not be reached for comment . . .” USM’s chief communications officer, Jim Coll, spoke on Saunders’ behalf when asked about the fact that the USM faculty senate president does have a place at the 30-seat *extended* cabinet table. Coll’s response to Kemp regarding the importance of that cabinet, and the faculty senate’s participation on it – “[t]here are no real powers associated with it.” Sources tell USMNEWS.net that Coll’s response to Kemp’s queries highlights the importance Saunders appears to place on shared governance and faculty oversight at USM. They also point out that having the institution’s CCO speak for the institution in Saunders’ absence, and not one of the USM vice presidents, speaks volumes about how USM is being managed by Saunders. Finally, long-time followers of USMNEWS.net [likely recognize Coll](#) from [prior reports](#).