

# The Farm

## News Briefs from Southern Miss

6-Dec-2010

### AAUP-USM's Frustration Growing

As *The Student Printz*'s Jonathan Edwards and Sarah Rogers [point out](#), in their 2-Dec-2010 story entitled "AAUP upset with appeals," the frustration level within AAUP-USM seems to be growing with each passing week. At a 1-Dec-2010 meeting, the group drafted letters to the USM faculty senate to express the group's concerns over the University Priorities Committee's (budget cut) recommendation process. According to Edwards and Rogers, those concerns center around the AAUP-USM's belief that the USM central administration-led budget-cutting process "represents a clear attack on tenure and academic freedom."

USM political scientist Bob Press also put forward a proposal that USM eliminate one-half of the athletics tuition tax, one that currently funds about \$6 million of the athletic department's \$19 million annual budget. As Edwards and Rogers indicate, Press' proposal, which passed unanimously, is [the same one](#) put forward by USM student Daniel Miles. Miles [appears to have](#) abandoned his proposal, however, after hearing that USM athletics director Richard Giannini was upset about what [the proposal would do](#) to the athletics department's annual revenue stream. Press' proposal will also now be forwarded to the USM faculty senate for consideration.

Finally, AAUP-USM president Tammy Greer remains steadfast in her vocal opposition to the Martha Saunders administration's handling of the \$25 million in budget cuts, along with the resulting "appeals" hearings. As Greer told *The Student Printz*, there is widespread frustration "[e]ither because none of the process followed AAUP guidelines or because even what parts the faculty were engaged in were ignored by the executive committee." The AAUP-USM documents were delivered to the USM faculty senate at its monthly meeting on 3-Dec-2010. Check with USMNEWS.net in the near future for details on how these materials were received by that body.

### USM's Award-Winning Budget-Cutter

As [pointed out in](#) David Tisdale's 1-Dec-2010 presser, USM president Martha Saunders recently became the 32<sup>nd</sup> winner of The Hub Award, honoring "outstanding contributions to the community, commitment to excellence and dedication to public service." Saunders received the award, according to Tisdale, during a dinner at the Hattiesburg Country Club. USM vice president for advancement, Bob Pierce, [introduced](#) Saunders, [saying](#) "Dr. Saunders is dedicated to USM and passionate about it – seriously passionate about it . . . [she] is an invaluable asset to USM and to Hattiesburg, and we are fortunate to have [her]." Interestingly, Saunders named Pierce the new VP for advancement just before the 2010-11 academic year, thereby [increasing his salary](#) by more than 75% percent, to \$185,000 per year.

Sources reminded USMNEWS.net that, under Saunders (pictured below with Bobby Chain at the recent Hub Award banquet), USM has been placed in *U.S. News & World Report*'s bottom academic tier for the past two years (2010 and 2011), and nearly 50 tenured and tenure-track faculty at USM have been delivered termination notices over the past 18 months. Under Saunders' watch, numerous [issues](#) involving the USM [Greek system](#) and [athletics department](#),

including the Nov-2010 [shooting of three](#) USM football players outside of a Hattiesburg nightclub, have [arisen](#), putting the institution in a [negative light](#).



Even though these examples of notoriety now characterize USM to some, Tisdale's presser highlights Saunders' so-called public relations talents. Still, sources say that USM faculty are not likely "buying" such Tisdale-type hype any longer.

### **"Life is Good" Redux**

There does not appear to be any shortage of reports about how members of the USM executive branch continue to live their lives unaffected by the economic strife that exists around them everyday. For example, USMNEWS.net readers [have seen how](#) USM president Martha Saunders flew off to Columbia, SC, to watch her beloved Golden Eagles football team take on South Carolina, only shortly after informing the world that she was firing 29 tenured and tenure-track faculty in order to bridge a \$15 million budget shortfall (see insert below). And as that story indicated, even though his team was whipped by South Carolina, USM coach Larry Fedora still got a raise of \$35,000, taking his annual salary all the way up to \$685,000.



From "living on [summer](#) time" [to](#) "life is [good](#)," all of the blogging and Tweeting that Saunders and her administrators do always seems to hit a nerve, according to sources, with one campus constituency or another. Now, the same can be said about USM head women's soccer coach Scott Ebke, [whose](#) abysmal record at USM has been the subject of a number of [reports](#) here [at](#) USMNEWS.net. Like Fedora, Ebke maintains a Twitter account, only Ebke Tweets much more so than does Fedora. Those who follow Ekbe's Tweets tell USMNEWS.net that his is one of the more happy-go-lucky existences they know among the USM family, even though his coaching

record begs for greater oversight from the Saunders administration. For example, at 9:39 am on 29-Nov-2010, Ebke informed the USM family (and the world) via Twitter that he would be having lunch at Lenny's that day (see below). This was followed up two days later at 8:05 am when Ebke let the USM family know that he was on his way to North Carolina to watch Duke take on Michigan State in a battle of two of the country's top college basketball teams. In anticipation of the excitement, Ebke noted that "[i]t should feel like March Madness."

Thinking that Lenny's will hit the spot for lunch! [9:39 AM Nov 29th](#) via web

On my way to North Carolina to watch Duke vs. Michigan State tonight. It should feel like March Madness. [8:05 AM Dec 1st](#) via Twitter for BlackBerry®

Whether he is Tweeting from his office ("via web") or from afar ("via . . . BlackBerry®"), Ekbe always seems available to provide details of his life as head women's soccer coach at USM.

Given Ebke's sub-par performance as head coach, one is reminded of USMNEWS.net's recent *Special Report* entries entitled [Basketball Bully](#) and [Got Embarrassment?](#), wherein USM head basketball coach Larry Eustachy's penchant for piling up as many wins as possible against non-Division I opponents is described in great detail. The latter report quotes sources who point out that Eustachy's behavior over six years in this regard is analogous to a professor who is granted tenure in six years after having published in only D- and F-level journals. If that is indeed the academic equivalent of what Eustachy has done, then Ebke's record compares, sources say, to someone who has hit third-year review, and who fully *expects tenure* after an additional three years, without the slightest inclination to publish any journal articles at all.