

## “Turns Out iTech was in Error”

USM HONORS COLLEGE DEAN PLACING ‘TABLETGATE’ BLAME ON COFFMAN

“We’re all very upset, and something needs to be done. We know this isn’t the fault of the Honors College. We just want help from whoever got us into this. They should get us out.”

Johnathan Wilkes, USM Honors College Senior

“Mistakes were made and unfortunately students will have to help us make up for those mistakes.”

Joe Paul, USM Vice President for Student Affairs

Johnathan Wilkes, a senior in USM’s Honors College, expresses (above) the sentiment of the 700 to 1,000 USM students who were *given* new Samsung Galaxy Tab tablets by USM at the start of fall semester (2011), only to be told in late November-2011 that USM, not the selected students, owned the tablets after all. The snafu that Wilkes alludes to above is [the subject](#) of Mary Margaret Halford’s 22-November-2011 story for *The Student Printz* that introduces the term “Tabletgate” to describe the latest scandal at USM. USM president Martha Saunders’ response to Tabletgate has, thus far at least, been to place provost Robert Lyman, chief information officer Homer Coffman, and procurement/contract services director Mike Herndon on administrative leave pending further investigation into potential misappropriation of hundreds of thousands of dollars in state funds. Of these three, sources say Lyman seemed to attempt to avert some of the personal damage to himself by submitting his [resignation from administration](#) just days before Tabletgate broke in the news media. Saunders [accepted that resignation](#), telling the public the Lyman had departed her administration for “personal reasons.” Of course, Saunders’ original comment appears now to have been disingenuous, given Lyman’s apparent involvement in Tabletgate.



*Saunders*



*Lyman*



*Coffman*



*Davies*

The latest development detailed by Halford is the claim by USM Honors College dean David Davies that iTech, and thus USM’s chief information officer Homer Coffman, is responsible for the ongoing Tabletgate mess at USM. As Halford reports, Davies told affected students attending a meeting on Tabletgate: “We are as disappointed as you guys are. We understood that you would get to keep the tablets, and we were absolutely delighted with that. Turns out iTech was in error, and as dean of the [honors] college I’m disappointed.” Clearly, as sources state, Davies is throwing Coffman under the proverbial bus, likely in an effort to ingratiate himself even further with Saunders. Some sources are suggesting that Davies appears to even be angling for Lyman’s vacated position as permanent provost, a post now being filled on an interim basis by USM vice president for research Denis Wiesbenburg.

As always, stay tuned to USMNEWS.net as this story develops further.