

USM Campus Decorated with 'Impeach Saunders' Graffiti

USMPD Seeking Three White Males

A [breaking news](#) update on 29-October-2010 from *The Hattiesburg American* entitled "Three sought in campus vandalism" indicates that the USM police department is seeking "three white males" who are accused of "early morning vandalism" on the same day. USM police chief Bob Hopkins informed *THA* that 10 locations on the Hattiesburg campus were "marked with graffiti," as the suspects used "chalk" and "water soluble shoe-polish" between 2 a.m. and 5 a.m. to make what sources refer to as a political statement regarding the Martha Saunders administration of USM. As reported by *THA*, USM physical plant workers discovered the graffiti at about 6 a.m., and began the cleanup. Hopkins told reporters that the graffiti was "easily removed with water," and that there is "no permanent damage." The campus locations that were targeted by the suspects are:

- Hattiesburg Hall
- Shoemaker Square
- Joseph Greene Hall
- Danforth Chapel
- Joseph Cook Library
- Liberal Arts Building
- Harkins Hall
- Cook University Union
- Mississippi Hall
- Theater & Dance Building

Interestingly, the early *THA* story did not indicate that the graffiti stated "Impeach Saunders?" and "Impeach Saunders." It was, however, noted by the photos accompanying the early story on *THA*'s website (some of those photos are inserted below), as well as by Ed Kemp's 30-Oct-2010 [report](#) for *THA*, which also indicated that "earthier language" replaced "Impeach" in some of the cases.¹



¹ Other photographs of the graffiti are being hosted by www.usmlite.com.





Sources tell USMNEWS.net that referring to the graffiti artists as vandals, and to their actions as *vandalism*, smacks of heavy-handedness by the Saunders administration. The early *THA* report indicates that the political statements were cleaned up, and no damage was spotted. Online readers of *THA*'s earlier report are

even appropriately pointing out that USM students have a tradition of chalking various areas of campus to announce various events, promote specific causes, and make political statements. Going after the alleged “three white males” seems, to sources at least, to be Saunders’ attempt to suppress campus dissent and disagreement with her own administrative policies, both of which have been growing since August of 2009. Since then, Saunders has delivered almost 50 termination notices to tenured and tenure-track faculty. She has also slashed a number of academic programs, including economics, philosophy, and religion. USM students told *THA*’s Kemp that USM students are angry over the way Saunders is addressing budget cuts, and that the anger has grown since budget cuts began in 2009, when \$10 million was trimmed. This September (2010), the Saunders administration also addressed a \$15 million cut. With another \$10 million in cuts expected to hit USM next September (2011), sources say the heat on campus could continue to rise.