

President Saunders: Inefficient and Ineffective Use of Students' and Taxpayers' Money

Part 3

2011 Costs and Use of King Air N777AQ

Coaches Get To Take Advantage of Student and Taxpayer Money, Too

usmnews.net reports President Saunders' 2011 cost and use of a multi-million dollar airplane, King Air N777AQ. You have a right to know. Your money is paying for it. Our news in this series continues with records received from USM via Open Records requests.

This report is entitled "Coaches Get to Take Advantage of Student and Taxpayer Money, Too" for good reason. The passengers of this flight were coaches and the use of the plane was charged to "R. Giannini/Athletic Foundation." Passengers were Coach P.W. Underwood, Bubba Bryant, and Coach Phillip Fulmer.

N777AQ pilot Julian Allen wrote in a memo on November 16, 2010 that "Jack Gill and I flew a trip for Richard Giannini to pick up Phillip Fulmer (former U of TN coach) from Birmingham to Hattiesburg. Coach PW Underwood and Bubba Bryant went with us."

On January 27, 2011, pilot Allen reported 2.7 flight hours for the coaches' trip in a memo to Michael Herndon. However, President Saunders charged the USM Athletic Foundation (invoice 001-103) 1.8 flight hours, i.e., \$1,440 (1.8 X \$800).

Here's what it actually cost USM students and Mississippi taxpayers:

\$14,852.97 = (\$5,501.10 cost per flight hour X 2.7 actual flight hours)

[For details of measuring cost per flight hour based on USM's cost records, [click here.](#)]

If the contractual obligation President Saunders signed for her airplane with regard to a balloon payment is included, the cost to USM students and Mississippi taxpayers is:

\$21,802.26 = (\$8,074.91 cost per flight hour X 2.7 actual flight hours)

President Saunders and R. Giannini/Athletic Foundation deprived students and taxpayers out of the full cost of the use of N777AQ. In fact, students and taxpayers were forced, without their knowledge or consent, to subsidize a flight for some unknown purpose to the tune of more than \$20,000.00.

We think you should ask yourselves, is President Saunders effectively and efficiently

employing student/taxpayer money to carry out the mission of Southern Miss – the education of students? Does this unnecessary expenditure in any way advance the education of USM students?

Not only was there no imaginable connection to the education of students, this trip deprives of students and taxpayers of more than twenty thousand dollars of money they entrusted to President Saunders to effectively and efficiently employ in the education of USM students.