

President Saunders' Last Days Squandering Students' and Taxpayers' Money

Part 7 2012

What does it cost to accommodate a bureaucrat's schedule?

On April 27, 2012, then-President [Martha Saunders](#) announced her “retirement.” Whether it was voluntary is a matter of debate given the secrecy and suddenness of the “retirement.” Interim President [Aubrey Lucas](#) immediately took over even though Saunders’ “resignation” was not effective until June 30, 2012.

President Saunders presided over [many scandals](#) as USM’s president and the scandals did not abate with her “resignation.” The waste of taxpayer and student money continued right up to the end of her presidency and continues today like a bad taste in your mouth. (For example, see the [reports](#) concerning [recent lawsuits](#).)

Recent documents obtained via open records requests included a pilot’s log for April 19, 2012, in which N777AQ was flown from Hattiesburg to Norfolk, VA, to pick up Martha Saunders, and then turned around to fly her to Gulfport, MS. We know nothing about the purpose of her hasty, ill-planned trip. USM’s Interdepartmental Invoice cavalierly notes only that “Commercial flight could not accommodate schedule.”

What did it cost to “accommodate [Saunders’] schedule? It was a very, very expensive. Saunders squandered tens of thousands of dollars of student and taxpayer resources for her convenience.

The number of flight hours reported in the pilot’s “King Air N777AQ Trip Log” was 6.1. USM documents show that the cost per flight hour is \$7,226.19. So, the cost of this flight to taxpayers and students is **\$44,079.76**.

Let’s repeat that: it cost Mississippi taxpayers and USM students **\$44,079.76** to “accommodate [a-soon-to-be-“retired”-or-“fired” Saunders’] schedule. AND, what was so important that Saunders had to spend **\$44,079.76** for a flight from Norfolk to Gulfport?

When bureaucrats are given cart blanche, this is the nonsense you get for your hard earned tax dollars.