

## Part 27

**Questions directed to President Martha Saunders at her deposition on April 12 and 13, 2010--Q is question; A is President Saunders' answer.**

Q. Did the ombudsman tell you in his report that a significant point of contention between Dr. Depree and the faculty was his website?

A. (Witness looks at document.) Yes.

Q. Did you ask him what the contention was or did you know?

A. I don't know, didn't ask.

Q. I believe Dr. Cannon says that he was told that Dr. Depree used the web page in his classes?

A. (Witness looks at document.) I see that.

Q. And do you know who told Dr. Cannon that?

A. It does not say.

Q. Do you know if there is any evidence other than claims by the accounting faculty that he did so?

A. I don't know.

Q. Did you ask?

A. No.

The website, [usmnews.net](http://usmnews.net), was one of the speech activities intolerant administrators and a few faculty insisted cease. After all, with the other accusations firmly disproven, freedom of speech is the reason left to punish Professor DePree. Did he, for example, use [usmnews.net](http://usmnews.net) in his classes? Did Ombudsman Cannon bother to ask Professor DePree if he used [usmnews.net](http://usmnews.net) in his classes? The answer to both questions is no. It's simple to prove or disprove: ask the students. A place to start is the student teacher evaluations that were readily available to President Saunders and other USM administrators.

President Saunders acted on mere accusations -- nothing more. President Saunders needed nothing but accusations to punish Professor DePree for his speech. (By the

way, her area of academic study was communications theory--public relations. Public relations by definition is maintaining a favorable public image.)

Remember that some of Professor DePree's accusers had been caught copying other's ideas and words "without proper citation"—Charlie Jordan's phrase to describe his participation. Dr. Jordan and his friends attacked Dr. DePree and other colleagues who initially brought the potential misconduct to the attention of those who copied "without proper citation"—Charlie Jordan among them. Dr. Jordan and the other participants were afforded an opportunity to say, "Oops, we'll correct that" or "it's boilerplate ask anybody". After being ignored, Dr. DePree and colleagues took the potential misconduct to internal USM decision-makers for review. They were ignored again, but the decision-makers quietly got to work behind the scenes "fixing the problem." [Mississippi Open Records Act requests filed by the editor of usmnews.net produced the supporting information. More on this issue later.]