

# 31<sup>st</sup> & Pearl

## Rainbows and Butterflies

USM president Martha Saunders may have been [living on summer time](#) the past few weeks, but the 600 or so USM faculty she supervises have likely been fretting the possibility of being among the potentially 100 USM faculty who will be losing their jobs after 2010-11 as a result of the coming \$15 million cut in the institution's budget. She certainly, at least in the recent photo below with U.S. Department of Homeland Security secretary Janet Napolitano, appears well-tanned and relaxed, while many USM faculty/staff are losing sleep and wearing down.



More often than not, the USM executive appears to be divorced from the realities being faced by most USM faculty and staff. While they worry about their relatively meager salaries and benefits, Saunders likely spends much of her day worrying about the state of her Pensacola Beach (second) home. Saunders has also become the consummate name-dropper, from Napolitano to Lulu and Jimmy Buffett (“[her] former [USM] classmate”). Yes, it appears to be the trappings of the top USM position that turns Saunders on, not the day-to-day grind of dealing with declining budgets and faculty/staff morale. Certainly spending \$2 million to \$2.5 million to expunge the institution of productive faculty – as appears to be the case regarding the USMNEWS.net editor – doesn’t cause any lost sleep . . . or lost tanning time. In this critical period, the institution deserves much better.

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*31st & Pearl is a series housed at [usmnews.net](#) that features commentary on aspects of life in the CoB from a variety of columnists.*