

MGCCC Snubs USM, President Saunders

HATTIESBURG – USM president Martha Saunders is angry that Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College is allowing the University of South Alabama to use its facility rent-free during the upcoming 2010-11 academic year. According to Melissa Scallan's [15-Mar-2010 report](#) for *The Hattiesburg American* entitled "Saunders: USM upset because of rent deal," Saunders was dismayed that USA was being allowed to use a MS taxpayer-funded facility for free, especially when USM was paying \$200,000 per year in rent for use of the same facility. MGCCC president Willis Lott said the decision was not personal. He told Scallan that since USM was unable to pay next year, it would likely be unable to pay in future years.

The Gautier-based facility was built in the 1980s for USM's use. Now, USA has a significant foothold in south Mississippi's higher education market. Though Saunders told Scallan that this move tells USM who its friends are, USM's dire financial situation means that any type of retribution will have to be put on hold for now. Whether or not Saunders has a long memory remains to be seen.