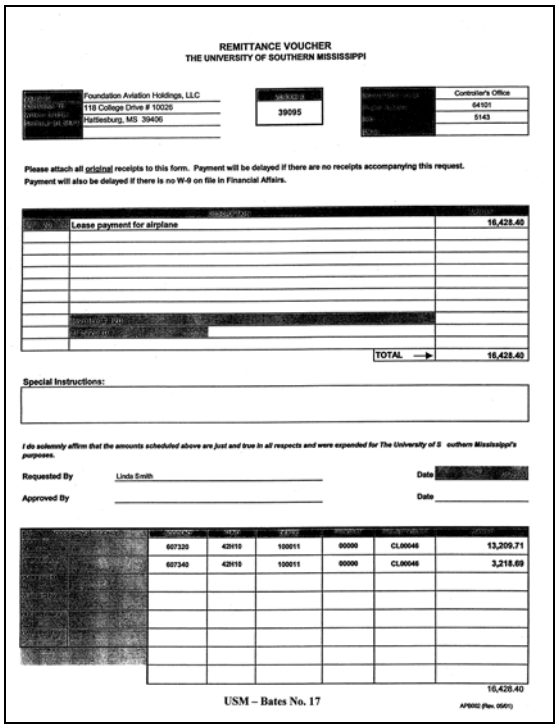
How Much? How Long?

by Duane Cobb

"Maybe if . . . they knew better than to blow millions of dollars on a pointless wall in front of campus . . . maybe if they don't own a jet, maybe then I would have an inkling of respect for the administrative bullshit that we call the leadership of USM." – USM student Floyd Maseda, *TSP* interview, 31-August-2010

The USM Remittance Voucher below covers just one month, Aug-2010, of USM's lease of the Beechcraft King Air that president Martha Saunders uses so liberally. The invoice amount is an astonishing $16,428.40. This amount is paid once a month, every month. Each time, this sum is no longer available to support USM academic programs, or USM faculty members.



REMITTANCE VOUCHER
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Foundation Aviation Holdings, LLC
118 College Drive # 10026
Hattiesburg, MS 39406

39095

Controller's Office
64101
5143

Please attach all original receipts to this form. Payment will be delayed if there are no receipts accompanying this request.
Payment will also be delayed if there is no W-9 on file in Financial Affairs.

	Lease payment for airplane	16,428.40
	TOTAL →	16,428.40

Special Instructions:

I do solemnly affirm that the amounts scheduled above are just and true in all respects and were expended for The University of S uthern Mississippi's purposes.

Requested By Linda Smith Date

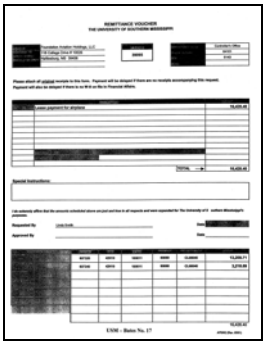
Approved By Date

607320	42H10	100011	00000	CL00046	13,209.71
607340	42H10	100011	00000	CL00046	3,218.69
					16,428.40

USM – Bates No. 17

At $16,428.40, we're talking about *not supporting* two USM faculty who are earning about $65,000 each. This amount could also support three USM faculty who are each earning $40,000 per year. Of course, these five hypothetical faculty are 9-month USM employees. The lease payment is due *every* month, not just those from August through May.

The USM family needs to think about this situation, every time Saunders' name comes up, or whenever she delivers a commencement address or convocation speech. If wallet-size copies of this voucher could be put into the hands of each USM faculty and staff member, that would also be a good thing. Having something to pull out and gaze at every time a new program cut, or faculty elimination, comes down from the dome, would indeed be welcomed.



One wonders how long USM can remain afloat with expenditures like these. USM is, and will be, saddled with this plane lease for months and months to come. Nothing about it is central to educational mission of the institution. In an era when teetering financial institutions and other private business entities are castigated by members of the U.S. Congress for maintaining company aircraft, how USM is able to pull one over on Mississippi taxpayers simply boggles the mind.