

\$11,137.81 Joy Ride Around Mississippi?

What's this business of not reporting a purpose for spending so much money? President Saunders, are you above accountability?

Hey, let's fly to Columbus Golden Triangle, Madison, and back to Hattiesburg!

On December 2, 2009, USM Pilots' Trip Log reported that President Saunders, J. Paul, D. Davis, Francis Karnes, Daniel Clark boarded N777AQ for a .7 hour flight from Hattiesburg to Columbus Golden Triangle. Next, N777AQ took the passengers on a .6 hour flight to Madison. Saunders got off the plane at Madison. The remaining passengers--J. Paul, D. Davis, Francis Karnes, Daniel Clark—continue on a .5 hour flight to Hattiesburg. The cost of the flight aboard N777AQ was **\$11,137.81** (1.8 x \$6,187.67). There was **no purpose given** and **no explanation** why this group flew around the state of Mississippi. Rest assured, though, you—taxpayers, students, and faculty—paid the **\$11,137.81**. USM's Interdepartmental Invoice for this trip is different from USM Pilots' Trip Log. It does not report that Saunders was not a passenger from Madison to Hattiesburg. Be assured of one conclusion: inconsistent records warrant concerns about the reliability of USM's records

President Saunders offers no reason for spending **\$11,137.81** of our money. Doesn't **\$11,137.81** rise to a level of importance that Dr. Saunders' records should provide some explanation for the trip? Do students think **\$11,137.81** is a lot of money? Do taxpayers think **\$11,137.81** is a lot of money? Do faculty -- particularly those who don't know if they will have a job next year -- think **\$11,137.81** is a lot of money?

Why should President Saunders and her bureaucratic minions care? The answer is, they don't. After all, it's not their money.

King Air N777AQ Trip Log

Date(s) Destination(s) Passenger Name(s)
12-2-09 Columbus Golden Triangle M. Saunders, J. Paul, D. Davies, Frances Kaines, Daniel Clark
 Ldgs 1 Cycles 1 Pilots Hand/Price Bus. Trng Maintenance
 Hobbs Mtr In 16842 Out 16855 = 0.7 hrs total

Date Destination(s) Passenger Names
12-2-09 Madison, MS M. Saunders, J. Paul, D. Davies, Frances Kaines, Daniel Clark
 Ldgs 1 Cycles 1 Pilots Hand/Price Bus. Trng Maintenance
 Hobbs Mtr In 16848 Out 16854 = 0.6 hrs total

Date Destination(s) Passenger Names
12-2-09 Hattiesburg, MS J. Paul, D. Davies, Frances Kaines, Daniel Clark
 Ldgs 1 Cycles 1 Pilots Hand/Price Bus. Trng Maintenance
 Hobbs Mtr In 16853 Out 16858 = 0.5 hrs total

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INTERDEPARTMENTAL INVOICE
 THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
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Date: 12/16/2009

CHARGE: President's Office/V.P. Student CREDIT: Analysis Operations
DEPARTMENT 540 DEPARTMENT 540

2001 201-5011 500 396-4136
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QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION OF GOODS OR SERVICES, INCLUDING DATES OF SERVICE	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT
1	1.8 Hour Round Trip to Columbus, MS for Dr. Saunders, Joe Paul, Dave Dwyer, Frances Kates, and Danielle Clark	1,440.00	1,440.00
	Trip December 2, 2009		
TOTAL			1,440.00

SPA APPROVAL, IF REQUIRED: _____ PROVSST APPROVAL, IF REQUIRED: _____
SIGNATURE DATE SIGNATURE DATE

ACCOUNTING INFORMATION	ACCOUNT	FUND	DEPTID	PROGRAM	PROJECT/GRANT	AMOUNT
BUDGET STRING TO CHARGE FOR SERVICES OR MATERIALS RECEIVED	604021	10H10	100001	06000		940.00
	604021	10H10	100002	06000		500.00
BUDGET STRING TO CREDIT FOR SALES OF SERVICES OR MATERIALS	604021	10H10	100011	06000		1,440.00

JOURNAL NUMBER: _____
 JOURNAL DATE: _____

(Remember, usmnews.net’s computation of cost per flight hour does not include or amortize the \$907,053.85 balloon payment due on the 60th month. If that amount is included, the cost is substantially higher than \$6,187.67 per flight hour.)

Context

If you are a new reader of this series, catch up by reviewing [A Brief History of Saunders’ “Lease” of airplane N777AQ During a Recession, Part 1](#). That report provides background information concerning the actual costs for the first 17 months of an airplane N777AQ leased by President Saunders for a 60-month period. For example, USM documents report total actual cost of **\$591,231.71 and 95.55 flight hours** during the first 17 months of airplane N777AQ operations. Therefore, the ACTUAL cost per flight hour is **\$6,187.67**, i.e., \$591,231.71 total actual cost divided by 95.55 actual flight hours.

Interdepartmental Invoices for 30 flights were provided in an initial response from USM to a MORA request concerning the airplane President Saunders leases and pays for with Mississippi taxpayer and student dollars. Although the MORA request was for all records related to the plane, USM's response was incomplete. When legal counsel followed up concerning the inadequate response, the University produced more documents. usmnews.net reporters are currently reviewing the additional documents and there are reasons to believe the response was again incomplete.

WHO'S MONITORING THESE "PUBLIC SERVANTS"?

The incomplete response to our MORA request, as exemplified above, signals irresponsible accountability and questionable use of taxpayer, student, and faculty resources.

Is anyone holding USM and IHL administrators accountable? IHL members blessed the lease/purchase of the plane. Why not? IHL members are enjoying the use of the plane **at no cost**. So, do not expect the IHL to do its oversight responsibility and hold President Saunders accountable for this extravagant expenditure of USM student and faculty resources. **And, she's giving it away at the same time she's terminating USM academic programs and faculty.** Unless USM faculty and students take charge of their destiny, President Saunders will continue to implement her own vision which, increasingly does not include them.

Stay tuned to usmnews.net for cost analyses of the remaining flights aboard President Saunders' plane.