

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

## The Admission Behind Marvasti's P&T Gambit

The idea that the CoB's Akbar Marvasti, an associate professor of economics, sought and received an "external letter of review" for his promotion-to-full dossier from Charles Sawyer continues to spark interest among usmnews.net readers. Sawyer, who spent approximately 25 years in USM's College of Business, retired from USM in May of 2007. One of his last acts was to assist EFIB Chair George Carter in the hiring of Marvasti during the spring of 2006. Despite all of this, these days it seems that Sawyer's CoB friends barely know him. At least that's the impression one gets from listening to them speak about Marvasti. According to sources, economics professor William Gunther has spoken in high praise of Marvasti by lauding Marvasti's "external review" letters. As Marvasti's folder moves through the P&T channels, we now hear that Carter even used Sawyer's "external review" of Marvasti to sing the praises of Sami Dakhli, who has also applied for a promotion during the 2007-08 P&T season. In doing so, Carter speaks of Sawyer as if Sawyer were some distant luminary, and not the same Sawyer whose wife still works at USM (and who still maintains the family residence in Hattiesburg), and certainly not the same Sawyer who sources indicate helped Carter subvert faculty governance in the EFIB at the beginning of the 2006-07 academic year.

By choosing to be "reviewed" by Sawyer, and another "external reviewer" who hails from the very institution where Marvasti earned his doctorate, Marvasti opened himself up to the criticism he has been receiving of late. Knowing that would be the case, as he had to have known, Marvasti's P&T gambit appears to simply be an admission on his part that his record would not withstand the scrutiny of individuals who are truly "removed" from the situation. By going with Sawyer as an "external reviewer," Marvasti appears to have subverted the intent of "external review," much the same way in which Sawyer reportedly assisted Carter in brushing aside the principles of shared governance.

So, let's all continue to pretend we've never heard of Sawyer and that Marvasti is truly a top-notch "get" for the CoB – someone who will take the CoB to the elusive "next level." After all, Sawyer – the distant luminary – said as much himself. It's all in his (Sawyer's) "external review" letter.