

31st & Pearl

Akbarometer

Are we really supposed to believe that former CoB economics professor Akbar Marvasti needs a \$500/month allowance to visit his son in Houston? Really? That's \$6,000/year going to Houston and back to Miami. Is he using the USM plane? There's no other way to justify such an expense. If we're being real about this, the full measure of that \$500/month doesn't belong in the expenses column of Marvasti's recent Chapter 7 Bankruptcy petition. From there, some discussion is needed regarding the \$150/month storage allowance, and possibly on and on.

The whole Marvasti File supports so many other reports and editorials here at USMNEWS.net about how ill-advised some of the CoB's decision-making during the 2003-07 period was, particularly with regard to hiring. CoB faculty were told at the time of Marvasti's hiring that there were *issues* between him and other faculty at the University of Houston-Downtown. When Marvasti arrived at USM in 2006, so did Ray Canterbury, a retired economist from Florida State who had served, prior to 2006, as Marvasti's professional mentor. USM was paying Marvasti \$80,000 at the time, while Canterbury was banking closer to \$100,000. Thus, the institution was spending more than \$200,000/year, including benefits, attempting to keep Marvasti's lagging professional record afloat.

Of course, the story ends with Marvasti's murky tenure process at USM, which was itself delayed several months pending an investigation of what sources refer to as alleged peccadilloes centered around the former USM economist. There's no figuring now just how many tax dollars the state sunk into Marvasti's brief time at USM. What we do know, however, is that there was little, if any, real return from it.

31st & Pearl is a series housed at usmnews.net that features commentary on aspects of life in the CoB, and at USM, from a variety of columnists.