

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

## **Breaking Down Niroomand's Defenses**

We waited for it, and we finally got it. A written note from a usmpride confederate indicates that CoB Associate Dean Farhang Niroomand is on the warpath and is visiting select individuals to defend his extravagant and outrageous travel habits. Niroomand says that very little of his travel is paid for by State dollars and that most is funded by his grant work.

That's fine and dandy, but let's take a look at Niroomand's behavior and responsibilities. Niroomand is a Professor of Economics, first and foremost. When he was last a regular line faculty member, Niroomand was making about \$75,000 for a 9 month contract, plus summer stipend of about \$11,000, for a total of about \$86,000. As a rank-and-file faculty member Niroomand was expected to teach about 9 hours per semester, to conduct research, and to perform service.

Then Niroomand became Associate Dean of the CoB. Niroomand's responsibilities apparently shifted from teaching, research, and service to administration with a little teaching and research thrown in. He received major course load reductions (teaching one class per semester until he reached his current level of zero courses per fall semester) and major salary increases (from about \$86,000/year to about \$145,000/year) BECAUSE his job as Associate Dean was so daunting.

So, here's a man who was paid by the taxpayers of Mississippi to teach, do research, and perform service. This man has doubled his salary while removing himself from the classroom almost completely. The AD's job is so difficult, how could anyone expect him to teach classes and do the administrative work, right?

Enter Niroomand's grants. Niroomand has had at least two grants in the past ten years, which were funded by the U.S. Department of Education. His current grant calls for Niroomand to educate Mississippi small business owners on how to increase the profitability of their businesses by going global. Strange the Niroomand has zero years of practical business experience listed on his Sedona vita. How does he know what to say to these small business owners?

So, this is the source of Niroomand's "fun money" – his grant. It is strange that Niroomand is too busy to teach the USM courses the taxpayers pay him to teach, yet he has time to write grant proposals, organize programs, and teach non-USM students about international business. Then again, maybe it's the extra money and not the love of teaching and serving that drives Niroomand. Most people would say that if Niroomand has time to teach outside USM, then he has time to teach inside USM.

Just what does Niroomand teach in his grant workshops, anyway? Very little, if the past year is any indication. Niroomand has a habit of using untenured faculty to fulfill his obligations, and remuneration may or may not be forthcoming. In fact, we estimate that over 80% of Niroomand's contact time with his seminar attendees is taught by someone other than Niroomand – so he's not even teaching the sessions himself!

Professor Niroomand can whine all he wants about criticism at usmpride being unfair. However, Niroomand has shirked teaching in favor of administration and then has sought additional monies from outside (US-taxpayer funded) sources to supplement his already eye-popping salary. This extra money is then used to (in some instances partially) fund his travels to "academic visits", nonessential conferences, and fun trips to Las Vegas, Beijing, Canada, France, Iran, etc. During all of these travels for his secondary job (grant writer extraordinaire), Niroomand is away from USM and away from his primary job (Associate Dean at USM' CoB), meaning that Mississippi taxpayers are being fleeced by just another greedy administrator.

Dr. Niroomand spends an average of \$1,200 **per month** on travel. The average USM CoB faculty member's travel allotment is about \$1,000 **per year**. Here's a novel idea: give Dr. Niroomand the \$1,000 to which he is entitled as a member of EFIB and then cut off all other sources of funding other than his grant. Let him pay for the Journal of Current Research in Global Business and all of his other side enterprises out of his grant funds only. Better yet, require that he stay at home and do the job for which he is paid \$145,000 per year by Mississippi taxpayers.

Dr. Niroomand has defended his exorbitant travel spending based on the idea that he uses grant funds to pay for a lot of the trips. The questions for Dr. Niroomand are: Why did you work so hard to extricate yourself from your academic duties? USM provides you the venue to educate in the field of

international business, yet you feel compelled to shirk that duty in favor of external education? Your grant work is in Mississippi, Dr. Niroomand – why do you have to travel out of state (and especially internationally) so frequently?

Niroomand should answer these questions, assuming he's in Hattiesburg long enough to stop by Greene Hall for a few minutes.

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*31st & Pearl is a series housed at [usmpride.com](http://usmpride.com) that features commentary on aspects of life in the CoB from a variety of columnists.*