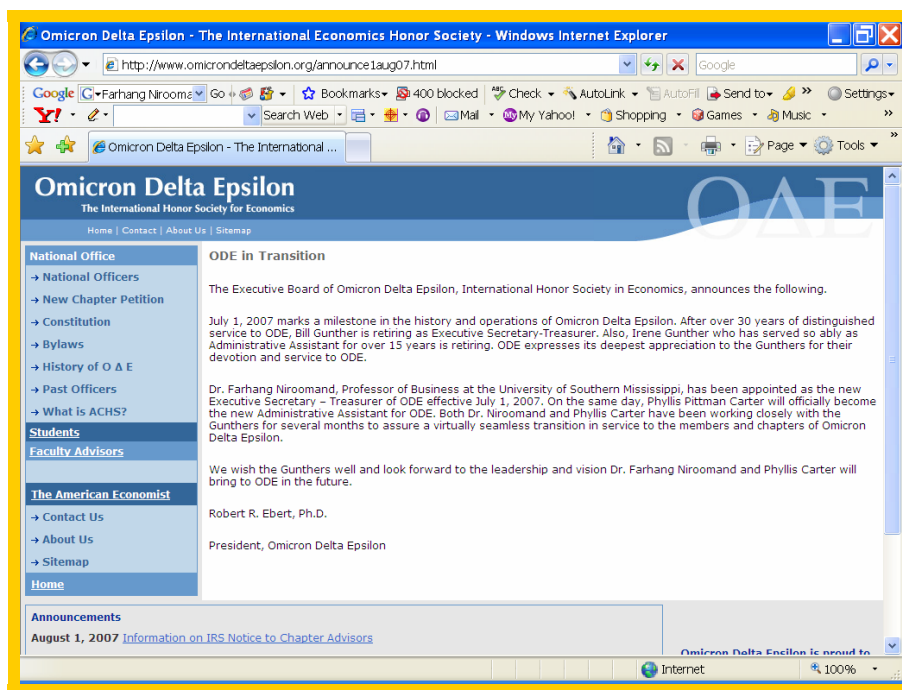


Breaking News

Niroomand Now Holds a Top Spot at Omicron Delta Epsilon

HATTIESBURG – Robert R. Ebert, President of Omicron Delta Epsilon (International Honor Society in Economics), announced on 1-July-07 that, after 30 years of service, the USM College of Business' William Gunther retired (effective 1-July-07) as Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the international organization. Gunther, a former Dean of the USM CBA, served the last 15 of his 30 years alongside his wife Irene, who worked as the Administrative Assistant to the Executive Secretary-Treasurer.

According to Ebert's 1-July-07 press release (shown below), Gunther's replacement is none other than the CoB's own "Professor of Business," Farhang Niroomand. Niroomand's appointment, along with that of his executive assistant Phyllis Pittman Carter, became effective on 1-July 07. According to Ebert, "Both Dr. Niroomand and Phyllis Pittman Carter have been working closely with the Gunthers for several months to assure a virtually seamless transition in service to the members and chapters of Omicron Delta Epsilon."



Ebert's release, entitled "ODE in Transition," closes by wishing "the Gunthers well" and "look[ing] forward to the leadership and vision Dr. Farhang Niroomand and Phyllis Carter will bring to ODE in the future."

Niroomand's climb through the ranks of ODE has been the subject of reports here at USMNEWS.NET. One of these is an installment in the **Special Report** series entitled

“Quid Pro Quo in the CoB?” (see headline and intro below). That report indicates that Niroomand was named Vice President of the National Officers group of Omicron Delta Epsilon. That **Special Report** also goes on to discuss a number of interesting scenarios

Special Report


Quid Pro Quo in the CoB?

An Investigative Series on the use of the CoB for Personal Gain

This Special Report benefited from tips provided by a usmpride.com reader which, combined with some documentation obtained by usmpride.com via a Mississippi Open Records Act request, shows an interesting potential relationship between CoB Associate Dean Farhang Niroomand and former CoB Dean/Professor of Economics William Gunther.

surrounding Niroomand’s rekindled relationship with Gunther, his former boss. Some of these are highlighted in the excerpted sections below:

Consider the possibility that Gunther assisted Niroomand in obtaining this lofty position within the ODE. What would Niroomand gain from this position? Of course, a nice line on Niroomand’s vita (i.e., “Vice-President of ODE . . .”) would be one benefit. Consider other possible avenues of support that come with a National Officers position within the ODE. Consider the recent trip (January of 2006) made by Niroomand to Boston for the Allied Social Science Association Meeting, which is captured in the screen below (taken from an **Employee Travel Voucher** filed by Niroomand):

	THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI EMPLOYEE TRAVEL VOUCHER		Name	Farhang Niroomand		SS#	[REDACTED]		
			Phone #	601.266.5028		Dept Box #	5021		
			E-Mail	farhang.niroomand@usm.edu					
			Dept Name	Dean's Office					
Title of Meeting: Allied Social Science Association Meeting			Permission to Travel Filed (if yes, attach copy)						
			UNIVERSITY CLASSIFICATION						
			Submitter	Melia Hartsfield 601.266.5853 melia.h					
Location and Purpose of trip:			Boston, MA Attend meeting and recruit candidates			Accompanied By: Drs. Carter, Sawyer, Lo, Wong & Klinedinst			

Like many of Niroomand’s trips, this was an expensive one, as the lodging/meals table below suggests:

MEALS AND LODGING									
Departure Time	AM		PM		Return Time		AM		PM
Date	4-Jan-06	5-Jan-06	6-Jan-06	7-Jan-06	8-Jan-06	9-Jan-06			
Breakfast	\$ 4.60	\$ 5.10	\$ 7.80	\$ 4.60	\$ 9.00	\$ 9.90			\$ 41.00
Lunch	\$ 20.80	\$ 8.20	\$ 23.90	\$ 12.10	\$ 18.90				\$ 83.90
Dinner	\$ 16.00	\$ 29.90	\$ -	\$ 25.00	\$ 32.00				\$ 102.90
Lodging	\$ 100.08	\$ 100.08	\$ 100.08	\$ 100.08	\$ 100.08				\$ 500.40
Note: for additional days, use tab TV pg2									Total Meals & Lodging \$ 728.29

This trip would have cost taxpayers a few hundred additional dollars had Niroomand's airfare not been paid by Omicron Delta Epsilon, as the insert below shows was the case:

TRAVEL BY PUBLIC CARRIER (mode = Airfare, Rental Car, Bus, Train, etc.)				
Date	From	To	Mode	Ticket Amt
4-Jan-06	PIB airport, MS	Boston, MA	Airfare	
9-Jan-06	Boston, MA	PIB airport, MS	Airfare	
Total Travel By Public Carrier				\$ -

Note: for additional Public Carriers, use tab TV pg2

paid by Omicron Delta Epsilon

By saving a few hundred dollars, the travel support provided to Niroomand by the ODE allowed him to attend an additional conference or make an additional "academic visit" (in 2006) on the funds that otherwise would have been used to get to Boston for

the 2006 ASSA. This is a nice deal. Readers certainly understand by now how much Niroomand values travel (like gold).

Sources indicate that Gunther, the Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the ODE, has held the ES-T position for a number of years and would have the clout inside the organization to have Niroomand selected as one of the four vice presidents among the ODE's National Officers.

What might Gunther get from an arrangement with Niroomand such as the one presented for consideration above? Visitors to usmpride.com will recall that Gunther is the Director of the CoB's (relatively) new Bureau of Business and Economic Research. That Bureau, or Center, has been described in various reports that also appear on this website. These reports make use of a profile published in the Spring 2005 issue of *Joint Venture* (excerpt shown below).

As usmpride.com sources have indicated, the BBER has no visible staff, there are no research reports coming out of the BBER, and Gunther is rarely seen near the BBER suite on the third floor of Greene Hall. However, Gunther does get a 1-course reduction from his teaching load for serving as the Director of the BBER. That is a benefit that Niroomand can ensure that Gunther receives each semester, and, given that Gunther's permanent residence is near the Alabama-Florida border, that is a benefit that Gunther likely values.

A previous report at usmpride.com indicated that Gunther's residence in Alabama is about 3 hours from Hattiesburg, which means that his weekly round trip is about 6 hours (mapquest). An anonymous e-mailer indicated that Gunther's address is quite a bit further from Hattiesburg, perhaps an additional hour one-way. We looked into this assertion by inputting the address for Gunther that we were provided into a Yahoo map search, and we discovered the following:

Niroomand can also assist Gunther in avoiding a teaching schedule that includes teaching on Friday in order to facilitate Gunther's trip back to his permanent residence. Gunther's current weekly teaching schedule ends at about lunch time on Thursday and it starts up again on Monday nights at 6:30pm.

For a look at the complete **Special Report** please visit [Quid Pro Quo in the CoB?](#)