

CoB at a Crossroads

PART 3

Many followers of the trials and troubles of USM's College of Business believe that the institution has been forever relegated to bottom of the academic food chain. Others recognize the many problems, yet they still have hope that the organization can be turned around. However, even those in this group understand that if a turnaround is to succeed, it must begin with the hiring of the CoB's next Dean. This new series, "CoB at a Crossroads," takes a multi-part look at the many problems that the new Dean of the CoB will face as the 2008-09 academic year begins.

Farhang Niroomand: CoB "Attack Dog"

Farhang Niroomand, CoB Associate Dean from 1998 to 2007, has arguably been the most corrosive figure in USM's business school over the past decade. During Harold Doty's administration of the CoB (2003-2007), Niroomand was essentially unleashed to plow through the CoB on a daily basis, mistreating both faculty and staff all along the way. Niroomand's tirades are legendary, and they spared no one. Aimed at Lola Ingram, Wanda Crain and other staff members, Niroomand gained the reputation as an "attack dog" in the Joseph Greene Hall administration.

After a controversial run as Associate Dean, Niroomand resigned mid-semester on 9-April-07. Niroomand's resignation came without a public explanation, and CoB faculty and staff continue to speculate, nine months later, as to the reason or reasons for such a hasty departure. In any case, the CoB's next Dean will have the luxury of not having to face Niroomand (in the AD's chair) upon arrival. This time, if Niroomand is to hold such a pivotal post, he (Niroomand) will have to be appointed anew, as was done by former CBA Dean William Gunther in 1998. If that occurs, CoB faculty will have to look no further to realize that nothing has changed in USM's College of Business. It will still be business as usual.

"Oh Captain, . . ."

Unlike with the case of Niroomand, current EFIB Chair George Carter was actively placed in his current position by Doty. That decision has, according to sources, stood as tall as any other in putting the CoB in the troubled waters it treads even today. Carter has the administrative finesse of the proverbial bull in the china shop, and his ill-advised decisions and actions have tormented multiple CoB Deans, from Harold Black to Harold Doty. Whether it's phoning the wives of targeted CoB faculty, clumsily orchestrating 3rd Year Review hatchet jobs, or thwarting faculty governance with dubious stories about university lawyers and eligible (faculty) voters, Carter's tenure in USM's College of Business has made a lasting, negative impression on the institution -- the one he graduated from, twice.

The duo of Niroomand and Carter, a duo that, in Carter's own words works so well together, has been described as a scourge by many CoB faculty. The organization would not be where it is today had their relationship not come together the way it did.