

CoBscam?

A Look at Questionable Publishing Practices in the College of Business

An interesting angle on some publishing practices in the CoB is taking shape based on the recent discovery of documentation from an open records request. This (Part 1) installment starts with the SEDONA records of Farhang Niroomand (Associate Dean and Professor of Economics).

Farhang Niroomand's Refereed Articles from SEDONA (5/2/2006)

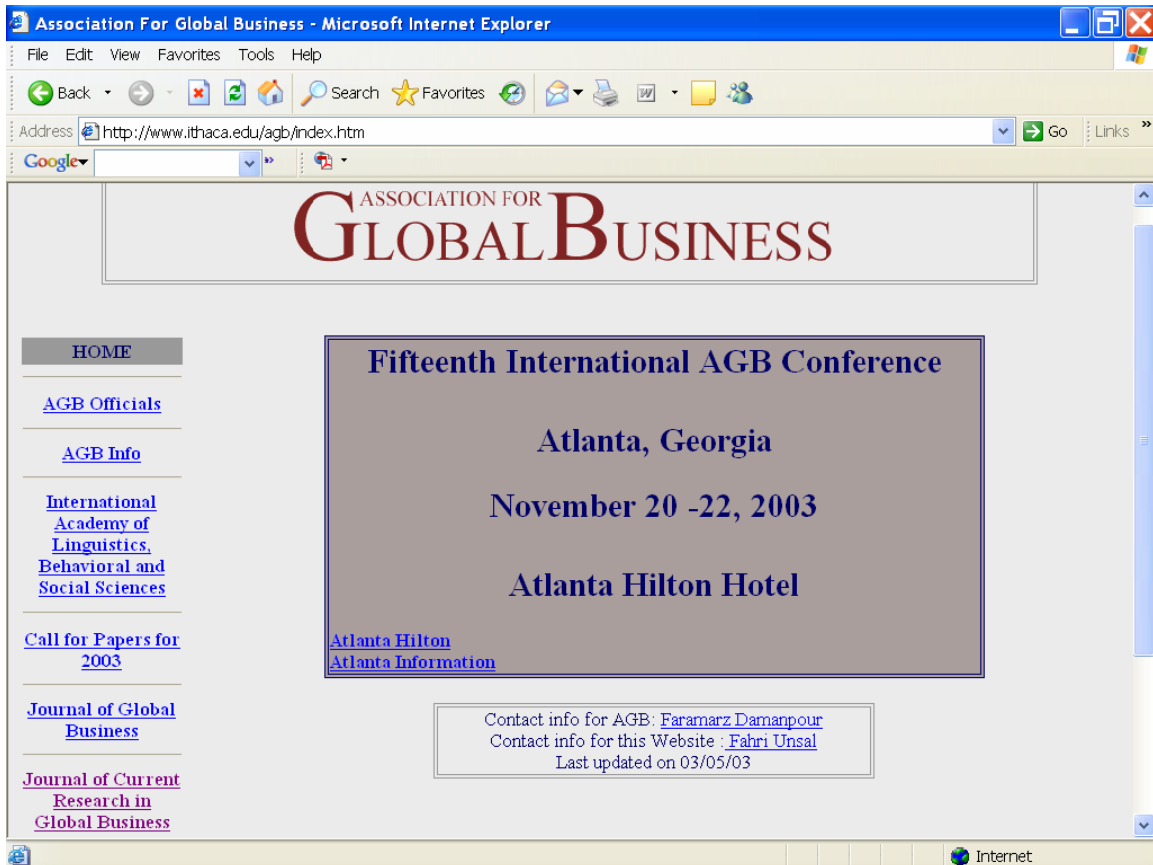
- Niroomand, F. and Nissan, E. (2007). Banking Bigness: Concentration of the World's 50 Largest Banks. Forthcoming in *Multinational Business Review*.
- Niroomand, F. and Nissan, E. (2006). Regional Comparison of Technological Efficiency and Productivity. Forthcoming in *Southwestern Journal of Economics*.
- Niroomand, F. and Nissan, E. (2006). Determinants of Income: A Probability Approach. Forthcoming in *Journal of Current Research in Global Business*, 9 (13), 35-46.
- Niroomand, F. and Nissan, E. (2005). Inter-country Income Inequality and Social Indicators Convergence. *Journal of Global Business*, 16 (32), 5-16.
- Nissan, E. and Niroomand, F. (2005). Convergence and Divergence of Basic Needs and Income: An International Comparison. *Journal of Developing Areas*, 39(1), 151-167.
- Niroomand, F. and Nissan, E. (2005). Technological Change and Contribution to Growth and Convergence. *Journal of Economic Development*, 30 (2), 1-21.
- Niroomand, F. and Nissan, E. (2002). Assessment of Latin American and Caribbean Countries in International Economy. *International Advances in Economic Research*, 8(2), 128-134.
- Nissan, E. and Niroomand, F. (2000). Concentration of Sales of the Largest Global Enterprises. *Informacion Comercial Espanola, Boletin Economico (2640)*, 45-59.

All of Niroomand's refereed research above is also cross-listed in Edward Nissan's SEDONA records. For the most part, the journals listed above are obscure at best. Below is a breakdown by journal quality across the time period listed above (i.e., 2000-2007), using the CoB's approved journal ranking listing from *Enhancing Faculty Productivity*, revised (2005).

<u>Year</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>Other</u>
2007				1
2006				2
2005		1	1	1
2004				
2003				
2002				1
2001				
2000				1
Totals	0	1	1	6

In all, the Table above contains 8 journals, six of which are listed as “Other” in terms of quality (the lowest grade). Of the remaining two, one is rated as a B-level journal and the other a C-level journal.

As the screen below indicates, both the *Journal of Global Business* and the *Journal of Current Research in Global Business* fall under the umbrella of the Association for Global Business.



Of course, the screen above is from an old website. Further Internet search reveals a new site for the Association, as the next screen indicates.

Association for Global Business - Microsoft Internet Explorer


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Association for Global Business



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Organization

The Association for Global Business is a worldwide, non-profit organization, created exclusively to foster education in the fields of business, economics, computer information and science, political science, and related areas of global concern. The Association encourages and facilitates an exchange of information, ideas, and research activities among the people in academic life, business, government, and those who are concerned with education, research, and study in the fields of business and global enterprises. The main functions of the Association are to provide opportunities for the exchange of professional ideas and to create a general awareness of the significant accomplishments in the area of global enterprises. To achieve this goal, the Association meets once per year at various locations.

Internet

The *Journal of Global Business* link is clearly visible in the screen, while the link for the *Journal of Current Research in Global Business* resides beneath that. The next screen depicts what one finds after scrolling down using the bar on the left of the webpage.

Association for Global Business

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If one accesses the link to the *JCRGB* on the left, the guidelines for submissions are presented in MS Word format. What one finds when this link is used is the name and address of the *JCRGB*'s editor:

Mail to: Dr. Farhang Niroomand, Editor, *JCRGB*,
 College of Business
 The University of Mississippi
 118 College Drive # 5021
 Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, USA
 Phone: 601-266-5028 or (601) 266-4659
 Fax: 601-266-5814; E-mail: Farhang.niroomand@usm.edu

Despite the institutional “snafu” in the address, the editor is the CoB’s very own Associate Dean, Dr. Farhang Niroomand. Of course, this should come as a surprise to no one in the CoB given Niroomand’s electronic (e-mail) signature:

Farhang Niroomand
 Editor, *The Journal of Current Research in Global Business*
 Associate Dean and Professor
 College of Business
 The University of Southern Mississippi
 118 College Drive #5021
 Hattiesburg, MS 39406-001

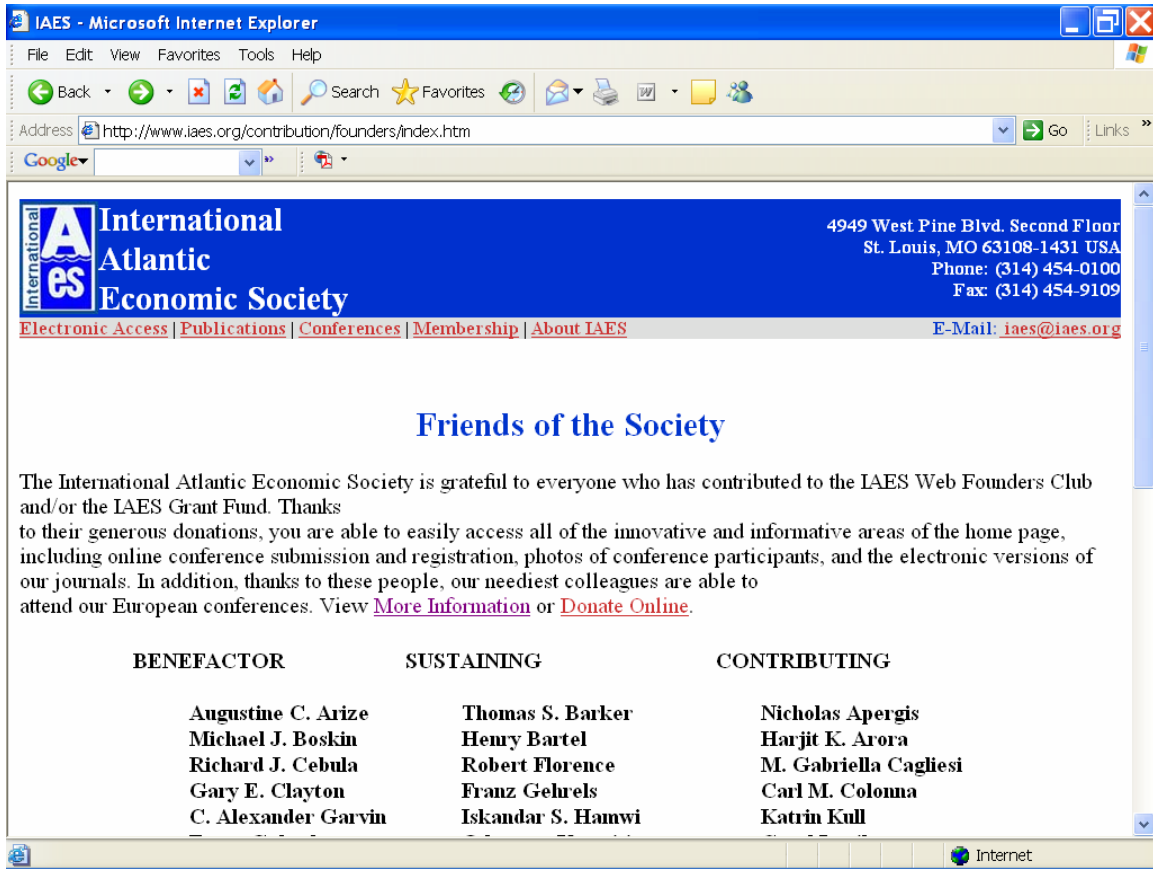
Phone: 601 266-5028
Fax: 601 266-5814

Both of these journals rate as “Other” using the CoB’s journal ranking list. There are some additional details regarding the *JCRGB*’s sister journal, the *Journal of Global Business*. Investigators at USMPRIDE.com have access to some USM Purchase Orders from the Winter and Spring of 2004. They deal with requisitions from Edward Nissan for reimbursement of publication fees paid to the *Journal of Global Business*. These are summarized below:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Req Id</u>	<u>Vendor</u>	<u>Amount</u>
2/26/04	3121	Association for Global Business, Journal of Global Business	\$250.00
4/21/04	4222	Association for Global Business, Journal of Global Business	\$455.00

Thus, based on the table above, Nissan requisitioned \$705 in the Spring semester of 2004 alone for publication fees associated with articles he co-authored in the *Journal of Global Business* with Associate Dean Niroomand.

Another journal above, the *International Advances in Economic Research*, is examined. It is under the umbrella of the International Atlantic Economic Society. The screen below, taken from the Society’s homepage, gives some information about IAES.



As you will notice, one of the IAES's "Sustaining" supporters is Iskandar Hamwi, former Chair of the Department of Economics, Finance and International Business at USM (and official signatory of Niroomand's stack of travel vouchers).

Further, we also have a USM Purchase Order from the Fall of 2001 that indicates that Niroomand requisitioned reimbursement for publication fees regarding an article he published in the *IAER*. A summary of that PO (USMPO-001002847) is presented just below:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
9/21/01	Reimbursement for publication fee . . . [for article] to appear in the May 2002 issue of the International Advances in Economic Research	\$280.00

As the description above states, the \$280 reimbursement covered the publication fee of the 2002 article Niroomand published in the *IAER* with Nissan that is listed above (from Niroomand's SEDONA records). Thus, the cost to USM of only three of the 6 articles written by Niroomand and Nissan, and published in relatively obscure journals, is about \$1,000.

A recent issue of “Sedona Files” contained the following information about Niroomand’s article with Nissan in the *Journal of Economic Development*:

As a check to see whether any inaccuracies in the other direction occurred, we examined the homepage of the journal listed in Niroomand’s 6th entry. That entry is presented below:

Niroomand, F. & Nissan, E. (2005). Technological Change and Contribution to Growth and Convergence. *Journal of Economic Development* 30 (2), 1-21.

When the archive for that particular issue was examined (7/14/2006), the article was nowhere to be found. We expected it to appear in view immediately, given that Niroomand recorded the page numbers as “1-21” (i.e., he noted that it was the feature article for that particular issue). To be sure, we scanned the entire issue, but failed to turn up anything.

To resolve our confusion regarding this matter, we turned to the **Refereed Articles** section of Ed Nissan’s SEDONA record. We found that entry in his list, and it appears as:

Nissan, E. & Niroomand, F. (2006). Technological Change and Contribution to Growth and Convergence. Forthcoming in *Journal of Economic Development*.

So, if we are to believe Nissan’s SEDONA entry the article in question is set to appear in the 2006 volume of the *Journal*. Given the results of our trip to the *Journal’s* homepage, Nissan’s version of the publication date is the only one that has a chance to be correct at this point, although Niroomand may yet be accurate in his representation of the order of the two names. The *Journal* has not yet uploaded publication information for its 2006 volume. As more information appears, we will make that available at usmpride.com.

A subsequent issue of “Sedona Files” contains further insights into the relative obscurity of another journal in Niroomand’s list of publications --- *Southwestern Journal of Economics*. Those passages are presented below:

Some of the information we reported on in our last installment continues to puzzle. The *Southwestern Journal of Economics* is a difficult journal to locate any information about, so we are not able to report anything further on the two-for-one credit that George Carter (Professor and Chair of Economics, Finance and IB) may have received during the 2006 merit raise process.

Apparently, a search by SF contributors could not turn up any useful information about the *SWJE*.

How have Niroomand and Nissan fared with their research portfolios in the merit raise process? The table below, covering the previous two merit raises, provides an indication (taken from USMPRIDE.com):

<u>Year</u>	<u>Niroomand Raise [rank]</u>	<u>Nissan Raise [rank]</u>
2006	\$ 9,282 [1st]	\$4,635 [19th]
2004	\$22,728 [1st]	\$7,772 [4th]

In terms of position, they both did similarly well in 2004 (though Niroomand got 3 times the \$-amount Nissan received). Niroomand again turned “publication obscurity” into financial reward in 2006, while Nissan fell back to 19th in the CoB (at about one-half of Niroomand’s raise). However, before concern arises about Nissan’s results above, recall two recent reports at USMPRIDE.com (excerpts below):

Special Report
Edward Nissan & the Academic Council
An Investigation into University Service Dereliction in the CoB

Commentary

Based on the information uncovered and presented above, it seems that the only error made in “Sedona Files III” was naming Donna Davis instead of Trellis Green as the CoB faculty member who had to take a seat in the USM Academic Council due to a senior professor’s dereliction. A number of interesting items accompany this story. Nissan received one of the 5 largest merit raises in the CoB in 2004 (about \$7,400). His actions in this case came only a few months after receiving that raise. Also, other “Sedona Files” reports seem to be linked to this story, such as the issue examining the CoB administration’s publishing patterns. We can’t help but wonder, when the 2006 raise data are published, what Green’s “reward” and Nissan’s “punishment” will be as a result of this whole affair. We bet that, upon examining the numbers, Green will likely look more like the absconder in this case.

The Louis K. Brandt Research Award: Friendraising through Fundraising?

The 2001 Louis K. Brandt Award Contest: Was it Over Before it Even Got Started?

As the Table above points out, the 2001 Louis K. Brandt Award was won by Ed Nissan, Professor of Economics. At the time of the 2001 Award, Farhang Niroomand was serving as the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Business. We have been informed that he coordinated the process of selecting the individual to be invited to serve as the outside reviewer of the finalists’ applications. We are informed that it came to light just after the judging was completed that the outside reviewer was Mohsen Bahmani-Oskooee, Professor of Economics at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. Niroomand and Bahmani-Oskooee each received a PhD in economics from Michigan State University. A search (primarily using *Business Source Complete*) indicates that the two economists have also collaborated in the past, as the list below indicates:

Bahmani-Oskooee/Niroomand Collaborations
Applied Economics Letters, 1999
Economics Letters, 1998
Applied Economics, 1998
Economic Development & Cultural Change, 1996

Our search also turned up a number of collaborations between Niroomand and Nissan, especially during the period after the 2001 Louis K. Brandt Research Award contest, as the list below indicates (*BSC* search supplemented by Sedona information):

Niroomand/Nissan Collaborations
Multinational Business Review, 2007
Southwestern Journal of Economics, 2006
Journal of Economic Development, 2006
Journal of Current Research in Current Business, 2006
Journal of Developing Areas, 2005
Journal of Global Business, 2005
International Advances in Economic Research, 2002
Informacion Comercial Espanola, 2000
Journal of Economic Studies, 1997
Journal of Economic Development, 1991

The data above clearly depict a working relationship between Niroomand and Nissan that seems close enough to conclude that Niroomand should not have had the authority to select the outside reviewer in this case.

These details show how far the collaborations- and numbers-game in the CoB can take someone. Not only did publishing in obscure journals secure relatively large merit raises and research awards (service exemption), it appears as though several hundred (maybe a few thousand) dollars were used to cover “publication fees” in these lower-level research outlets. Finally, where “publication fees” weren’t integral to publishing success, editorial (support) connections seem to have played a key role in the process.