

## DONE DEAL?

More than just a few people find the behavior, since coming to the CoB in August of 2006, of assistant professor of economics Sami Dakhlia puzzling. First, a failed tenure-track ride at the University of Alabama turned Dakhlia into what EFIB chairman George Carter refers to as a professional "pariah." From that position one would think that Dakhlia would have begun his tenure-track ride in the CoB more cautiously. That was not to be. Dakhlia's first move was to position the purchase of a [\\$350,000 house in Canebrake](#) on a \$71,000/year salary. While some predicted "rent out," Dakhlia "bought in" - and in a very big way.

Second, Dakhlia spent much of his first year in the EFIB accumulating service responsibilities, from administering a seminar series (every Friday) to (now) *chairing* the CoB's *Journal Ranking Committee*.<sup>1</sup> In addition to that, Dakhlia also made the dangerous move to lecture, for pay, at an institution in France during a week in October (2006), and as a result missing multiple class meetings back at USM - meetings which Mississippi taxpayers were working hard to provide the money to pay Dakhlia to attend. So, while some in the CoB wondered if he had learned anything from his experiences in Tuscaloosa, Dakhlia appeared to be repeating past mistakes, while at the same time making (possibly) new ones.

Third, and to top it all off, Dakhlia ended the 2006-07 academic year with a bang by delivering the *coup de grace* in what has been described as the "academic mobbing" of long-time CoB accounting professor, Marc DePree. At the end of the May 2007 CoB faculty meeting, Dakhlia took the floor from Interim Dean Alvin Williams and delivered a multi-point "proclamation" that vilified DePree, other (unnamed) CoB faculty, and DePree's website, USMNEWS. It almost goes without saying that USMNEWS has heard from academics from around the country about how ill-advised Dakhlia's decision to deliver such a proclamation before the faculty really was.

What remains for Dakhlia from the fallout of his first year in USM's CoB? Well, in the short run things are rosy. Dakhlia's compensation - his ability to cover expenses (for things like a \$350,000 house) - has grown to something more like the size of the checks that his mouth has been writing since he arrived in the CoB in August of 2006. At that time, August of 2006, Dakhlia's USM salary was \$71,000/year.

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<sup>1</sup> The irony of having someone who had just been terminated by one university for lack of research chosen to chair a journal ranking committee was not lost on several, if not most, CoB faculty.

In about 7 weeks, when Dakhlia's promotion (to associate raise) goes through, he will be slated for a salary of \$84,064/year. That change represents an 18.4 percent increase in only 21 months or so, which is not bad if you can get it. Of course, in Dakhlia's case it all came from participation in [the EFIB's "Quick Strike Promotion and Raise" Program](#) (about \$4,000), as well as from an [inexplicable merit raise](#) (about \$9,000) in the [spring of 2007](#). These short run benefits (for services rendered?) make Dakhlia's success in *USM's CoB* seem like a "done deal" between Dakhlia, Carter, and former EFIB economist Charles Sawyer, perhaps as far back as the winter of 2006, when, as sources state, Sawyer and Carter were first interviewing Dakhlia.

In the longer run things might be looked at a little differently. This "new vision" is probably already being realized by the Alabama faculty who participated in Dakhlia's tenure and promotion there. After examining Dakhlia's publication record, it's clear to USMNEWS sources that the Alabama faculty made the correct decision on Dakhlia. Though negative T&P decisions are never easy ones, sources tell USMNEWS that the majority group members were as comfortable as they could be with the negative decision at the time they made it. And now that members of this majority group have had a year to observe Dakhlia's behavior while at USM, they are probably sleeping better at night than they were back then. A year of Monday morning quarterbacking around the coffee pot in Tuscaloosa has likely solidified in their minds the appropriateness of their earlier decision.

The minority that supported Dakhlia back then has had to face the same Monday morning quarterbacking realities as the rest.<sup>2</sup> Now, they must be wondering about the cost to themselves of supporting Dakhlia's case for T&P. After a year of seeing the same thing out of Dakhlia that the majority has been seeing, these minority group members are probably thinking that they are at least somewhat diminished in the eyes of their colleagues in the majority. That's what I would be thinking if I were in that minority.

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<sup>2</sup> Sources tell USMNEWS that Dakhlia's support came from a relatively small minority.