

Dakhliā's Follies

A Guest Editorial by Susan Greene-Lewis

Browsing through both the USMNEWS.net Archives and heretofore untapped files yields a number of interesting situations pertaining to outgoing CoB associate professor of economics Sami Dakhliā. Dakhliā joined the CoB in August-2006, after a failed tenure-track run with the University of Alabama. The 2-June-2010 installment of [GH Chatter](#) indicates that Dakhliā's *departing* salary is \$84,000. It did not note that his *initial* salary, in August-2006 as a newly-hired assistant professor of economics at USM, was \$71,000. As such, the decision to purchase a Canebrake home he now lists for \$450,000 was perhaps the first folly of several made by Dakhliā while in the CoB.

In his earliest days with USM's b-school, Dakhliā reportedly mocked the Harold Doty-Farhang Niroomand administration, referring to e-mail communiqués from the second floor of Greene Hall as "bull****." Once discovered by then-CoB associate dean Niroomand, that habit earned Dakhliā the ire of the CoB administrators, who then reportedly used the so-called *tenure club*, and an *undeserved* BAC Professorship as a carrot, to rein Dakhliā into the fold. Dakhliā responded by whole-heartedly supporting the now-*infamous* "Black Tuesday" EFIB governance vote of September-2006, which former EFIB chairman George Carter orchestrated in order to thwart anything other than "chair only" governance for economics, finance and international business.

Fast-forwarding to May-2007 finds Dakhliā at the center of the mobbing episode against the USMNEWS.net editor. At the CoB's May-2007 faculty meeting, Dakhliā was given behind-the-scenes permission by then-interim CoB dean Alvin Williams to take the floor and present a statement disparaging the editor of this website and a number of other "anonymous" CoB faculty. That action was followed by a verbal outburst from Niroomand (in the hallway of the b-school) – aimed at the editor – wherein Niroomand had to be restrained by other CoBers. At the same time, Dakhliā was exalted by some CoB faculty, as he reportedly pranced around the b-school in apparent triumph.

Fast-forwarding again – this time to August-2009 – finds Dakhliā and all of his economics colleagues being told they are no longer needed by USM. Around the final day of August-2009, the CoB's nine tenured/tenure-track economics faculty were handed terminal contracts stating that 30-June-2010 would be their last day at USM. In a panic, Dakhliā and others organized a media campaign, and some say also student groups (for protest), though neither mustered anything significant. There were no CoB faculty protests. In fact, CoB dean Lance Nail supported the decision to eliminate the CoB's economics programs, as did a number of other CoB faculty. Reports indicate that the CoB's accountants, including School of Accountancy director Skip Hughes, were solidly on board with the institution's decision. Like that of so many others, Dakhliā's usefulness to the *real* power brokers had long since expired, and he was tossed to the side by USM administrators, who perhaps cited the many annoyances involving the economics faculty that had come to characterize their existence under Carter's leadership.

Dakhliā's follies while at USM from 2006-10 were numerous. This column highlights what is arguably the biggest, and one that serves to show other current and future young CoBers how tying oneself to university administrators is a path to demise. Having spent about 12 years in the U.S. higher education system, Dakhliā never earned tenure. His case is, in popular parlance, a teachable moment. Hopefully the lesson will not go unlearned.