


## Updated – See Below

### Did Niroomand Follow E.E.O. Guidelines? A Look at 2004-05 Faculty Recruiting in the EFIB

Investigators at USMPRIDE.COM ran across some interesting information in the stack of paperwork that was obtained via a “freedom of information” request. The information concerns a faculty recruiting trip made by CoB Associate Dean and Professor of Economics Farhang Niroomand to Philadelphia in January of 2005. This report was meant to be part of the “Special Report” series, however USMPRIDE.COM investigators made the case that it should be an independent report given the serious nature of the findings.

The screen below shows what Niroomand planned to do at the American Economic Association Meeting in Philadelphia in 2005 (January):



**EMPLOYEE  
TRAVEL VOUCHER**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI**

Purpose and Place of Visit	attend American Economic Asso and interview job candidates in Philadelphia PA
----------------------------	---

**IMPORTANT-SEE INSTRUCTION  
ON BACK**

Employee	Farhang Niroomand
Address	Box 5021
Department Name	COB
Others On Trip	

Next, investigators examined the lodging and meals expenses that are shown below:

MEALS AND LODGING								Total
Date	1/6	1/7	1/8	1/9	1/10			
Departure Time	AM-PM	AM-PM	AM-PM	AM-PM	AM-PM	AM-PM	AM-PM	
Arrival Time	AM-PM	AM-PM	AM-PM	AM-PM	AM-PM	AM-PM	AM-PM	
Breakfast	5 60	7 20	5 00	5 10	5 10	7 20		30 20 299
Lunch	10 80	8 00	12 00	25 63	16 80			73 23 ✓
Dinner	87 54 ✓	25 20	24 00	163 90 ✓				300 74 44
Lodging	96 90	96 90	96 90					387 60 -
Total Meals and Lodging								791 77

Note that these expenses total nearly \$800, primarily because of the \$87.54 and \$163.90 dinner expenses that occurred on 6 January 2005, and 9 January 2005, respectively. That expense was enough to arouse suspicion in our investigators. Why is it that dinner on that evening was so costly to the CoB?

Additional paperwork submitted by Niroomand provides the answer. That paperwork is copied below:

**BUSINESS RELATED EXPENSE FORM  
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI**

This form must be completed when the Entertainment Expense box is checked on the Employee Reimbursement form. Please make sure all original receipts are submitted when requesting reimbursement.

Date of Activity	Location of Activity	Business Purpose of Activity	AMOUNT
1/6/05	Sahara Grill (Philadelphia, PA)	Dinner with two faculty members from Leeds Business School in U.K. who lectured to our students in the British Studies Program	87.54
1/9/05	Aromatic Restaurant	Dinner with two job candidates from The University of Illinois and Virginia Tech University	163.90

According to the information above, on 9 January 2005 Niroomand had dinner “with two job candidates from The University of Illinois and Virginia Tech University,” and that dinner cost the CoB the better part of \$200. This dinner raises a number of questions: First, was Niroomand part of the EFIB’s recruiting committee/team in January of 2005, or was he acting independently, as the CoB’s Associate Dean, in participating in EFIB’s 2004-05 job search process? Second, and perhaps more importantly, did Niroomand follow E.E.O. guidelines when he had dinner with these two (unnamed) candidates from Illinois and Virginia Tech? Or, did Niroomand’s decision to invite these two candidates to dinner put other EFIB candidates at a disadvantage in the 2004-05 hiring process?

There are other questions that could be raised here. We would think it prudent for USM’s Equal Employment Opportunity officer to look into this matter, and perhaps reprimand Niroomand if it’s the case that his actions in this case were over the line. We would also invite EFIB faculty to contact USMPRIDE.COM and provide some of the details regarding the 2005-06 hiring process (e.g., How did it go?)

The possibility that *Associate Dean* Niroomand, perhaps acting independently, had dinner with two job candidates near the end of the Conference, while the other job candidates were likely treated to a standard in-room interview with the EFIB Search Committee only, seems to us to be potentially troublesome. As the screen below indicates, CoB Dean Harold Doty sanctioned Niroomand’s “recruiting trip” to Philadelphia, a trip that cost the CoB a hefty sum:

Report all expenditures, including expenses paid for with a travel advance.  If the department limits the total expenditure, enter the amount on the “Maximum Reimbursement Allowed” block.	Total Other Expenses	168	50
	Total Expenses	1,196	97
	MAXIMUM REIMBURSEMENT ALLOWED →	1,196	97
			37
Employee Signature <u>J. Niroomand</u>	Date	1/12/05	
Approved By <u>[Signature]</u>	Date	1/12/05	

We invited both Niroomand and Doty to provide an explanation for events described in this report.

## Updated, 10/11/2006

Investigators at USMPRIDE.COM have heard from a number of corners on this report. Here are some of the reports/tips investigators have been provided:

- The spring 2005 hiring process was a contentious one. Among the three finalists for the job, one was staunchly supported by an EFIB faculty member who had an institutional connection to the candidate. At the beginning of the selection meeting, CoB Associate Dean Farhang Niroomand reportedly announced to the department that CoB Dean Harold Doty preferred that the department hire the second candidate among the three. That candidate was preferred by other Hattiesburg faculty, and by all but one of the USMGC faculty, where the job position would be located. The remaining/winning candidate received support from a pocket of USM-H faculty. When the vote tally was relayed to USMGC, some of the non-EFIB USMGC faculty became vocal in their opposition to the EFIB's selection, stating that since the position was at USMGC they should have a say. They noted openly that their preference for the second candidate was based on their more positive interaction with him in social settings. As indicated to us by sources, this comment furthers the "country club" perception of the DoB at USMGC.
- One tipster indicated that it is believed that Niroomand was hosting a protégé of an economist (and native of Iran) who is affiliated with Virginia Tech. This individual (the mentor) is Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, and at least one of the job candidates hosted by Niroomand may have been Salehi-Isfahani's protégé. Sources indicate that Salehi-Isfahani's protégé was a finalist for one of the two EFIB openings in the spring of 2006, and that EFIB Chair George Carter was a supporter of his candidacy, perhaps as a favor to Niroomand. As the insert below from Salehi-Isfahani's CV indicates, Salehi-Isfahani has a connection to the Central Bank of Iran. The protégé did not secure a position at USM. Akbar Marvasti (native of Iran) now holds the faculty line.

1979-80

Department of Economic Research, the Central Bank of Iran

In the course of checking source materials and verifying information from tipsters and sources for the addendum to this report, we ran across some interesting items. Below you will find a screen taken from Virginia Tech's Department of Economics faculty page(s):

http://www.econ.vt.edu/Faculty/Facultybios/salehibio.htm - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Print Mail News RSS

Address http://www.econ.vt.edu/Faculty/Facultybios/salehibio.htm Go Links



**Department of Economics**

- [Home](#)
- [Faculty](#)
- [Staff](#)
- [Undergraduate](#)
- [Graduate](#)
- [Seminars](#)
- [Conferences](#)
- [Alumni](#)

**Dr. Djavad Salehi-Isfahani**  
Professor of Economics



*Department of Economics  
Virginia Tech  
3023 Pamplin Hall (0316)  
Blacksburg, VA 24061  
(540) 231-7697  
[salehi@vt.edu](mailto:salehi@vt.edu)  
[webpage](#)*

**Fall 2006 Office Hours**  
Tuesday and Thursday  
2:00PM - 3:00PM

[Research](#)

[Curriculum Vitae](#)

**Specializations:**  
Development Economics  
Population  
Family Economics



Updated September 19, 2006  
Webmaster: [econrad@vt.edu](mailto:econrad@vt.edu)

Department of Economics, College of Science  
3016 Pamplin Hall (0316)  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
(540) 231-5688 Fax: (540) 231-5097

Done Internet


The screen above relates to information about Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, Professor of Economics at VPI, who is discussed in the new text material added to this report (see above). Next, we visited the Department of Economics at the University of Illinois, and found the following:

Hadi Salehi Esfahani - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Print Mail News RSS

Address https://netfiles.uuc.edu/esfahani/www/index.htm Go Links



**Department of Economics**  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

**Hadi Salehi Esfahani**  
Professor of Economics

[Vita](#)


[Research](#)

[Courses](#)

[Development/ International Economics Workshop](#)

[Middle East Economic Association](#)

[University of Illinois International Political Economy Research Group \(U2IPERG\)](#)



**Degrees:** Ph.D. in economics, University of California, Berkeley, 1984.  
B.Sc. Mechanical Engineering, Tehran University, 1977.

**Positions:** At the University of Illinois since 1984.  
Economist at the Policy Research Department of the World Bank, 1994-95.

**Contact Information:**

[Department of Economics](#)  
[University of Illinois](#)  
210 David Kinley Hall  
1407 W. Gregory Dr.  
Urbana, IL 61801

Phone: (217) 333-2681  
Fax: (217) 333-1398  
Email: [Esfahani@uiuc.edu](mailto:Esfahani@uiuc.edu)

**Research:** Theoretical and empirical issues in the political economy of development, the role of country institutions in the formation and reform of fiscal, trade, and regulatory policies.

**Teaching:** EMBA macroeconomics, development economics and international economics.

Done Internet

This individual is Hadi Salehi Esfahani, Professor of Economics at the University of Illinois. It appears to us that Hadi is possibly the younger sibling of Djavad.

Consider this possibility: CoB Associate Dean Farhang Niroomand had an expensive meal with two Iranian friends, Djavad Salehi Esfahani and Hadi Salehi Esfahani, and the taxpayers of the State of Mississippi were left to take care of the damage (i.e., the \$165 restaurant tab).