

# Ethics Update, October 2007

There are a number of interesting stories on the ethics front in the CoB to update USMNEWS.NET readers on. Let's get started.

## “Outside” Looking In

The P&T gambit pulled by associate professor of economics, **Akbar Marvasti**, still has everyone buzzing. Here's the deal. Marvasti, new to the CoB, was hired by EFIB economist **Charles Sawyer** in the spring of 2006. Marvasti joined the CoB in the fall of 2006. After being in the CoB during Marvasti's first year in the CoB (2006-07), Sawyer departed for a new job at TCU in August of 2007. Then, in September of 2007, Marvasti submitted his application for promotion to full professor. Informal hallway reviews are mixed. Some say the record is adequate for early promotion. Others disagree. Fortunately, USM's P&T process builds in a safeguard against possible irregularities by including a provision requiring that applicants for promotion to full be evaluated by three “external reviewers.” After all, the promotion to full carries with it a \$5,500 permanent salary bump. What does Marvasti do? With the help of former CBA Dean **William Gunther**, he (Marvasti) asks to be evaluated by Sawyer. Sawyer's evaluation letter is glowing. Of course, it never mentions the fact that he (Sawyer) just ended a 25-year stint in USM's CoB, and that he (Sawyer) hired Marvasti in the spring of 2006, a fact that creates a conflict of interest situation.

At least there are two more letters to fall back on, right? Well, here's the rub. Sources tell USMNEWS that one of the other Marvasti-evaluators was, and still is, a professor at the institution where Marvasti earned his PhD, and this evaluator was there while Marvasti was working on his PhD. How's all this for having some fun with the meaning/intent of “external” review? So much for oversight.

## Meat & Potatoes “CoB Ethics”

Thirteen days after the event occurred, Interim Dean **Alvin Williams** concluded his investigation of the so-called “Doty incident.” As reported by USMNEWS.NET, former CoB Dean **Harold Doty** threatened economics professor Franklin Mixon in the Greene Hall corridors on 28-Sept-07.

Let's get it all straight: It has also been reported recently that Williams, Doty, and USM President **Martha Saunders** are all co-defendants in a federal lawsuit. Mixon testified for the plaintiff at a preliminary proceeding on 27-Sept-07. The “Doty incident” occurred on 28-Sept-07. Later that same day, 28-Sept-07, Saunders appointed co-defendant Williams to investigate the actions of a third co-defendant, Doty, that were taken against Mixon, a witness for the plaintiff. Thirteen days later, “fair and *impartial*” co-defendant Williams concluded, according to sources, that fellow co-defendant, Doty, had done nothing (to Mixon) “of any consequence,” and he (Williams) reported to his other fellow co-defendant, Saunders, that same conclusion. How's all that for ethics?

## Overloaded (and Underpaid?)

EFIB Chair **George Carter** and associate professor of finance **John Clark**, are both teaching overload courses this semester (fall 2007). Though Carter has participated in his own “clinical teaching professorship” program multiple times in the past, this is the first foray into the program

for Clark. Several interesting points. First, both hold administrative appointments (i.e., EFIB Chair and CFS Director), positions which provide them with 6-hour teaching loads. Thus, both are taking advantage of administrative release-time to saddle up with extra teaching responsibilities. Of course, the extra teaching comes with extra money. A recent USMNEWS report estimates that the two will share anywhere from \$7,500 to \$12,000 (if not more) throughout this semester. Second, Clark holds a CoB professorship – a position that is supposed to be used to be extra-productive in one's research endeavors. How's that for following the spirit of the rules/privileges?

### **Out and About**

It looks as though assistant professor of economics, **Sami Dakhli**, has decided to bounce on the week of fall break again. Sources informed USMNEWS that during the week of fall break of 2006 Dakhli stepped off to France to teach a class, for pay of course, at a French university. It appears as though he may be repeating the practice, though sources say that Germany is a possible location for this year's (2007) effort.

A recent USMNEWS report also indicated that MIS professor **Chang-Tseh Hsieh** and economics professor **Farhang Niroomand** appeared to have taken off for most, if not all, of the week of fall break 2007. Niroomand, the CoB's former Associate Dean, is the same guy who spent at least \$75,000 on travel over a 59-month period in recent years. He's got skills.