

Nostalgia Series: Farhang

Farhang Niroomand, Associate Dean of the CoB, former Chairman of the Economics Department, and former power broker and player inside the CoB. Farhang controlled the money for everything: raises, travel, data purchases, or anything else a faculty member's heart may desire. He also controlled tenure and promotion votes, election results, teaching loads and assignments, and even office selection. Dr. Niroomand never let anyone forget about any of these things. If you bought into his ploy – and all too many did because he is a good bully – he supplied you with the very air you breathed, and could and would shut it off as he alone desired. He personally ran off productive faculty members that would not bow and scrape for him. As one of the great (probably the greatest) destroyer of deans, he demanded you obey him, not the dean, because the deans were temporary (with his help), and he was forever. But enough about the past.

What is Farhang up to these days? He is well-versed in forwarding emails to the CoB that he receives from around campus. He is good about rushing up to talk to Trellis Green if anything is needed from Trellis or there is anything they want Trellis to do. One assumes he is still processing forms that need processing. The swagger is gone. The cock-of –the-walk lady killer attitude is gone. Marginalization has come to Iran. It only continues to get worse as Barry pushes Farhang away from Doty so Barry gets all he wants for Barry and Laurie. Now that Barry's power lust is temporarily slaked by the decentralization evaluation move, Farhang sits farther and farther away from the throne and the riches in the throne room. Can't you just feel those multi-week Iran trips disappearing? Those family visits to Atlanta? All those meetings just to go to in places like Las Vegas so you are out of Hattiesburg? Sorry, Farhang, but the Babins are expensive to keep. So are many people when you are no longer very useful.

Look on the bright side: maybe Doty will get fired for the CoB not getting re-accredited. Maybe some school is goofier than we are and will actually hire Barry to be a dean. Maybe George will get fired or retire so you are no longer beat with him like he was a thick stick. Maybe the Susan Doty pay deal will finally catch someone's attention that can do something about it. On the other hand, being an outsider while looking like an insider may help you with the next dean; perhaps s/he will be in the overwhelming majority and not see you for who you are, allow you to stay, and finish off her or his career as CoB dean, too.

Draw some lines of death in your sandbox. Threaten to quit; that will show your sense of humor. Remember this: if you get accused of something you did not do, especially if you get accused of it in public, and if someone who still has power ever flippantly apologizes in private to you – paybacks can be really rough.