

Just How Toxic is the CoB's Environment?

B-School Naghshpour vs. CoAL Naghshpour Suggests It's "Very"

The Intro

The recent series [Our Most Talented Colleagues](#) showed just how successful those former CoB faculty who departed USM in 2003 and later have been throughout their careers relative to current CoB faculty. The new recurring report [Index Lost](#) provides some evidence suggesting that those same CoB departures (since 2003) are doing much better on the research front these days than they were doing under the Harold Doty-Farhang Nirroomand administration of the CoB (2003-07). Making inferences about these situations is, however, often difficult because of the myriad of factors that are at play. For example, some former CoBers who are doing better these days are also working at Tier 2 universities, which offer greater resources than USM was ever capable of providing them. It works the other way as well – that is, some former CoBers who made worse-than-lateral moves are doing better now that they have put many miles between themselves and the Doty-Nirroomand regime, despite now working with fewer resources.

The Naghshpour Experiment

Sometimes a way around difficult situations like those described above presents itself. This was the case regarding the very story above when former b-school economist Shahdad Naghshpour left the b-school in 2004. Unlike so many other departures, however, Naghshpour's offered up a natural experiment in that he simply walked across 31st Avenue (figuratively) when he left the b-school for USM's College of Arts & Letters (CoAL). Simply put, Naghshpour traded in the rough-around-the-edges leadership style of Harold Doty (b-school dean) for the smooth-as-silk leadership approach of Denise von Herrmann (CoAL dean). What has become of Naghshpour's research portfolio as a result of this move is nothing short of amazing, as [Naghshpour's USM.edu curriculum vitae](#) indicates.

Some USM B-School History

In January of 2003, econ/int development (EID) was brought into USM's b-school (College of Business & Economic Development, CBED) by then-USM president Shelby Thames, who also fired CBA dean William Gunther at that same time. About a year later Naghshpour left his home department in the CBED, economics, and joined CBED's EID department. During this transition period, Naghshpour worked under new CBED dean Harold Doty, who had been hired in July of 2003 to replace Gunther. The link above shows that, under Doty, Naghshpour's research fell off of the proverbial table. Some of the CBED's economists at the time (e.g., Charles Sawyer) reportedly described Naghshpour as a failure, and even one dating back to his (Naghshpour's) early days in the College of Business Administration (CBA) under former CBA dean Tyrone Black. In 2004, Doty successfully convinced the Thames administration that the presence of EID in the b-school (CBED) jeopardized the b-school's AACSB accreditation prospects, Thames and then-USM provost Jay Grimes acquiesced, and removed EID from the CBED, and the CBED changed its name to CoB.

The Naghshpour Success Story

Shortly after his move from the CBED (CoB) to the CoAL, Naghshpour began to flourish. In fact, about 75% of Naghshpour's journal publications have, to date, come in the roughly 25% of his career that has been spent under the leadership (deanship) of the CoAL's von Herrmann. Looked at the other way, only about 25% of Naghshpour's production came during the roughly 75% of his career that was spent under the heel of current and former b-school administrators like George Carter, Farhang Nirroomand, and,

later, Harold Doty. The link above shows that Naghshpour's record has surpassed that of his detractors (Sawyer, Niroomand, etc.) and those they supported (Carter, Edward Nissan, etc.).

CoB Toxicity

Just how toxic is the environment in USM's CoB? The details of the Shahdad Naghshpour story says it's "very." Now all that remains to be seen is whether CoB dean Lance Nail can turn things around, and, if so, how fast and by how much. One thing is certain, there are fewer and fewer individuals willing to serve as canaries in the current (and former) CoB coal mine.