

Over and Over and Over

What Being Reminded of Niroomand's Grant Work Actually Reminds Us

At every opportunity to do so, the CoB's administration reminds CoB faculty about the United States Department of Education Title VI-B Grant work being done by the CoB's Associate Dean Farhang Niroomand. The most recent example comes from the fall 2006 issue of *Joint Venture*, the CoB's fundraising magazine. That example is depicted below:



COB HOSTS INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Dr. Farhang Niroomand, professor of economics and associate dean for the College of Business (COB), with support from a Title VI-B grant from the U.S. Department of Education, and in cooperation with the Mississippi World Trade Center and the Mississippi Development Authority offered a series of seminars leading to an International Business Information Technology (IBIT) certificate.

The workshops, held on the Southern Miss campus from January to May, covered a variety of topics relative to doing business in the international marketplace. Taught by COB faculty and international business practitioners, the courses presented were international business, e-commerce, information technology, cross-cultural communications, international marketing, international trade and finance/export-import financing, global supply chain management, small business management and entrepreneurship. In addition to business people and other professionals, several COB seniors majoring in international business attended the workshop series, which culminated in a presentation of certificates to the participants.

Shan Miller, owner of Magnolia Honey Jelly in Woodville, Miss., ships her products throughout the U.S. and to Ontario, Can. She stated that the information and networking opportunities made the workshops invaluable to her as she seeks to expand to foreign markets. "I highly recommend the program," she said.

The IBIT certificate program is part of a project, "From Local to Global: The Internationalization of Business in Mississippi," which is a \$450,000 two-year initiative with \$180,000 in funding from a federal Title VI-B grant through the U.S. Department of Education."

This is the fourth grant to be funded for international business initiatives at the COB and Niroomand has served as project director of the last two.

The internship component of the project has helped the COB with its mission of developing careers by giving students first-hand work experience and providing networking opportunities with potential employers. And it's working. Xian Zheng, who as a senior IB major interned with Hood Packaging Corporation, was hired by the company.

Niroomand seems to continually retain access to the two-year funds that come with Title VI Grants that focus on internationalizing the business curriculum. Niroomand's current project is titled "From Local to Global: The Internationalization of Business in Mississippi," and it is described above as a \$450,000 two-year initiative with \$180,000 in funding from the U.S. Department of Education.

In the previous issue of *Joint Venture*, published in Spring of 2005, another profile of Niroomand's USDE grant efforts was published. The screen below captures the details of that work, as explained in that 2005 issue of *JV*:

International e-commerce incubator project to assist Mississippi businesses

Mississippi's small- and medium-sized businesses will soon have more help in selling their products and services in the international marketplace through a new project headquartered in the College of Business.

The major thrust of the project will be the development of an information technology (IT) business incubator that can equip small- and medium-sized businesses in Mississippi with the know-how and skills for selling their products and services to customers in the international community.



Farhang Niroomand, left, and Linghui Tang are leading the information technology business incubator project that aims to help Mississippi business compete in the international marketplace.

Titled "From Local to Global: The Internationalization of Business in Mississippi," the project is a \$450,000 two-year initiative with \$180,000 in funding from a federal Title VI-B grant through the U.S. Department of Education.

"In Mississippi, there is a real need for education and training in the applications of information technology to promote international business," said Farhang Niroomand, project director and associate dean.

"We have the ability to improve the exporting performance of these businesses through the IT incubator with the help of our nationally renowned faculty team in international business and information management."

Project manager is Linghui Tang, assistant professor of international business. Other CoB faculty members who will be involved with the project are those who teach international business, entrepreneurship, management information systems, international marketing and international finance.

Another component of the project is the development of an International Business certificate program for long-term international business education in Mississippi. This will provide a foundation for continuous improvement of international skills and knowledge necessary for competing in a global economy, likely through a series of workshops. Finally, it will help establish an internship program for international business students at Southern Miss. The internship will provide opportunities for students to help companies create and manage Web sites, conduct market research and develop international business plans.

Gaining a competitive edge

According to the Small Business Administration, 97 percent of the firms in Mississippi are small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with less than 500 employees. However, in 2001, the state ranked 46th in the nation in terms of export performance among its SMEs, said Farhang Niroomand, professor of economics.

Small- and medium-sized businesses do not have the capital that allows them to risk entering the international business arena with an overseas office and do not have the business connections that large companies have.

"Therefore, e-business becomes a necessary avenue for them to successfully sell their products to international markets," said Niroomand.

Niroomand said that the IT business incubator project team will also collaborate with other Mississippi organizations, including the Mississippi World Trade Center, Mississippi Development Authority, and the Small Business Development Center and International Trade Center at Hinds Community College.

The profile above provides much of the same detail as the recently published one located on page 1 of this document. This profile mentions the development of an International Business certificate program, which is presumably the program that Barbara Travis, pictured above on page 1, completed recently. The 2005 article indicates that Linghui Tang was selected as the "Project manager." Tang is no longer affiliated with USM's College of Business.

Joint Venture coverage of Niroomand's grant efforts date all the way back to the inaugural issue of the magazine in spring of 2002. The 2002 profile of Niroomand's "Project Outreach" grant is shown below:



PROJECT OUTREACH

Funded by a U.S. Department of Education grant, Project Outreach is in its second successful year. "Project Outreach serves a dual purpose," said Dr. Farhang Niroomand, Associate Dean for the College of Business Administration and director of the grant.

The main focus of Project Outreach, Niroomand explained, is to provide continuous training and education to community colleges. "In addition to offering an ongoing series of workshops at USM on global topics in business, the grant has made it possible for community college faculty to attend the CIBER Institutions at universities around the country for a week of intensive training and to participate in the USM Study Abroad program in Britain and Spain."

Terry Thompson, instructor at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, said, "As a result of the project's training programs at USM and

at the CIBER Institute I attended, I have become an ambassador for internationalizing all college courses. I'm sharing with fellow faculty the knowledge and skills I've learned."

Jones County Junior College instructor Dottie Bisland, who traveled to Spain with the Spanish Business Studies Abroad program, said the experience gave her the broader knowledge necessary to effectively incorporate global topics into the classroom.

This summer, according to Niroomand, Community College faculty will travel to Britain and Japan.

Establishing an international business mentoring program for Mississippi exporters is a secondary purpose of the project. In partnership with the Mississippi Development Authority, the Mississippi Export Assistance Center, and Hinds Community College International Trade Center, the CBA is building a directory of state businesses with global experience to act as mentors for protege companies that are new to international exporting.

As the profile above points out, "Project Outreach" focused on providing "continuous training and education [on global topics in business] to community colleges."

CoB faculty and others are again reminded of Niroomand's grant work when visiting the CoB's webpages, as shown below:

http://www.usm.edu/business/faculty_staff/economics/farhang_niroomand.htm?id=000380380 - Microsoft Int...

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Associate Dean

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Specialty Field: International economics

Education: Michigan State University (Ph.D.)

Academic and Professional Interests: International trade, international business, economic development

Professional Honors and Achievements: Dr. Niroomand currently is the Project Director for "From Local to Global: The Internationalization of Business in Mississippi," a Title VI-B grant from the U.S. Department of

Current Projects:

Editor
Journal of Current Research in Global Business

Project Director
"From Local to Global: The Internationalization of Business in Mississippi"

The list goes on and on. We are reminded over and over and over. Only now, after the USMPRIDE.COM investigators have broken several stories related to Niroomand's activities as the CoB's Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, those reminders serve as prompts to think about more questionable aspects of Niroomand's activities, as the series of headlines below shows:

Special Report

"Dinner with Colleague(s)"

An Investigative Series on the use of the CoB's Budget

Special Report

Stretching the Truth to Stretch the Trip

An Investigative Series on CoB Faculty Travel

Updated . . . See Below!

Special Report

Niroomand on the Move

An Investigative Series on CoB Travel

31st & Pearl

Breaking Down Niroomand's Defenses

Special Report

Niroomand Drops it like it's Hot

An Investigative Series on CoB Faculty Travel

Special Report

Niroomand & Doty "Recruiting" in Vegas

An Investigative Series on CoB Faculty Travel

Special Report

Remember Niroomand's Trip to the Alamo!

An Investigative Series on CoB Faculty Travel

Special Report

Niroomand's "Academic Visits" to Purdue and LSU

An Investigative Series on CoB Faculty Travel

Special Report

The AGB "Amigo" Crosses the Rio Grande

An Investigative Series on Travel by CoB Faculty

Special Report

Dr. Niroomand's "Academic Visit" to Irvine
An Investigative Series on CoB Faculty Travel

Special Report

Niroomand and the AGB hit the Big Apple
An Investigative Series on CoB Faculty Travel

Special Report

Niroomand makes another "Academic Visit" to Atlanta
An Investigative Series on Travel by CoB Faculty

Updated – See Below

Special Report

Back to Tehran in 2005
An Investigative Series on Travel by CoB Faculty

Paging Dr. Gandhi! Dr. Gandhi! Dr. Niroomand's On The Phone!

Special Report

How Much does JCRGB Sponsorship Cost the CoB?
An Investigative Series on the use of the CoB's Budget

Special Report

Project Outreach
A Look at Consulting Associated with Niroomand's Grant Work

CoBscam?

A Look at Questionable Publishing Practices in the College of Business

Special Report

The Niroomand World Tour: Asia in 2001
An Investigative Series on CoB Travel

31st & Pearl

The Time Has Come

The Louis K. Brandt Research Award: Friendraising through Fundraising?

A Closer Look at Niroomand's Travel
Updated 4 August 2006

"Table for 14, please . . ."

THE 2004 TRIP TO THE MISSISSIPPI BUSINESS HALL OF FAME

Re- Directing Niroomand's SEDONA Vita, Part I

Special Report

Niroomand's 2002 Trip to the Central Bank of Iran
An Investigative Series on CoB Travel

Special Report

Niroomand "Visits" Seattle, USM Pays
An Investigative Series on CoB Travel

Special Report

Nov 2001, Niroomand Goes "Down Under"
An Investigative Series on CoB Travel

Special Report

Niroomand's "Academic Visits" to Atlanta
An Investigative Series on CoB Travel

The 2006 Merit Raises as seen through USMPRIDE.COM Bytes

31st & Pearl

Musings on the 2006 CoB Raises

Not only do the grant reminders remind us of the many recent headlines above, they also point to a number of other questionable aspects of Niroomand's tenure as the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs within the CoB. Some of these are:

- Niroomand is increasingly distancing himself from classroom duties within the CoB. His one course per semester load has dropped to a one course per academic year load. Thus, even with his grant work, Niroomand's net contribution to the CoB's bottom line is a big negative.
- Niroomand is increasingly distancing himself from his Associate Dean responsibilities, given his propensity to travel both within and out of the United States. As "Niroomand on the Move" indicates, Associate Dean Farhang Niroomand has spent over \$75,000 in travel in just the past few years alone.
- Niroomand is increasingly distancing himself from University service. As reported by usmpride.com, Niroomand's service, as presented in his SEDONA file, consists only of CoB Scholarship Committee and iTech Advisory Board. Such a low level of participation might be fitting for a Visiting Instructor, but not for an Associate Dean.

These are but a few of the problems associated with Niroomand's tenure as Associate Dean of the CoB. A big question arises: Why does the CoB need an Associate Dean for Academic Affairs? What is gained by the taxpayers of Mississippi from having Farhang Niroomand traveling all over the world, avoiding his classroom and administrative responsibilities, all the while being paid a salary of \$142,000? Not only that, what are federal taxpayers getting out of Niroomand's grant work, when very little of his travel seems to have anything to do with training Mississippi junior college instructors or assisting Mississippi businesses in their efforts to globalize?

These and other questions deserve answers. Please continue to follow reports here at usmpride.com as we attempt to provide the answers to at least some of those important questions.