

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

As reported at USMPRIDE, Farhang Niroomand's grant listed a Dr. Gandhi from Plattsburgh, New York as a payee for consulting services. Further, documents obtained by the USMPRIDE research staff explicitly indicate that payment to Dr. Gandhi was to be channeled via a check made to Niroomand, who would reimburse Gandhi at a later date. Just who is this Dr. Gandhi, why would Niroomand involve him in his grant work, and why might Gandhi's mode of remuneration be so unusual?

A Google®™ search of *Gandhi Plattsburgh* reveals only one real possibility – Dr. Prem Gandhi of SUNY Plattsburgh. Dr. Gandhi is the “Academic Coordinator/Distinguished Service Professor” in the “Center for the Study of Canada” at SUNY Plattsburgh. So, Gandhi is an academic that has some ties to international business research. Further investigation reveals that Dr. Prem Gandhi has been a member of the Academy of International Business – host of one of Niroomand's favorite international travel conferences. Because Dr. Gandhi's curriculum vita is not available on the web, we cannot tell what other ties Niroomand might have to Gandhi.

Gandhi's involvement in Niroomand's “Project Outreach” grant is even less clear. From the CoB website, “Project Outreach” is described as, “...a program funded by a U.S. Department of Education grant, was completed in 2003 under the leadership of Dr. Farhang Niroomand, associate dean. The two-year program provided for faculty training and curriculum development in international business education to community colleges through workshops and study abroad opportunities for more than 50 participants.” So “Project Outreach” was an educational grant, not a research grant. That's a good thing, since Prem Gandhi has one scholarly publication as listed by Business Source Complete, Academic Search Premier, and Google Scholar – a review of another author's scholarly book. Gandhi's expertise is, assumedly, international business education, an assumption made vis-à-vis his connection with the “Center for the Study of Canada” at SUNY Plattsburgh. This begs a question: Why did Niroomand need Gandhi's assistance delivering an international business educational program? Niroomand is, after all, a professional educator who has spent his career teaching USM students about international business. In fact, Project Outreach was the third grant Niroomand had directed at USM, according to the Public Relations release on Niroomand's latest grant, “From Local to Global: The Internationalization of Business in Mississippi”. We can understand the employment of liaisons at community colleges, but why was Niroomand in need of Gandhi's services? There is no readily available answer.

Lastly, why was Niroomand requesting such a strange payment method for Gandhi's services? USM was requested to pay Niroomand for Gandhi's services, and Niroomand would then pay Gandhi when he completed his work, which is only specified as “consulting”. Why not just allow USM to pay Gandhi directly? Again, there is no readily available answer. However, it is this strange arrangement that casts another financial shadow, this time over Niroomand's administration of this USDE grants.