

## **Farhang Niroomand** **Some Things and Some People Seem Never to Change**

usmnews.net has been provided with a copy of the response to *The Victoria Advocate's* Texas Public Information Act Request dated May 5, 2017. *The Advocate* asked for:

Any report that provides the results of the 2017 UH-Victoria Survey conducted in January about leadership at the university.

Any reports or documents that provides any information about the last two performance evaluations of University of Houston-Victoria President Dr. Vic Morgan.

There can be little doubt that the documents paint a portrait of a university in considerable disarray. One factor cited in the survey is Dean Farhang Niroomand. (usmnews.net's readers are familiar with Dr. Niroomand's history of bullying and favoritism during his time as associate dean at Southern Miss' college of business.) The following is the first in a series of articles reporting quotes found in the survey.

*Having a new president and provost will probably not allow our university to grow and succeed unless we replace the deans in A&S and Business[Farhang Niroomand]. Both have personal agendas. The success of our entire university is limited by their focus on increasing their power through practices that include hiring friends and changing policies to help consolidate their power base. They also damage the university and enrollment by trying to eliminate faculty, and even programs, they find threatening to their power. The ways that they do this are varied but include making false accusations.*

*UHV has had a downward spiral spin in the past several years due to lack of proper leadership from the president, the provost, to the deans. The president and the provost are short-term oriented, but the worst of all is the School of Business dean [Farhang Niroomand]. I would like to give the benefit of doubt to Dr. Morgan as he was only an Interim for two years. However, even after he was made President in early 2016, he has failed to address the core issues facing UHV. That has to do with the morale of the faculty, staff, and other stakeholders. Two of the big schools in UHV - A&S and Business - have been having leadership crisis and poor morale which has affected the enrollment and growth of the schools. The lower level administrators have totally failed to enhance the staff and faculty morale but have been pursuing the tactics of bullying, intimidation, harassment, favoritism in the form of out of line merit increases for their buddies, secrecies in policies, etc. Both the President and Provost Cockrum have been made aware of these and have failed to take any action. On the contrary, the information have been shared with the Deans and others which has only resulted in more intimidation and bullying. If anyone from UH System privately talks to the staff members in the various schools (e.g. REDACTED BY UNIVERSITY) they will share more information privately to UHS and not through any surveys or UHV administrators about the culture and morale.*

*Provost Cockrum has also been a disappointment. He too have turned his head to hostile and retaliatory conditions. Recently, “supposedly” a faculty member in the School of Business approached Dean Dileo, asking whether the search that resulted in Dr. Jim Higgin’s hiring was legitimate. This came shortly after Dr. Higgins had asked Dean Dileo about an adjunct instructor in Arts & Sciences, who happens to be **Dean Niroomand’s** wife; and after Dr. Higgins had expressed concerns over the “loyalty pledge” that was conducted by **Dean Niroomand’s** administrative team. At our Faculty Senate meeting in November we passed a resolution requesting that Provost Cockrum investigate this matter, and find out just who it was that approached Dean Dileo, and depending on the facts, take appropriate action. Unfortunately, Provost Cockrum did nothing. In regards to the “loyalty pledge”, behind the scenes Provost Cockrum gave his blessing to SBA Faculty Senators to take a vote of no-confidence, then undermined them later. In the beginning of the semester I informed Provost Cockrum about concerns of School of Business staff in Katy, and urged him to meet with them, but nothing ever happened. One of the biggest failures of this administration is its condoning of the “loyalty pledge” that was conducted by members of **Dean Niroomand’s** administrative/executive team. Their position that this is simply a “freedom of speech” issue is completely contrary to the principles of academic freedom endorsed by the AAUP. Knowing that untenured faculty members were asked by department chairs and/or other members of **Niroomand’s** administrative team to sign a loyalty pledge (I witnessed this personally), and then to declare that apparently none of these faculty felt intimidated because no one has complained, is simply preposterous, and has further eroded faculty trust. If Morgan and Cockrum, instead, had publicly disavowed the pledge, they would have changed the organizational culture at UHV for the better. It would have sent a signal that academic integrity is valued. Instead, they made things worse. Unfortunately, that seems to be the theme throughout Dr. Morgan’s tenure at UHV. My suggestion is that we begin a search for a new president as soon as possible, and then give the incoming president time to hire a new provost. Appoint another interim if necessary (or even keep Dr. Cockrum around for another semester - he might actually be OK if he wasn’t being controlled by the Morgan and UH legal). At the same time, replace **Dean Niroomand** (and his department chairs). Put the School of Business in receivership if necessary, so that when a provost is hired he/she can conduct a new search. Overall, UHV has great potential. However, that potential will not be realized under the current administration.*

*Every business school (accredited) subscribes to an exam, ETS. This exam is used to assess whether the students have basic business course knowledge. The students at the School of Business performed badly for years. The scores decrease significantly, credited to the large number of online course instruction. The school made the decision to create their own tests, which also included a large amount of preparatory power point slides and documents with at least half of the questions on the assessment. Note that this is not the standard practice for ETS*

*exams. Every semester, the school has to address this issue and provide “easier” slides and documents so that the students can score higher, which has not happened. Moreover, the students are given 200 points, just for showing up. These assessments show that the students are not prepared, which is probably one of the strongest factors in their lack of employment and our damaged reputation. We are labeled the University of Phoenix in Victoria.*