

## *Special Report*

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

This "Special Report" begins a multi-part examination of Employee Travel Vouchers in USM's College of Business. In this report, we examine the details of trip to the Central Bank of Iran made by CoB Associate Dean Farhang Niroomand (also Professor of Economics) in July of 2002. The details of this trip are presented below.

#### **Purpose and Place of Visit**

Below, we represent a facsimile of what Niroomand entered near the top of the travel voucher he filed with regard to his July 2002 trip to Iran:

Purpose and Place of Visit	Department Name	
	Development/Economics	\$1,400
Monetary & Banking Research	Economic Development	\$ 600
Academy of Central Bank of Iran	Research Projects	\$1,200

Note that the funds for Niroomand's trip to Iran came from three sources: Development/Economics (\$1,400), Economic Development (\$600), and Research Projects (\$1,200). We are not sure about the last category, but the first two accounts appear to have resided in the Department of Economics, Finance and International Business. It is noteworthy that none of the funds appear to have emanated from Dean's Office accounts. The voucher was also all signed by Farhang Niroomand and Iskandar Hamwi, the Chair of the Department of Economics, Finance, and International Business in July of 2002. Hamwi's signature supports the notion that the funds came from Niroomand's home department.

#### **Employee Travel Voucher Number**

The Voucher Number (Date) for this trip is #9495 (8/6/02).

What follows in the space below is a detailed analysis associated with Niroomand's 2002 trip to the Central Bank of Iran.

#### **Analysis of Expenses**

Voucher # 9495

#### **MEALS AND LODGING**

Date	7/12/02	7/13	7/14	7/15	7/16
Breakfast		\$7.00	\$8.00	\$8.00	\$8.00
Lunch	\$8.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$20.00

Dinner	\$18.00	\$32.00	\$32.00	\$32.00	\$32.00
Lodging		\$128.00	\$128.00	\$128.00	\$128.00
Date	7/17	7/18			Total
Breakfast	\$8.00	\$8.00			\$69.00
Lunch	\$20.00	\$20.00			\$184.00
Dinner	\$32.00	\$32.00			\$274.10
Lodging	\$128.00	\$128.00			<u>\$768.00</u>
					\$1,295.00

**TRAVEL BY PERSONAL VEHICLE**

Date	From	To	Miles	
7-12-02	Hattiesburg, MS	PIB Airport	20	
7-31-02	PIB Airport	Hattiesburg, MS	<u>20</u>	
			40	x .36 = \$14.60

**TRAVEL BY PUBLIC CARRIER**

Date	From	To	Mode	
7-12-02	Hattiesburg, MS	Tehron, Iran	Air	
7-31-02	Tehron, Iran	Hattiesburg, MS	Air	
			Total Travel By Public Carrier	\$2,214.87

**OTHER EXPENSES**

Item	Date	Place Where Expenses Occurred	Amount	
Tips/Bagg. Hand.	7/15-7/20	Tehron, Iran	\$16.00	
Taxi/Limo	7/14-7/20	Tehron, Iran	\$180.00	
Tele. & FAX	7/15-7/20	Tehron, Iran	\$35.00	
			Total Other Expenses	\$231.00
			Total Expenses	\$3,755.47
			MAXIMUM REIMBURSEMENT ALLOWED →	\$3,200.00

**Accompanying Documentation**

The “Permission to Travel” form filed by Niroomand (on May 7, 2002) stated, as the purpose for his trip:

“To attend the 12th conference on Monetary and Foreign Exchange Policy of Iranian Central Bank and to collaborate with colleagues at the National University of Iran”

This form was signed by both William D. Gunther (Dean of the CBA) and Iskandar Hamwi (Departmental Chair). Other notable signatures on this form are A. Griffin (Vice President), and Anthony Harris “for Shelby Thames.” It is notable that Niroomand filed this form within 90 days of his trip, thus violating a requirement for international travel. Niroomand, therefore, had to file a letter with Financial Affairs. That letter is reproduced below:

May 7, 2002

Ms. Barbara Davis

Financial Affairs  
USM

Dear Ms. Davis:

I have been invited to participate and present a paper at the Monetary and Banking Research Academy of Iranian Central Bank during July 15-19, 2002. Enclosed you will find a completed Permission to Travel form typed on May 7, 2002, less than 90 days required prior to my trip. Although I received the invitation several weeks ago, it is only now that I have decided to attend the conference. This is due to rearranging my schedule and my administrative responsibilities in the College of Business and partly due to political situation in the Middle East. I hope this will not cause any problem.

Sincerely,

Farhang Niroomand  
Professor and Associate Dean

Other travel documentation, signed by Anthony Harris (Assistant to President Thames), the DFA Executive Director, and others had been filed by Niroomand prior to the trip.

### **Analysis and Commentary**

A number of questions arise. First, this seems to be the rare “invitation” that carries with it a \$3,750 price tag. It would be our understanding that, if you were invited to the Central Bank of Iran to share your research, the CBI would fund the trip. Apparently, that was not to be in this instance, as USM picked up \$3,200 of the \$3,750 price tag.

Niroomand’s letter to Ms. Davis said that his administrative duties at USM almost prevented his acceptance of the CBI’s “invitation,” yet, though the Conference ended on 7/19, he did not return to Hattiesburg until 7/31. This means he was away from his administrative seat back at USM for at least 20 days.

These and other questions will be addressed as the “Special Reports” series on CoB travel continues.