

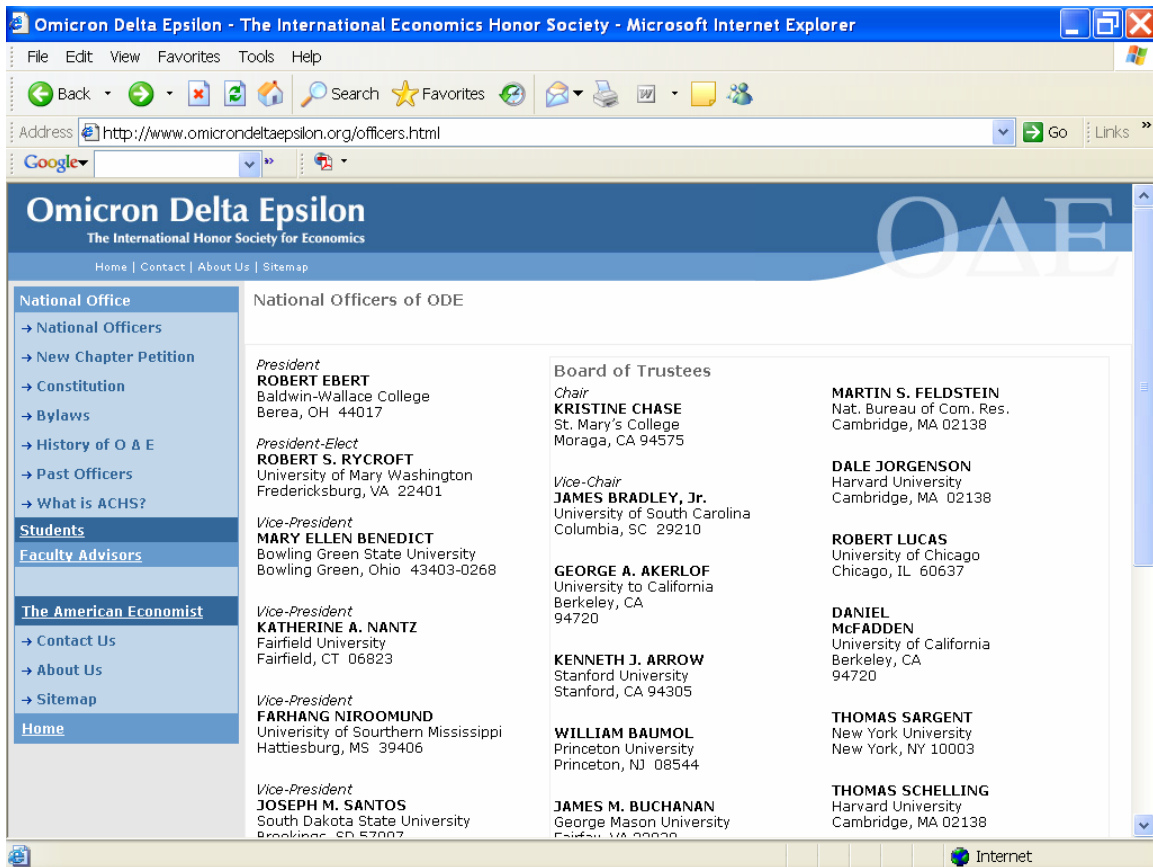
## Special Report

### Quid Pro Quo in the CoB?

#### An Investigative Series on the use of the CoB for Personal Gain

This Special Report benefited from tips provided by a usmpride.com reader which, combined with some documentation obtained by usmpride.com via a Mississippi Open Records Act request, shows an interesting potential relationship between CoB Associate Dean Farhang Niroomand and former CoB Dean/Professor of Economics William Gunther.

The screen below confirms information provided to us by the editors of the **SEDONA Files** series regarding Niroomand.



The screen indicates that “Farhang Niroomund [sic]” is currently serving as the *Vice-President* of the National Officers group of Omicron Delta Epsilon. The insert below indicates how National Officers of the ODE are chosen:

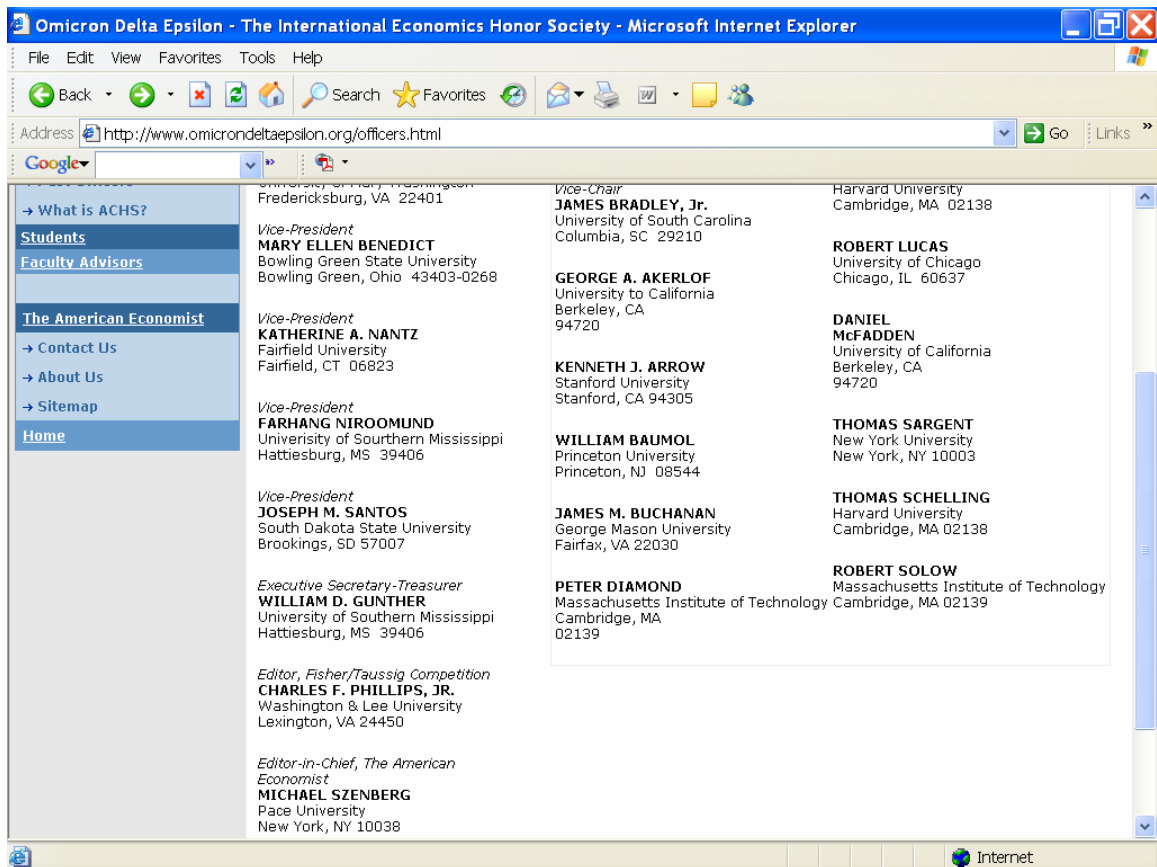
#### VIII. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. The President of the Society shall preside at all meetings of the Society and of the International Executive Board.


A. Not later than 120 days before the Biennial Convention, the President will appoint a Nominating Committee. This Committee will consist of at least one past President and not less than two other officers of the Society. The Nominating Committee shall be instructed to present to the President within 30 days a nominee for President, President-elect, and two or more Vice Presidents. The members of the Nominating Committee and the International Executive Board shall constitute the Electoral College. They will consider the nominees of the Nominating Committee and present one candidate for each office.

B. The Executive Secretary-Treasurer will inform all chapters of the action of the electoral College at least 60 days before the Biennial Convention. An additional nomination for any office may be made by petition, delivered to the Executive-Secretary 30 days before the Biennial conventions, including signatures and addresses of not less than 5% of active Chapter Presidents or Faculty Advisors. The nominees selected by the Electoral College and those made by petition shall be presented at the Biennial Convention.

It is important to note that Gunther is the Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Omicron Delta Epsilon honor society, as the following screen indicates:



Consider the possibility that Gunther assisted Niroomand in obtaining this lofty position within the ODE. What would Niroomand gain from this position? Of course, a nice line on Niroomand's vita (i.e., "Vice-President of ODE . . .") would be one benefit. Consider other possible avenues of support that come with a National Officers position within the ODE. Consider the recent trip (January of 2006) made by Niroomand to Boston for the Allied Social Science Association Meeting, which is captured in the screen below (taken from an **Employee Travel Voucher** filed by Niroomand):

 <p><b>THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI EMPLOYEE TRAVEL VOUCHER</b></p>	<b>Name</b>	Farhang Niroomand	<b>SS#</b>	[REDACTED]
	<b>Phone #</b>	601.266.5028	<b>Dept Box #</b>	5021
	<b>E-Mail</b>	farhang.niroomand@usm.edu		
	<b>Dept Name</b>	Dean's Office		
<b>Title of Meeting:</b>	Permission to Travel Filed (if yes, attach copy)			
Allied Social Science Association Meeting	<b>UNIVERSITY CLASSIFICATION</b>			
	<b>Submitter</b>	Melia Hartsfield	601.266.5853	melia.h
<b>Location and Purpose of trip:</b>	Boston, MA Attend meeting and recruit candidates		<b>Accompanied By:</b> Drs. Carter, Sawyer, Lo, Wong & Klinedinst	

Like many of Niroomand's trips, this was an expensive one, as the lodging/meals table below suggests:

MEALS AND LODGING								
Departure Time	AM	PM			Return Time	AM	PM	
Date	4-Jan-06	5-Jan-06	6-Jan-06	7-Jan-06	8-Jan-06	9-Jan-06		
Breakfast	\$ 4.60	\$ 5.10	\$ 7.80	\$ 4.60	\$ 9.00	\$ 9.90		\$ 41.00
Lunch	\$ 20.80	\$ 8.20	\$ 23.90	\$ 12.10	\$ 4.00	\$ 18.90		\$ 83.90
Dinner	\$ 16.00	\$ 29.90	\$ -	\$ 25.00	\$ 32.09			\$ 102.99
Lodging	\$ 100.08	\$ 100.08	\$ 100.08	\$ 100.08	\$ 100.08			\$ 500.40
<i>Note: for additional days, use tabTV pg2</i>								<b>Total Meals &amp; Lodging</b> \$ 728.29

The total tab for the trip came to just under \$1,000, as the insert below points out:

<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	\$ 224.50	
Total for this page	\$ 967.37	970.25
Total for TV pg2	\$ 28.00	
Total for Multi Trip Mileage	\$ -	
Total for Bus Related Expense	\$ 82.78	
<b>TOTAL ALL EXPENSES</b>	\$ 995.37	998.25
<b>LESS ADVANCE</b>		
<b>TOTAL REIMBURSED</b>	\$ 995.37	998.25
<b>MAX REIMBURSED</b>		968.45

This trip would have cost taxpayers a few hundred additional dollars had Niroomand's airfare not been paid by Omicron Delta Epsilon, as the insert below shows was the case:

TRAVEL BY PUBLIC CARRIER (mode = Airfare, Rental Car, Bus, Train, etc)				
Date	From	To	Mode	Ticket Amt
4-Jan-06	PIB airport, MS	Boston, MA	Airfare	
9-Jan-06	Boston, MA	PIB airport, MS	Airfare	
<b>Total Travel By Public Carrier</b>				\$ -

*paid by Omicron Delta Epsilon*

By saving a few hundred dollars, the travel support provided to Niroomand by the ODE allowed him to attend an additional conference or make an additional "academic visit" (in 2006) on the funds that otherwise would have been used to get to Boston for

the 2006 ASSA. This is a nice deal. Readers certainly understand by now how much Niroomand values travel (like gold).

Sources indicate that Gunther, the Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the ODE, has held the ES-T position for a number of years and would have the clout inside the organization to have Niroomand selected as one of the four vice presidents among the ODE's National Officers.

What might Gunther get from an arrangement with Niroomand such as the one presented for consideration above? Visitors to usmpride.com will recall that Gunther is the Director of the CoB's (relatively) new Bureau of Business and Economic Research. That Bureau, or Center, has been described in various reports that also appear on this website. These reports make use of a profile published in the Spring 2005 issue of *Joint Venture* (excerpt shown below).

## New center to focus on regional economic research

**B**usinesses and governmental decision-makers across South Mississippi now have a new resource to go to for timely information about economic trends and issues through a new center in the College of Business.

It is the goal of the newly created Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) to be a contact between the College of Business and the regional business community, said its director William Gunther, professor of economics.



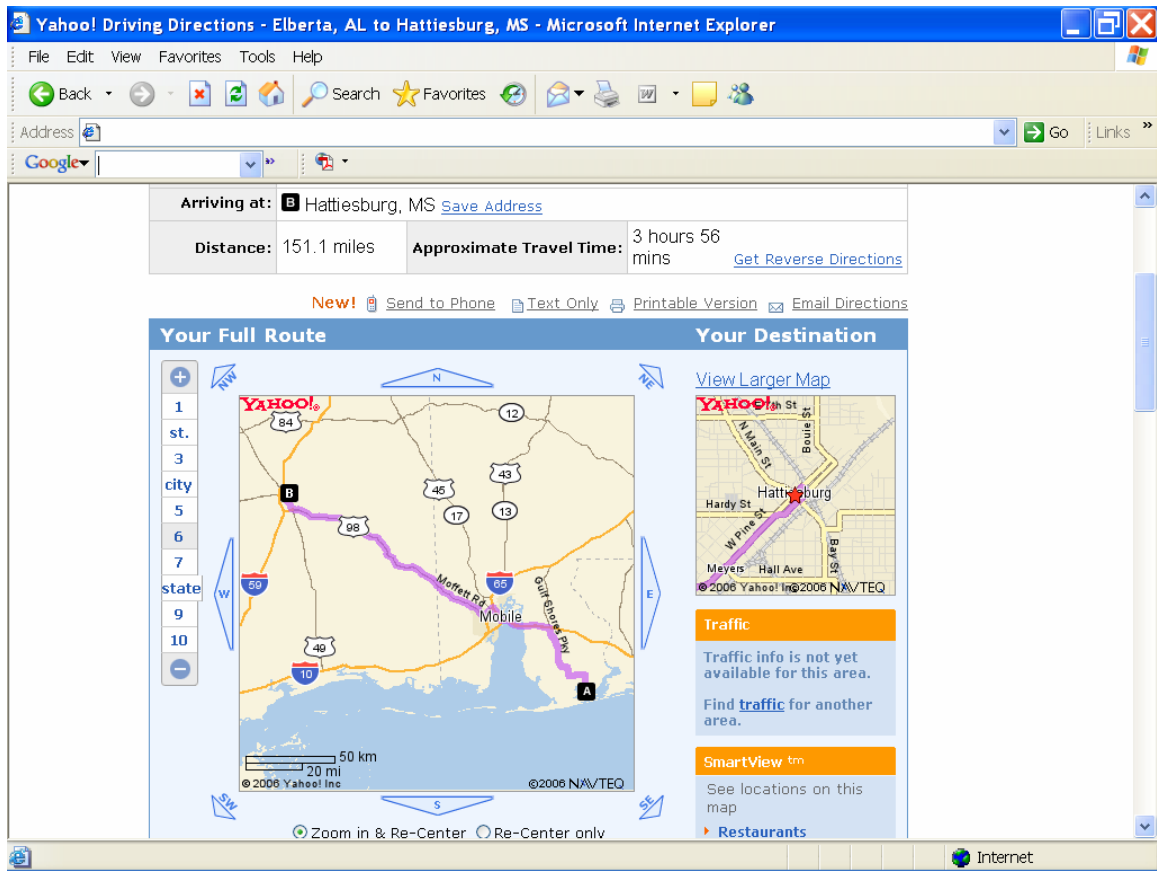
Gunther

“The bureau will be a one-stop source of information about the South Mississippi economy and population,” said Gunther. “It will provide a structure through which we can focus on ongoing work regarding regional economic policy, economic growth and the economic education of our citizens,” said Gunther. While other entities do work in this area, the BBER will pull it all together in one place, he added.

Initial work has already begun in economic education, one of the three major focus areas for the bureau.

As usmpride.com sources have indicated, the BBER has no visible staff, there are no research reports coming out of the BBER, and Gunther is rarely seen near the BBER suite on the third floor of Greene Hall. However, Gunther does get a 1-course reduction from his teaching load for serving as the Director of the BBER. That is a benefit that Niroomand can ensure that Gunther receives each semester, and, given that Gunther's permanent residence is near the Alabama-Florida border, that is a benefit that Gunther likely values.

A previous report at usmpride.com indicated that Gunther's residence in Alabama is about 3 hours from Hattiesburg, which means that his weekly round trip is about 6 hours (mapquest). An anonymous e-mailer indicated that Gunther's address is quite a bit further from Hattiesburg, perhaps an additional hour one-way. We looked into this assertion by inputting the address for Gunther that we were provided into a Yahoo map search, and we discovered the following:



Gunther's address, "A" in the map above is listed as being 3 hours and 56 minutes away from Hattiesburg ("B" in the map above), which makes for an 8-hour round trip each week instead of a 6-hour round trip. Thus, the 1-course reduction is even more helpful to Gunther's desire to live in another state.

Niroomand can also assist Gunther in avoiding a teaching schedule that includes teaching on Friday in order to facilitate Gunther's trip back to his permanent residence. Gunther's current weekly teaching schedule ends at about lunch time on Thursday and it starts up again on Monday nights at 6:30pm.

As more paperwork is processed by usmpride.com investigators, look for an update to this and other related reports. Given the length of the Vice Presidents' terms (in the ODE), as shown below, it is quite possible that Niroomand has received, or will receive funding to other venues.

## VII. OFFICERS

1. The Society shall have the following officers who shall be elective officers: a President, a President-elect, and two or more Vice Presidents. The terms of office of these elected officers shall be two years. In the event of a vacancy, the International Executive Board may appoint an individual to fulfill a term.