

## *Special Report*

### **All Eyes on Akbar**

#### **An Investigative Series on CoB Faculty Research Credentials**

Reporters at usmnews.net continue to investigate the story surrounding former CoB economist Charles Sawyer's "external review" of CoB associate professor of economics Akbar Marvasti. Marvasti, who joined the CoB in August of 2006, was hired by Sawyer during the spring of 2006. Then, after 25 years in the CoB (at USM), Sawyer departed for TCU in August of 2007. A **Breaking News** story from 8-Oct-07 entitled "[Sawyer Does the \(Once\) Unthinkable](#)" revealed that shortly after exiting the CoB Sawyer penned an "external review letter" supporting Marvasti's 2007-08 application for promotion to full professor in the CoB.

As the 8-Oct-07 **Breaking News** story indicates, Sawyer failed to reveal to readers of his "external review letter" that he (Sawyer) not only worked with Marvasti during 2006-07, as the leader of the EFIB's faculty search team he (Sawyer) hired Marvasti in the spring of 2006. Reporters at USMNEWS.NET revealed some months ago that Sawyer also responded to concerns about faculty turnover expressed by EFIB faculty by stating that the EFIB would, in response to the turnover problem, simply "hire some more Akbars." This was clearly a reference to Sawyer's then-recent hiring of Marvasti from Pomona College. Sources have also told USMNEWS.NET that Sawyer possessed information regarding various problems Marvasti had with individuals at the University of Houston's branch campus(es), Marvasti's previous employer, but he (Sawyer) chose not to reveal that information to EFIB faculty at the time of Marvasti's hiring.



Akbar Marvasti

Another facet of Sawyer's "external review letter" in support of Marvasti's 2007-08 promotion application covered in the **Breaking News** story deals with Sawyer's seeming exaggeration of the impact of Marvasti's research on the academic world. A *Social Sciences Citation Index* search referred to by Sawyer's letter was followed up by USMNEWS.NET reporters. That search, one about which Sawyer chose not to reveal any (numerical) details, turned up only 10 citations to Marvasti's work by others since 1994. This appears to be a relatively low figure, especially given Marvasti's 23 years in academia. Our *Special Report* series investigators have followed up on that **Breaking News** story by further examining the citations (in *SSCI*) by others to Marvasti's work. It was confirmed that there have been only 10 citations since 1994. However, it was also

found that only four (4) of those 10 have appeared in economics journals. Those four (4) journals are shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**  
**Akbar Marvasti's *Social Sciences Citation Index* Cites (by Others) in Economics Journals**

| <b>Journal Name</b>              | <b>CoB Ranking</b> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Economics of Transition          | "Other"            |
| Journal of Comparative Economics | A                  |
| Journal of Economic Surveys      | C                  |
| Journal of Media Economics       | "Other"            |

Table 1 above does not paint an impressive picture of Marvasti's research accomplishments since 1985. The information there also supports the contention made by sources suggesting that Sawyer's "external review letter" was meant to deceive higher-level USM decision-makers, such as the members of the University Advisory Committee, who will sit in judgment of Marvasti's P&T dossier. Not only did Sawyer withhold the fact that he (Sawyer) just ended a 25-year career at USM and he (Sawyer) was instrumental in hiring Marvasti, and thus has a vested interest in Marvasti's progress at USM, Sawyer's letter also appears to have dramatically overstated Marvasti's research production.

Look for various reports at [USMNEWS.NET](http://USMNEWS.NET) to continue in their coverage of events (like this one) surrounding the "2007-08 P&T Jailbreak Train."