

## *Special Report*

# Preemptive Pardon

## Niroomand Gets Political Cover from Embattled Provost

Official documents recently received by USMNEWS.net indicate that former CoB associate dean and current b-school dean at the University of Houston-Victoria, Farhang Niroomand, was handed what sources refer to as a preemptive pardon by his embattled provost. That document is a communiqué from Suzanne LaBrecque, the former provost at UH-V, to all UH-V business faculty, and it concerns Niroomand's use of state tax dollars for travel.

### **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** School of Business Administration Faculty  
**From:** Suzanne V. LaBrecque  
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
**Subject:** Update  
**Date:** May 2, 2011

Recently, anonymous letters were sent to members of the UHV President's Cabinet, SBA faculty, the UHS Chancellor and perhaps other members of the UHV community regarding Dean Niroomand's travel. Given the nature of the allegations, and to provide closure, the matter was referred to UH System auditors for their review. I want to report that the UH System auditors did not find anything inappropriate or untoward.

As you are aware, reports or allegations of fraud, waste or abuse are taken seriously by the University of Houston-Victoria. There are numerous reporting mechanisms available for anonymous and non-anonymous reports, including through MySafeCampus ( ) and the UH System auditors. Reports are investigated, as appropriate, and kept confidential to the extent permitted under the law.

Open, constructive discussion of these and other issues and the expression of different viewpoints are essential to teaching, research, service, shared governance and sound decision making and are valued and fostered at UHV. This practice is consistent with UHV's expectation of its faculty to work constructively in a collegial environment and contribute to collective efforts.

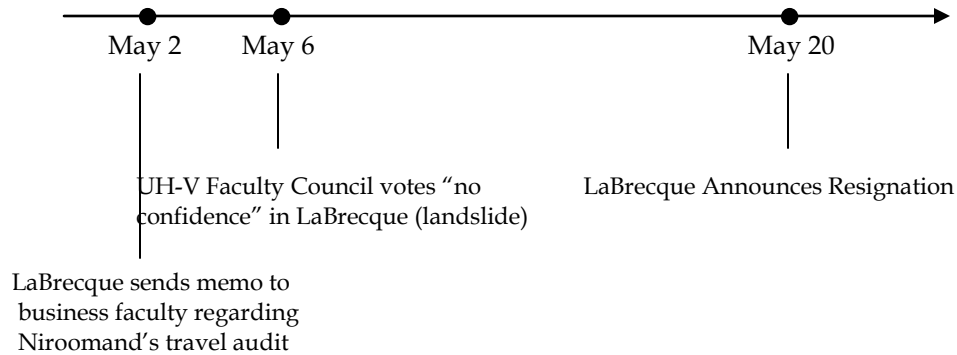
In contrast, widespread dissemination of unfounded allegations and/or otherwise making personal attacks against colleagues is inconsistent with UHV expectations and the ethical standards of the academic profession.

On a personal note, I want to recognize Dr. Niroomand's vision, efforts and tireless commitment to maintain and improve the academic quality of SBA programs while raising the SBA to new heights. With each of your important contributions to this collective effort, it is sure to be a success.

In a memo dated 2-May-2011 entitled "Update," LaBrecque informs UH-V b-school faculty that UH-V's central administration had received "anonymous letters" alleging improprieties regarding Niroomand's travel. LaBrecque then informs recipients, as indicated above, that UH System auditors "did not find anything inappropriate or untoward [regarding Niroomand's travel]."

Sources tell USMNEWS.net, however, that LaBrecque's report does not stand the test of timeline, as shown below.

Figure 1 – LaBrecque's Timeline, May 2011



The timeline of events indicates that LaBrecque's memo exonerating Niroomand came on Monday, 2-May-2011. At the end of that week, on Friday, 6-May-2011, the UH-V faculty council [voted overwhelmingly](#) against confidence in LaBrecque. Lastly, on Friday, 20-May-2011, LaBrecque announced to [Victoria media](#) that she [had resigned](#), effective 1-June-2011, [her post of](#) UH-V provost. Sources tell USMNEWS.net that the timeline depicted in Figure 1 above is enough to cast serious doubt as to whether the UH System office was ever even contacted by LaBrecque or UH-V officials regarding Niroomand's travel, let alone whether an audit of Niroomand's travel was ever performed. The fact that LaBrecque's signature is all over Niroomand's travel forms only adds to that doubt, sources state.

A good example of the situation described above comes from a travel expense report, submitted by Niroomand and signed by LaBrecque, concerning a March-2010 trip to Washington, D.C. made by Niroomand. The expense report, inserted below, shows that Niroomand spent 18-March-2010 through 25-March-2010 in/around D.C. However, accompanying documents submitted to USM indicate that Niroomand's grant-related visit included scheduled meetings on 22-March and 23-March only, leaving 18-March, 19-March, 20-March, 21-March, 24-March and 25-March unexplained. It appears as though this trip, which cost Texas taxpayers almost \$1,000 (at least), was more of a D.C. vacation than UH-V-related business. With LaBrecque's signature penned prominently at the bottom of the form, sources state that there is little doubt as to why she felt it necessary to provide something like a preemptive pardon for Niroomand on her way out of higher office at UH-V.

## Travel Expense Report

See the following website for travel reimbursement information:  
[http://www.fry.edu/EOE/Gen\\_Office/3.html](http://www.fry.edu/EOE/Gen_Office/3.html)

Traveler's Name: Farhang Miroomand Travel Req.# SBUNRO032810 PS Voucher #

**Vendor LD:**

[illegible]

### Comments

WINDOMAND FLEW TO WASHINGTON DC TO MEET WITH THE CHIEF OFFICER OF THE BUSINESS AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION (BIE) AT THE US DEPT. OF EDUCATION REGARDING THE SCHOOLS SUBMITTED GRANT PROPOSAL FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AT THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS (SBA) AND UNV. ALSO MET WITH THE OFFICER FOR FUND FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATION (FPSE) AT THE US DEPT. OF EDUCATION ABOUT THE SCHOOLS SUBMITTAL OF A FPSE GRANT PROPOSAL FOR NEXT YEAR. TRAVEL WAS FROM 6/21/78-6/22/78. DEAN WINDOMAND STAYED WITH FRIENDS IN ORDER TO KEEP THE COST OF THE TRIP DOWN, THEREFORE NO HOTEL BILL. BIP: TO FURTHER DEVELOP GRANTS FOR UNV AND THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS.

**Attach the following:**

1. **Approved Travel Request**
2. **Attach receipts for all expenditures indicated above for "Paid by Traveler".**
3. **Attach Travel Mileage Guide Calculation or Web Base Mileage Calculation and Mileage Reporting Form to verify mileage request reimbursement above.**
4. **If requesting Per Diem allowance, attach the applicable Per Diem allowance Schedule for Out-of-State reimbursement amount.**
5. **Attach currency conversion schedule if applicable. See the following website:**

Attach additional forms for travel greater than 10 days.

I certify that the reimbursement requested above is true, correct, and unpaid, and all expenses are for university related business.

Claimant: Z. Nisomani DATE: 3/30/10  
 Signature of higher authority required if Claimant and Local Center Authority are the same person. DATE: 3/31/10