

Special Report

Niroomand Drops it like it's Hot

An Investigative Series on CoB Faculty Travel

This Special Report examines the details of CoB Associate Dean Farhang Niroomand's trip to Berlin (in March of 2006) to attend the 61st Annual International Atlantic Economic Society Conference. The screen below shows the top portion of Niroomand's **Employee Travel Voucher** regarding this trip:

 <p>THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI EMPLOYEE TRAVEL VOUCHER</p>	Name	Farhang Niroomand	
	Phone #	601.266.5028	Dept B
	E-Mail	farhang.niroomand@usm.edu	
	Dept Name	Dean's Office	
Title of Meeting:	61st International Atlantic Economic Conference		
Location and Purpose of trip:	Berlin, Germany Attend conference		Accompanied By:
Permission to Travel Filed (if yes, attach UNIVERSITY CLASSIFICATION)			
Submitter	Melia Hartsfield	601.266.5	

At \$250/night, the lodging expenses for this trip totaled \$1,250. With meals added, the lodging/meals costs alone totaled almost \$2,000 (see below).

MEALS AND LODGING									
Departure Time	AM	PM			Return Time	AM	PM		
Date	14-Mar-06	15-Mar-06	16-Mar-06	17-Mar-06	18-Mar-06	19-Mar-06	20-Mar-06		
Breakfast		\$ 11.88	\$ 23.00	\$ 23.00	\$ 23.00	\$ 23.00	\$ 23.00	\$ 126.88	
Lunch	\$ 23.07	\$ 16.38	\$ 19.00	\$ 23.75	\$ 29.00	\$ 38.00	\$ 19.00	\$ 168.20	
Dinner	\$ 18.00	\$ 34.00	\$ 81.00	\$ 78.25	\$ 70.60	\$ 61.25		\$ 343.10	
Lodging		\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00		\$ 1,250.00	
<i>Note: for additional days, use tab TV pg2</i>								Total Meals & Lodging	\$ 1,888.18

The travel expenses, by personal vehicle and public carrier, came to almost \$1,000, as shown below:

TRAVEL BY PERSONAL VEHICLE						
Did you use a University vehicle? No						
Date	From	To	Miles	Rate	TOTAL	
14-Mar-06	Hattiesburg, MS	PIB airport	18	445.0405	\$ 7,998.01	
20-Mar-06	PIB airport	Hattiesburg, MS	18	445.0405	\$ 7,998.01	
<i>Note: for more mileage, use either tab Multi Trip Mileage (or) TV pg2</i>					Total Travel By Personal Vehicle	\$ 15,996.02
TRAVEL BY PUBLIC CARRIER (Mode = Airfare, Rental Car, Bus, Train, etc)						
Date	From	To	Mode	Ticket Amt		
14-Mar-06	PIB airport	Berlin, Germany	Airfare	\$ 488.39		
20-Mar-06	Berlin, Germany	PIB airport	Airfare	\$ 488.39		
<i>Note: for additional Public Carriers, use tab TV pg2</i>					Total Travel By Public Carrier	\$ 976.78

Registration fees, tips, and taxi services also killed off most of the annual travel of one CoB assistant professor, as the figures below indicate:

OTHER EXPENSES (For additional other expenses, use tab TV pg2)			
Item	Date	Place Where Expenses Were Incurred	Amount
Registration Fees	14-Mar-06	Berlin, Germany	\$ 445.00
Banquet Fee			
Tips (baggage handling)	3/14-3/20	Berlin, Germany	\$ 26.00
Taxi/Shuttle/Limousine	3/14-3/20	Berlin, Germany	\$ 58.75
Parking/Tolls			
Car Rental Gas			
ADVANCE RECEIVED? (Yes) (or) No			Total Other Expenses \$ 529.75

These "Other Expenses" amounts above, when combined, would finance a complete conference trip to New Orleans for a CoB professor. What about the total cost of this trip to Germany? The screen below answers that question:

TOTAL Other Expenses	\$ 529.75	
Total for this page	\$ 3,409.29	3410.73
Total for TV pg2	\$ 63.03	
Total for Multi Trip Milage	\$ -	
Total for BusRelatedExpense	\$ 74.25	
TOTAL ALL EXPENSES	\$ 3,472.32	3548.01
LESS ADVANCE	\$ 2,500.00	
TOTAL REIMBURSED	\$ 972.32	1048.01

How does **\$3,548.01** sound? Why did Niroomand attend this meeting? His **Permission to Travel** form provides some answers. As the screen below points out, Niroomand wanted to "Attend [the] Conference."

Employee Name	Farhang Niroomand	Emp
University Classification (circle one)	Faculty	
Traveler's E-Mail Address	farhang.niroomand@usm.edu	Department 1
Phone #	601.266.5028	Department 1
Dates of Travel (include traveling dates)	Beginning Date 14-Mar-06	Ending Date 19-Mar-06
Title of Meeting (Do not Abbreviate)	61st International Atlantic Economic Conference	
Location of Meeting	Berlin, Germany	
Purpose of Travel	Attend conference	

Is that a sufficient reason? Perhaps even Niroomand didn't even think so. Consider the possibility that Niroomand knew he needed further justification to attend this Conference in Berlin. He provided such on his international travel authorization form (see below).

TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION

RECEIVED
JAN 09 2005
OFFICE OF
PURCHASING AND TRAVEL

CHECK ALL APPLICABLE TRAVEL ITEMS REQUESTED HEREIN:

IN-STATE _____ OUT-OF-STATE _____ OUT-OF-COUNTRY TRAVEL ADVANCE _____

(See page 2 for instructions)

EMP. NAME: Farhang Niroomand EMP. TITLE: Assoc. Dean & Prof. EMP. SS#: [REDACTED]

AGENCY: USM DIVISION/BUDGET: _____

DATE (S) OF MEETING/TRIP: March 14-19, 2006 DESTINATION (S): Berlin, Germany

TITLE OF MEETING: 61st International Atlantic Economic Conference

PURPOSE/BENEFITS OF TRIP/MEETING: To present paper, to chair a session and discuss several papers. Faculty development and recruiting students for ELI and the MBA at Southern Miss.

Here is what he listed there:

- Present paper
- chair a session
- discuss several papers
- Faculty development
- recruiting students for ELI
- recruiting students for the MBA [Program] at Southern Miss

The last two of these seem totally bogus. The fourth one, "faculty development," is comical. It seems to us that listing the final three items calls into question the entire trip.

What is Niroomand's job? As these types of reports continue to mount, Mississippi taxpayers deserve an answer to this question. It is our investigators' understanding that the job of Associate Dean of Academic Affairs is a position with responsibilities for things going on inside of the College. Niroomand spends so much time outside of JGH that it's hard to keep up with. CoB Dean Harold Doty has now been signatory on several of Niroomand's travel vouchers and permission to travel forms. Doty is now a big part of this situation.