

Updated! See Below

The Persianization of USM's College of Business

A number of usmnews.net readers have commented that, with the recent announcement that Barry and Laurie Babin are departing USM's College of Business after spring semester 2007, Associate Dean Farhang Niroomand (see below) appears to be attempting to rebuild his power base within the CoB's administrative structure.



Farhang Niroomand

Niroomand, a 1975 graduate of the National University of Iran (B.A.), lost much of his political power in the CoB back in December of 2006, when management professor Stephen Bushardt shepherded a new plan for “de-centralized” faculty evaluations through the College’s December faculty meeting. Since that successful effort by Bushardt, Niroomand’s influence on the CoB’s evaluation/merit raise process has been diminished.

Niroomand is known around the CoB as a bully who punishes dissent and enforces conformity to the desires of CoB administrations, past and present, through back channels/behind the scenes. Sources tell usmnews.net that Niroomand now hopes to use the CoB’s hiring processes to rebuild his influence in CoB governance matters.¹ As a result, we are told that qualification of job candidates is now a secondary consideration in the College, if even that.

Given Niroomand’s dual role as Associate Dean *and* professor of economics, he has been able to exercise his influence in EFIB Department hiring processes in recent years. One of the EFIB’s recent hires, associate professor of economics Akbar

¹ Sources tell usmnews.net that CoB Dean Harold Doty has, up until now, no idea about what Niroomand is planning with regard to using CoB hiring processes to rebuild his (Niroomand’s) power base in the CoB.

Marvasti, came to USM from Pomona College (California), where he held a visiting faculty position, at the beginning of the 2006-07 academic year. Previous reports at usmnews.net have indicated that one member of the EFIB search committee, economics professor Charles Sawyer, told members of the EFIB Department that Marvasti was visiting Pomona College because he was having difficulties with the administration at the University of Houston – Downtown, where he (Marvasti) once held a tenured position as economics professor. Sources have also told usmnews.net



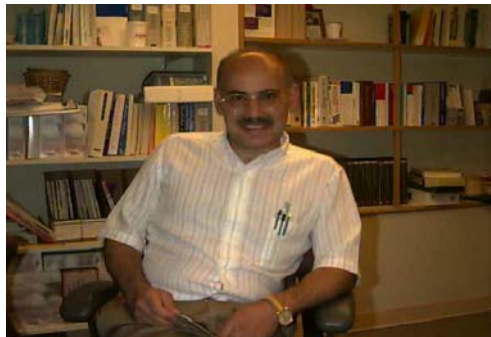
Akbar Marvasti

that Sawyer also reported to faculty in the EFIB Department that Marvasti (see above) failed to receive tenure at East Carolina University in 1990, though Marvasti's vita indicates that he (Marvasti) was serving as a visiting assistant professor of economics at the Greenville, NC – based institution. These inconsistencies aside, in coming to USM's College of Business in the fall of 2006, it is evident that Marvasti gave up the rank of "full professor" to move to Hattiesburg as an "associate professor."

Interestingly, Marvasti, like Niroomand, is also a native of Iran. A graduate of Rasht University in Iran (B.S.), Marvasti also served as a Lieutenant in the Iranian Armed Forces from 1974-1976. According to our sources, Marvasti "lashed out" at his new EFIB colleagues at the end of the infamous "Black Tuesday" faculty governance meeting on 19 September 2006, clearly indicating to those in the room that he had supported the governance coup orchestrated by EFIB Chairman George Carter and Associate Dean Niroomand. As previous reports from usmnews.net have indicated, Niroomand voted three times (at that meeting) to overturn the EFIB's previous choice of a three-person faculty governance committee, as a result of Niroomand's possession of two proxies from USMGC faculty, even though there was no prior announcement that any vote was to occur that day.

Sources tell usmnews.net that Marvasti and Niroomand share some of the same tendencies, and that Marvasti may emerge as the EFIB Department's next Chairman.² Look for more reporting on these issues in the future.

Usmnews.net has recently learned that the CoB has selected a top candidate for the SAIS Directorship vacancy, a position for which CoB Dean Harold Doty has secured up to a \$175,000/year salary line. That candidate is Saeed Roohani, a 1974 graduate (B.S.) of the Institute of Advanced Accounting in Iran.³ Roohani (see below)



Saeed Roohani

currently serves as Chair of the Department of Accounting at Bryant University (Smithfield, RI). Bryant University is a private, liberal arts institution with 3,600 full-time and part-time students. Four hundred of Bryant's 3,600 students are enrolled in Master's level programs (there are no Ph.D. programs at Bryant). Bryant's College of Business offers three AACSB-accredited B.S. degrees, although Accountancy **does not** hold a separate AACSB accreditation.

The Bryant University website states that Roohani received an M.B.A. from Sul Ross State University (TX) in 1978, an M.S. in Accounting from Louisiana State University in 1982, and a D.B.A. in Accounting and Information Systems from Mississippi State University in 1992. The Bryant website also notes the following for Roohani:

Over 50 refereed publications, proceedings, and presented papers.

Combining all of one's refereed journal articles, proceedings and presented papers into a single number is a tactic often used by individuals with little academic accomplishment in the most important area of these three: refereed journal articles.

² Sources also tell usmnews.net that Sawyer stated in the spring of 2006 that the CoB intended to hire "some more Akbars" as existing CoB faculty depart, for one reason or another.

³ The selection of Roohani as the SAIS' top candidate for SAIS Director follows Sawyer's statement indicating that the CoB intended to hire "some more Akbars" as open positions emerge. Like both Niroomand and (Akbar) Marvasti, Roohani is a native of Iran.

This line is reminiscent of former USM SAIS Director Roderick Posey's website claim of having over 100 published articles on issues related to accounting.⁴



Saeed Roohani

Roohani's curriculum vita is also included on the Bryant website. Table 1 below lists the refereed journal articles included on his c.v.:

Table 1
Saeed Roohani's Refereed Journal Articles

<u>Year</u>	<u>Journal Outlet</u>
2005	<i>Journal of Information Systems</i>
2005	<i>Journal of Information Systems</i>
2004	<i>International Journal of Digital Accounting Research</i>
2001	<i>New Review of Applied Expert Systems and Emerging Technologies</i>
2001	<i>Journal of Forensic Accounting: Auditing, Fraud and Taxation</i>
1998	<i>Journal of the Australian & New Zealand Academy of Management</i>
1997	<i>Advances in Accounting</i>
1997	<i>Review of Accounting Information Systems</i>
1997	<i>Accounting Forum</i>
1997	<i>Advances in Accounting Information Systems</i>
1997	<i>Journal of Accounting, Taxation and Finance for Business</i>
1996	<i>Journal of Accounting, Taxation and Finance for Business</i>
1996	<i>Bank Accounting and Finance</i>
1995	<i>Taxation for Accountants</i>
1988	<i>Business and Economic Review</i>
1987	<i>Business and Economic Review</i>

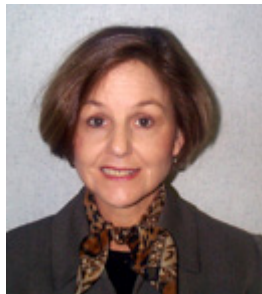
⁴ For more about Posey's website claim of over 100 accounting articles, visit his faculty page on the CoB's website at http://www.usm.edu/business/faculty_staff/accounting/rod_posey.htm. Usmnews.net has also published a report on Posey's claim which can be found in the archives section at www.usmnews.net.

Given the date provided on Roohani's vita – 4/1/2007 – Roohani has published 14 refereed journal articles since the year he was awarded his D.B.A. (that comes to 14 refereed journal articles in about 15 years). These 14 articles constitute **less than 28%** of Roohani's claim to have published "over 50 refereed publications . . ." that we have inserted above.⁵ Sources also inform usmnews.net reporters that the quality of Roohani's research (see Table 1 above) is not stellar, especially for someone who may be offered an annual salary of \$175,000 by USM's College of Business in the near future.⁶ We are told that Roohani may actually earn around \$90,000 (or less than \$100,000) per year now (at Bryant University).

If Roohani is hired as SAIS Director, and if he shares some of the same tendencies as Niroomand, look for the female faculty in SAIS to report some difficulties in dealing with their new Director in the future.⁷ Currently, there are four full-time female faculty in the SAIS, all shown below:



Mary Anderson



Patty Munn



Kuo Lane Chen



Donna Davis

If the experiences of some CoB staff are repeated, then the faculty above will have difficulty serving under both Roohani and Niroomand.⁸

How the Persianization of the CoB Affects Doty Abroad

The report above shows just how the CoB's Associate Dean Farhang Niroomand may be currently attempting to regain his internal power base in the CoB. However, the

⁵ This percentage supports the contention that the combination of all of one's academic work into a single number is often done to obfuscate.

⁶ If Roohani's SAIS Directorship candidacy advances, look for a future report to be available at www.usmnews.net that examines the quality of Roohani's published work.

⁷ Sources indicate that it is no secret in the CoB that Niroomand treats female staff with little or no respect. That same "courtesy" may extend to female faculty. Currently, there are no female faculty in the USM-H portion of the EFIB Department.

⁸ Sources tell us that the CoB's Alternative Learning Coordinator, Melia Hartsfield, is currently on a Leave of Absence that stems from recent confrontations/issues with CoB Associate Dean Farhang Niroomand.

Persianization that seems to be currently taking place *inside* USM's College of Business may not be the only way that Niroomand is using his native contacts to shape the future of CoB Dean D. Harold Doty. A number of reports at usmnews.net have pointed out how Niroomand uses a web of Iranian academics, all associated with the dubious Association for Global Business organization, to “pump up” his (Niroomand's) vita with sketchy scholarly accomplishments.⁹ Through a number of investigative reports at www.usmnews.net, we learned that Niroomand holds the “prestigious” position of **Amigo** in this Association for Global Business. In one report in particular, entitled “Is the Association for Global Business Really an Academic Organization?” (see http://www.usmnews.net/AGB_Academic.pdf), a photo of Niroomand with four of the other five **AGB Amigos** is shown. That photo, along with a caption containing the names of the **AGB Amigos**, also appears in another report, (see http://www.usmnews.net/Special_Report_37.pdf). That picture is reproduced below:

The Amigos of Association for Global Business



From Left to Right:

Professor **Farhang Niroomand** Dean, University of Southern Mississippi; Professor **Roger Doost**, Clemson University; Professor **Massood Samii**, Southern New Hampshire University (*Riding the donkey all the way to Boston!*); Professor **Nader Asgary**, SUNY College at Geneseo; Professor **Hossein Vaaramini**, Elizabethtown College.

⁹ For a number of reports on Niroomand's affiliation with the dubious AGB, see the “Farhang Niroomand” page at usmnews.net, which is located at <http://www.usmnews.net/Niroomand.html>.

Missing in Action!!!! ---President Faramarz Damanpour (Maybe attending the APEC summit in Santiago)

Note that the second-from-the-left **Amigo** is Roger Doost, a native of Iran and a professor of accounting at Clemson University. Not only is a connection between Niroomand, Doost and Roohani likely, Doost may be the hub through which information about Harold Doty from Niroomand to the faculty in Clemson's College of Business and Behavioral Sciences is moving. As usmnews.net readers are aware, Doty is in the running to become the business school Dean at Clemson University, though sources tell usmnews.net that Doty's chances are slipping fast due to information being gathered by Clemson administrators and faculty. The question now is: Just how much of that information is coming from Niroomand?

Look for future reports to delve further into this story.

Update: April 6, 2007

"1984 was a terrible year to be in the market [for an economist] . . . That's the year we hired Farhang." Charles Sawyer, 2006

This report has been of interest to many usmnews.net readers, some of whom have sent in suggestions and materials (such as the quote above) for an update.¹⁰ Since the report above was published, usmnews.net investigators have obtained copies of a series of e-mails relating to the SAIS Directorship search. The first of these is from MgtMkt Chairman Barry Babin (dated 19-Mar-2007):

From: Barry J. Babin [<mailto:barry.babin@usm.edu>]
Sent: Monday, March 19, 2007 1:53 PM
To: stan.lewis@usm.edu; 'Donna Davis'; mary.anderson@usm.edu; Roderick.Posey@usm.edu
Cc: 'Gwen Pate'; 'Farhang Niroomand'
Subject: SAIS Search

Due to my announced departure, the Dean has appointed Farhang to serve as the chair of search committee for the new SAIS Director. All records and applicant materials have been forwarded to Farhang and available through the Dean's office. Copies of the applicant CVs received thus far will be sent to the committee shortly.

¹⁰ One reader reminded us that the Archives section is replete with documents pointing out how the Persianization has been informally used by Niroomand in the past to ensure the desired Louis K. Brandt Award results, as well as to enjoy the fruits of the CoB's budget with "friends" and "associates." These reports are available on the "Farhang Niroomand" page, as well as in other places, at www.usmnews.net.

Thanks

Barry

Barry J. Babin

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Jamais en vain, toujours en vin.

As usmnews.net reported earlier, Babin was, up until this e-mail on 19-Mar-2007, serving as the Chair of the SAIS Directorship Search Committee. This e-mail to the search committee, however, informs the committee members that Babin has stepped down as chair and that he has been replaced as chair by CoB Associate Dean Farhang Niroomand.¹¹ Sources indicate that it was around this time that Saeed Roohani's candidacy got a boost in momentum.

The next day, 20-Mar-2007, Niroomand communicated with the committee for the first time as its chair:

From: Farhang Niroomand [<mailto:Farhang.Niroomand@usm.edu>]

Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2007 3:05 PM

To: 'stan.lewis@usm.edu'; 'Donna Davis'; 'mary.anderson@usm.edu'; 'Roderick.Posey@usm.edu'

Cc: 'Gwen Pate'; 'Farhang Niroomand'; 'Harold Doty'

Subject: RE: SAIS Search

¹¹ Note Babin's e-signature in the e-mail above. Sources tell usmnews.net that this is an example of the kind of "self-promotion" that Babin is famous for around USM's College of Business.

We have six applications and should have a meeting soon to select the top candidates for interview and campus visit. I am not sure about your availability and schedule. I know that Mary will be on the Coast on Wednesday. I teach on T-Th from 9:30 until about 11:00. Is it possible for us to meet on Thursday? There is an AACSB Leadership Team meeting at 2:30. Let's meet either early Thursday morning or late afternoon. Look forward to hearing from you regarding your time preference.

Farhang

As Niroomand's e-mail indicates, the SAIS received only six (6) applications, and, as of 20-Mar-2007, the "top candidates" had not been selected.¹² It is shortly after this point that Roohani emerges as a contender. After a search committee meeting, the top two candidates were selected. On 26-Mar-2007, Niroomand sent the following summary of events to the Search Committee members:

From: Farhang Niroomand [<mailto:Farhang.Niroomand@usm.edu>]
Sent: Monday, March 26, 2007 5:14 PM
To: 'Stan Lewis'; 'Donna Davis'; 'mary.anderson@usm.edu'; 'Roderick.Posey@usm.edu'
Cc: 'Gwen Pate'; 'Harold Doty'; 'Farhang Niroomand'
Subject: FW: SAIS Search

Dear Committee members,

Following our meeting/discussion and your recommendation last Thursday, I have contacted our top two candidates. As you know we are running out of time and the candidate pool is not getting any bigger. Our first candidate (everyone's top choice) is not too far away and I decided to invite him for a campus visit (relatively inexpensive trip). He will be here on Thursday April 5th. Our second choice has agreed to a conference call for 10:00 am on Friday March 30th. Please come to my office a few minutes before 10:00 am on Friday.

I need your help (can one of you volunteer please?) to put an itinerary together for our visitor on April 5th to meet with the faculty, Dean, and the Provost as well as having a presentation to the faculty. Given Our situation we need to move quickly. We have the option of inviting both candidates to campus and then select or go with the top choice since there was a bit of gap between the two and see what the outcome is before going through the expense of inviting the second candidate. Your input is very important. Thank you.

Farhang

¹² The receipt by the SAIS of only six (6) applicants is amazing given that CoB Dean Harold Doty received authorization from USM Provost Jay Grimes and USM President Shelby Thames to offer a salary as high as \$175,000 per year. This result attests to the reputation of USM's College of Business in the world outside of Hattiesburg.

As Niroomand's e-mail above indicates, the search for a new SAIS Director was not going well as of 26-Mar-2007. Only a handful of candidates had applied, or were going to apply, yet Niroomand repeatedly urges the Search Committee to move as fast as possible on the search process. This is yet another example of how the CoB's administration flippantly spends taxpayers' dollars – dollars which may add up to a \$175,000 per year salary line. Why not put the search off for an additional year and conduct it properly next time? No, it's now a race to the finish for the two best candidates from a pool of six.

Niroomand's e-mail above also indicates that the accountants prefer the "other" candidate, the one "not too far away" from Hattiesburg. Sources tell usmnews.net that this candidate is assistant professor Mary Anderson's Ph.D. advisor at Louisiana Tech University. Earlier reports at usmnews.net have pointed out that Anderson is related to former accounting professor Jerold Morgan, and current USM VP for Finance Joe Morgan.

In the 30-Mar-2007 e-mail below from Niroomand, SAIS Interim-Director Stanley X. Lewis is informed that the Search Committee interviewed Roohani by phone on 30-Mar-2007 and decided to extend an invitation to him (Roohani) to visit the CoB on 13-Apr-2007.

From: Farhang Niroomand [<mailto:Farhang.Niroomand@usm.edu>]
Sent: Friday, March 30, 2007 4:22 PM
To: 'Stan Lewis'
Cc: 'Dr. Jay Grimes'; 'Harold Doty'; 'Joe Morgan'
Subject: FW: SAIS Search

Stan,

After search committee telephone interview with one candidate and the recommendation of the committee I have set up the campus visit for our top two candidates. Our first candidate will be on campus on April 5th to meet with the faculty, Dean, and the Provost as well as having a presentation to the SAIS.

The same will apply for the second candidate who will be on campus the following week on Friday April 13. Please inform the faculty (or forward my email if you wish) and encourage them to participate in the interview process. Please make sure that the C.V. and the application of ALL candidates are available for review by the SAIS faculty. My thanks to you and every member of the search committee for the contribution you have provided.

Farhang

As stated in the e-mail above, Roohani's candidacy survived the phone interview, even though Niroomand had stated in his 26-Mar-2007 e-mail that the Search Committee favored Candidate #1 by a wide margin and that a Roohani visit might be a waste of time. (It is interesting that Niroomand copied Joe Morgan in the e-mail above.)

One source informs us that the accountants were working hard to convince this candidate to come to USM, perhaps showing their fear of a Roohani-led administration of the SAIS. As this search process continues, look for further updates from at least one of the news divisions at usmnews.net.