

## The Persianization of the 2007 Merit Raise Process

The results of the 2007 merit raise process have been released, and the data show that former CoB Associate Dean and professor of economics Farhang Niroomand, and associate professor of economics Akbar Marvasti, both natives of Iran, were big winners. The two garnered about \$14,000 in raise monies out of a single A-level journal publication combined. Meanwhile, a number of CoB faculty with multiple A-level publications over the 2004-present raise window (e.g., Talai Osmonbekov, etc.) received insulting raises, ranging from just over \$1,000 to about \$4,500.

### Akbar Marvasti

Marvasti, the subject of numerous reports here at USMNEWS.NET, received a raise of \$8,392. A recent report on USMNEWS.NET entitled “Did Dakhliia and Marvasti Hit the Powerball?” provided the list of journal publications produced (from 2004-Present) by Marvasti.<sup>1</sup> That list is presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**  
**Journal Publications 2004-Present, Akbar Marvasti**

---

The American Economist  
Pacific Economic Review  
Eastern Economic Journal  
*Economic Inquiry*  
Journal of Economic Issues

---

**Note:** Journals listed in blue font represent A-level journals using the CoB’s official journal ranking list.

Talai Osmonbekov, an assistant professor of marketing, received a 2007 merit raise of only \$4,477, and his list of journal publications is significantly more impressive than Marvasti’s. That list (2004-Present), taken from Osmonbekov’s SEDONA vitae (spring 2007), is presented below in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Journal Publications 2004-Present, Talai Osmonbekov**

---

Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing  
*Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*  
*Journal of Business Research*  
Marketing Research  
*Journal of Business Research*  
Industrial Marketing Management  
Journal of Interactive Advertising

---

**Note:** Journals listed in blue font represent A-level journals using the CoB’s official journal ranking list.

Examination of Tables 1 and 2 shows that (1) Osmonbekov published about 1.5 times the number of articles that Marvasti published (2004-Present), and (2) Osmonbekov published 3 times the number of A-level articles that Marvasti published (2004-Present). Throw in the fact that Osmonbekov has had his PhD only 4 years, compared to the 22 years that Marvasti has held his, and the result of this comparison is even more puzzling. It’s almost as if Marvasti’s chair, EFIB Chairman George Carter, exercises complete control over the CoB, while the Interim Dean Alvin Williams, himself a professor of *marketing*, sits idly by while the most productive faculty have their merit raises pillaged.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> For a look at that report, see <http://www.usmnews.net/Did%20Dakhliia%20and%20Marvasti%20Hit%20the%20Powerball.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Some would also say that former CoB Associate Dean Farhang Niroomand’s hand is in the raise pie, diverting monies toward the EFIB’s favorite sons (e.g., Marvasti, Sami Dakhliia, etc.).

## **Farhang Niroomand**

The CoB's former Associate Dean, who resigned his post on 9-April-2007 amid AACSB Maintenance of Accreditation turmoil, was somehow awarded a \$5,733 merit raise in 2007. Although Niroomand historically awarded himself, as AD, the top raises in the College, this raise of just under \$6,000 per year was easily enough to keep Niroomand among the Top 10 raise recipients in 2007. As numerous reports at USMNEWS.NET have shown, Niroomand's research has long since slid to the level of the *Journal of Current Research in Global Business* and the *Journal of Global Business*, two journals affiliated with the dubious Association for Global Business, an organization within which Niroomand holds the prestigious rank of "Amigo." The lesser of these two obscure journals, the *JCRGB*, is edited by none other than Niroomand himself, making it an "unlisted, in-house" outlet.

While the CoB continues to wait for a full explanation from Niroomand as to "why" he resigned in April of 2007, the fact that his 2007 merit raise exceeds that of Osmonbekov, Michael Vest, Franklin Mixon, Sharon Topping, etc. – in some cases by 70% or more – is astonishing.

## **Farooq Malik**

Farooq Malik, the CoB's newest hire in finance, is an interesting case. Malik, a native of Pakistan, came to the CoB's finance group from the University of Southern Mississippi, Gulf Park, where he was employed as an assistant professor of finance. Although Malik holds a PhD in economics, he was declared "Academically Qualified" by portfolio in finance by the CoB's own Donna Davis, in her role as Chair of USM's Academic Council.<sup>3</sup> When USM hired Malik from USM, Malik's salary rose from just under \$75,000 to \$95,000, representing an increase of 27.1%! The hiring of Malik in finance by the EFIB's Carter certainly gives new meaning to former USM President Shelby Thames' favorite phrase, "world class." When you have, at USM, an opening in *finance* and you say that the best person for the position is a USM *economist*, it becomes virtually impossible to claim that your schools and colleges are underfunded.

## **Final Analysis**

Not only do these stories from the CoB's 2007 merit raise process make it seem as though EFIB Chair George Carter, not Interim Dean Alvin Williams, is at the head of the CoB, they make USM's College of Business look completely silly to academics from around the globe. Readers from thousands of miles away are commenting on these issues, and in a not-so-flattering way about CoB administrators. To use Carter's own phrase, the CoB is an institution that is quickly spiraling down, and the world is watching.

---

<sup>3</sup> As expected, CoB administrators see no conflict of interest in this situation. Davis' dual roles of AACSB Assurance of Learning Coordinator and USM's Academic Council Chair do not overlap in any untoward manner that involves the CoB's Maintenance of AACSB Accreditation, at least according to the actions of CoB administrators.