

Top Stories of 2009

by Duane Cobb

Long-time readers of USMNEWS.net are probably aware that I like to provide “Top ___” type lists from time to time. The end of the year is a popular occasion for such a thing. In this three-part series, of which this is Part 3, I am providing my Top 10 news stories of 2009. Let’s get to the list.

3. Farhang Niroomand Heads West – Just like his former boss Harold Doty, the first half of 2009 was good to former CoB associate dean Farhang Niroomand. Even before Doty landed the top b-school position at the University of Texas – Tyler, the news that Niroomand had landed the same position with the University of Houston – Victoria hit the JAG. Never mind that many had not heard of either institution. The word that Niroomand beat Doty to the punch shocked many, and amused some. The story got even more interesting when people stopped to realize that Niroomand confidant and former USM provost, Tim Hudson, now the UH-V president, had more than a lot to do with Niroomand’s ability to move on. Neither Doty nor Niroomand get any glory, in the end, for these moves. They’re just more fodder for the chatter machine.

2. Yosef Bonaparte Mysteriously Fired – Most USMNEWS.net readers learned of the mysterious firing of CoB assistant professor of economics Yosef Bonaparte from George Carter’s mouth. That is, through Carter’s quotes in *Inside Higher Ed* we all learned that Bonaparte was fired by the Lance Nail/Martha Saunders administration during the spring of 2009. Since that report back in the summer of 2009, we’ve all also been waiting for the Gulf Coast-based Bonaparte to clear up some of the details. That hasn’t happened to date, and probably never will. All most are left to do now regarding the situation is keep a close eye on the Forrest County Circuit Court docket.

1. CoB ECO Programs Eliminated, Faculty Moved to CoAL – The decision by the Martha Saunders administration of USM to eliminate the CoB’s economics programs was shocking to many. The accompanying decision to terminate the unit’s nine faculty was mind boggling. That’s what happened in Aug/Sept-09, and it wasn’t until a group of economists, led by Mark Klinedinst, proposed that the five mostly senior professors (Klinedinst, George Carter, William Gunther, Trellis Green, and Edward Nissan) retire in June-2010 so that the four most junior economists (Sami Dakhli, Akbar Marvasti, Daniel Monchuk, and Deniz Gevrek) could continue their USM careers was the original plan altered. And *that* it was, with the four junior profs now set to join USM’s CoAL for the 2010-11 academic year in return for the *promised* (five) retirements. This has been nothing short of a saga, and one that promises to boil over should the five would-be retirees decide to break their agreement this coming summer. Many believe that may happen. Stay tuned.

See you next year.