

**Subject:** Re: IDP

**Date:** Monday, November 16, 2009 10:42 AM

**From:** Cindy Bower <Cindy.Bower@ars.usda.gov>

**To:** "Pantoja, Alberto" <Alberto.Pantoja@ARS.USDA.GOV>

**Cc:** <Janis.Contento@ARS.USDA.GOV>, <Juli.Philibert@ARS.USDA.GOV>

Alberto,

Sorry for your confusion. My "adjusted budget" applies specifically to my lab and is not something official that would require your approval. I am merely utilizing my allotted funds to best serve the interests of the ARS by limiting excessive travel to meetings if my submitted abstract will not be resulting in a peer-reviewed manuscript.

Thank you for the information on RPES and my career. As you must certainly be aware from our multi-day meeting (July 7th-9th, 2009), my professional career is of utmost importance to me.

I was invited to the 2010 Aquaculture America meeting to speak to female aquaculture students about EEO challenges that women face in the workplace. I declined. I hope you will eventually learn to trust my judgment in these matters, since this is surely the outcome you would have wanted.

As for career advancement through RPES, it is not clear from your email if you are aware of the subjective nature of the panel process. I am perhaps the first scientist to read the Research Grade Evaluation Guide (RGEG) manual with sufficient understanding to recognize that the entire process is overwhelming subjective. I discovered that RGEG does not provide any objective, measurable criteria for evaluating a scientist's career progress. The RGEG also lacks objective, measurable criteria for determining a scientist's impact, stature and recognition, nor are there criteria for gaining an accurate assessment of the "person on the job".

I invite you to read the RGEG manual for yourself to verify the truth of my findings. Please feel free to share this information with other panel members at your next RPES meeting. However, I would still like to be

credited with the discovery, since I am (apparently) the first ARS scientist to read, understand, and synthesize the RGEG information sufficiently to recognize that the RPES process contains no objective, measurable criteria. You might also share this information with your colleague, Dr. Eric Jang, who spoke to SARU scientists in September 2008. During his presentation, Dr. Jang admitted that the RPE panel makes a correct determination only about two times out of three. Perhaps my discovery of the subjective nature of the RGEG will help him to understand why there is such a high inaccuracy (33%) in the RPES results he produces.

In closing, I would like to alert you to an ancient poem from India, as retold by John Godfrey Saxe ([http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Blindmen\\_and\\_the\\_Elephant](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Blindmen_and_the_Elephant)), which tasks a committee of blind men to evaluate an elephant by proxy (much as the RPES committee evaluates ARS scientists by asking other people about them, rather than meeting the scientists themselves).

I hope this provided the clarification you were seeking.

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Cindy

On 11/16/09 7:59 AM, "Pantoja, Alberto" <Alberto.Pantoja@ARS.USDA.GOV> wrote:

Cindy

Is not clear from your email if you are aware of the importance of SY participation in professional societies for career development and stature. ARS uses RPES to classify SY's. I recommend visiting the web site for the RPES at <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/rpes/> <<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/rpes/>> . Manual 431.3-ARS explains information which Research Position Evaluation

System (RPES) panelists must have to make fair and equitable classification decisions. Chapter 6 of Manual 431.3-ARS provides information on SY's stature and recognition. Attending professional meetings and making presentation at professional meetings is one of the components scored in RPES. Rejecting invitations to participate in professional meetings to attend elective seminars is probably not the best way to elevate you professional stature and recognition.

Aglearn (<http://www.aglearn.usda.gov/>) provides no cost options in employee development and continuing education, including leadership training. It is unlikely that Aglearn options will conflict with professional meetings as they are web based and most options available 24/7.

I cannot remember seeing your "adjusted budget" for 2010; I assume you refer to an amended ARMPS request for evaluation and approval? Please send me copy of your "adjusted budget " .

Thanks

alberto

**From:** Bower, Cindy  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 14, 2009 3:57 PM  
**To:** Pantoja, Alberto  
**Cc:** Philibert, Juli  
**Subject:** Re: IDP

Alberto,  
I've already made cut-backs in my 2010 budget to accommodate my training needs.

For example, I won't be attending Aquaculture America this year, in a conscious effort to conserve program funds, even though I was an invited speaker. In fact, as a good steward of ARS, I am attending only the most relevant conferences this year with the goal of producing a manuscript for every meeting abstract I submit.

As you are aware, women research scientists in the ARS are not recruited, promoted and/or retained at the same rate as the men scientists, thereby leaving a huge deficit of women at higher GS levels and in the Senior Executive Service. I am preparing myself to help fill the ARS's future need for equality in the workplace. As you pointed out, program relocation costs may occur in 2010, but I have already adjusted my annual budget to reflect these expenditures. I believe it is unfair to place a disproportionate share of the financial burden on me by curtailing my career advancement, especially at a time when women are in such high demand for ARS leadership roles.

Thank you for approving my IDP as written.

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Cindy

On 11/14/09 9:57 AM, "Pantoja, Alberto" <Alberto.Pantoja@ARS.USDA.GOV> wrote:

Cindy

As you know the Aquaculture program will be relocated to an unknown facility before September 2010. The cost of moving the program to the new locality is expected to be significant. Your FY2010 IDP request reflects two multi-day leadership training events out of Alaska. Since funds availability are uncertain until the new site for the Aquaculture program is defined, please indicate which of the two activities you prefer to attend and submit an amended IDP reflecting your preference. Please copy Juli on your reply.

Thanks

alberto

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