

This material is part of a collection that documents the harassment, discrimination, and retaliation perpetrated against Alaska's women research scientists by their supervisor, with full knowledge (and arguably, "tacit approval") of their federal employer, the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS)

From: bower@sfos.uaf.edu
Subject: [Fwd: Re: Jeff Schmitt's Fairbanks visit]
Date: January 21, 2008 9:31:06 PM AKST
To: CKBower@cmug.com
▶ 1 Attachment, 4.8 KB

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: Jeff Schmitt's Fairbanks visit
From: "Brownell, Karen" <Karen.Brownell@ARS.USDA.GOV>
Date: Mon, January 21, 2008 7:26 pm
To: bower@sfos.uaf.edu
Cc: "Frick, Pat" <Pat.Frick@ARS.USDA.GOV>
"Brownell, Karen" <Karen.Brownell@ARS.USDA.GOV>

Cindy,

I was in a training class last week and did not get a chance to respond to your email.

I did not share with Jeff the grievance message on which I was a copy addressee. I did share it with Alan Robinson who is the Chief of the Employee Relations Branch, since grievances come under his jurisdiction. Alan did not share it with Jeff.

I've worked with Jeff for many years and know him fairly well. I'm sure he was not singling you out nor would he ever intentionally publicly humiliate you or anyone. I have found him to be approachable and easy to talk to, and I'm sure he would have been sorry if he left you with an impression of singling you out. I hope you had a chance to talk with him one-on-one while he was there so that you could clarify this with him.

Your grievance is being handled by Dr. Hammond and the employee relations specialist who handles PWA - Jeff is not involved in handling grievances and therefore would not be given access to the contents of your grievance document.

Since I was away last week, I do not know if Dr. Hammond has responded to your grievance at this time. But at least I hope I have put your mind to rest about Jeff's access to your grievance.

Karen Brownell

-----Original Message-----

From: bower@sfos.uaf.edu <bower@sfos.uaf.edu>
To: Brownell, Karen

CC: Frick, Pat
Sent: Thu Jan 17 03:16:06 2008
Subject: Jeff Schmitt's Fairbanks visit

Karen Brownell, Director of Human Resources

16 Jan 2008

Karen,

I was distressed today by the following incident and I see no safe way to discuss this with your employee Jeff Schmitt, who is currently here in Fairbanks presenting a Crucial Conversations training to our ARS Unit. Due to time constraints, few individual interactions occurred during this morning's presentation. However, at one point, Jeff looked directly at me and stated that there were many potential research directions for working with fish by-products, (a concept I'd presented the previous day), but my job was to perform the research specified by the National Program Staff. Needless to say, I was stunned to be singled out in this manner.

Certainly, since NPS sets the research direction for the ARS, Jeff's statement was generically true and applicable to every scientist in the room. However, I suddenly realized that Jeff had touched upon one of the topics in my informal grievance (27 Dec 2007), in which you had been cc'ed. My grievance concerned my belief that the Research Leader, Alberto Pantoja, had been damaging my research program by rejecting my proposals. When confronted, the RL consistently blamed the NPS, although no documentation was ever provided.

I hope you can understand my concern. I do not believe that Jeff's actions were random, and I'm trying to determine what information he had access to. I freely cc'ed my grievance to you in Human Resources, and I trust your wisdom to disseminate the contents wisely, as needed. If you chose to share my grievance with Jeff, then you had my tacit permission.

However, I am greatly concerned that Jeff may have been exposed to only the RL's side of this very complex issue, ("stories" provided to him since his arrival here), and then acted on that misinformation in a manner that was harmful to me. Jeff Schmitt, (in a group including my supervisor, peers, support personnel, and subordinates), conveyed the impression that I (specifically) should learn to follow Agency directives. Since I was given no opportunity to rebut Jeff's misconception, I was left feeling publicly humiliated.

This is the breach of trust I'm having so much trouble reconciling tonight.

I recognize that you are very busy in your duties, and that it might even

be considered presumptuous of me to contact you directly. However, if possible, I would appreciate a reply in this matter. The situation here in Fairbanks is so far out of control (for all the women currently under attack by the RL, not just for me) that I worry about any form of misrepresentation that might delay or divert relief. Thank you for whatever you can do.

Cindy

Cindy Bower
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