

***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, Cindy" <Cindy.Bower@ARS.USDA.GOV>

Subject: Performance Appraisal

Date: Wed, November 5, 2008 7:18 pm

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

Cc: "Matteri, Robert" <Robert.Matteri@ARS.USDA.GOV>,"Contento, Janis" <Janis.Contento@ARS.USDA.GOV>,"McLellan, Don" <Don.McLellan@ARS.USDA.GOV>

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Alberto,

This email is to confirm that we met today to discuss my annual Performance Appraisal. I have arrived at the conclusion that communication between us is best conducted through written forums, since you were unable to directly address any of my queries on your first (or second) attempts. Communication is an essential skill in leadership and it has been a source of great frustration that so many of our interactions place the burden of communication on me in order to advance the discussion and achieve understanding (e.g. I must restate concepts in multiple ways, as well as redirect conversations away from tangents and back to the main topic).

In a July 18th email to you, as a follow-up to my mid-year review, I confirmed that I had provided all the information you requested and then had asked for feedback concerning any deficiencies in my performance. You had supplied none. I then had asked for your comments concerning issues that would prevent me from achieving an "Exceeds" rating. You gave no suggestions. Consequently, I am disappointed in the performance appraisal rating you gave me today, specifically Elements 3 and 4.

I believe that my extra accomplishments in Element 3 (Resource Management) are understandable and have clear value to the ARS locally as well as nationally. We simply disagree, so I will not address that issue here. However, it concerns me that my extra accomplishments in Element 4 (Represents Program and Personal Development) did not register as worthwhile (i.e. counting towards a rating of Exceeds). In my 2008 Performance Plan I was required to give one presentation to scientific peers, (I gave four) and one to customer groups, (I gave two). I surmise that these activities are not valued by you or the ARS. I noted that I had reviewed manuscripts for three different journals this year, but you indicated that reviewing manuscripts was part of my assigned duties. (We both checked my performance plan and did not find it, yet you insisted that it was implied in the language that was present.) I also expended great effort (using personal time) to take 27.5 credit hours of AgLearn courses that were directly relevant to our ARS Unit. However, my efforts in this area were also discounted. I then (repeatedly) asked for suggestions concerning how I might exceed in Element 4, and you (repeatedly) responded by giving examples of how I could exceed in Element 1 by contributing to the upcoming OSQR project review process for aquaculture (NP 106). I was eventually successful in having you list two methods for exceeding in Element 4: organize a symposium, or become an editor for a journal. I believe there must be other ways to demonstrate an Exceeds and I am disappointed that you chose to withhold that information from me twice, (July 18th at the mid-year review and again today when I repeated my request).

According to P&P 418.3 (ARS Performance Appraisal System), it is your job to provide "objective measures" for gauging my performance. Objective measures include:

- quality - how well a thing is done
- quantity - how much or how many
- timeliness - how fast or by when
- method - following procedures, policies, technical requirements
- monetary savings in human resources and time

It is my hope that my upcoming performance plan will provide such measures so that the knowledge of how I can exceed Fully Successful will not be a secret that you share only with favored scientists in your Unit.

Finally, it was genuinely disturbing today when you indicated that you saw no conflict of interest in serving as the Rating Official on my performance appraisal (with Dr. Matteri serving as the Reviewing Official), even though I have filed a formal EEO complaint with the USDA listing both you and Dr. Matteri by name. I was also distraught to discover that you had scheduled annual-appraisal appointments to be held today for every female Cat 1 (research) scientist in the unit, even though all the male scientists had received their appraisals (without appointments) several days earlier. Your disparate treatment of the men and women in our unit continues to be a major source of stress for me.

Sincerely,  
Cindy

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**Attachments:**

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