

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)

Subject: Memorandum of Expectation

Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2010 1:12 PM

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

To: <Alberto.Pantoja@ars.usda.gov>

Cc: <Andrew.Hammond@ars.usda.gov>, <Robert.Matteri@ars.usda.gov>, <Maureen.Whalen@ars.usda.gov>

February 23, 2010

SUBJECT: Expectation on Following U.S. Civil Rights Laws and Ceasing Your Ongoing Harassment Against Women Scientists

TO: Dr. Alberto Pantoja, Research Leader
Agricultural Research Service
Subarctic Agricultural Research Unit
Fairbanks, Alaska

FROM: Dr. Cindy Bower, Research Food Technologist
Agricultural Research Service
Subarctic Agricultural Research Unit
Fairbanks, Alaska

Alberto,

The purpose of this email is to provide you with the expectation to follow U.S. Civil Rights laws and to cease your ongoing harassment against me.

In recent years, you have committed numerous acts of unlawful discrimination against the women research scientists in your unit (e.g. delegating leadership opportunities only to the men, denying women equal program-building resources, allowing only temporary technicians for women, etc...). The first complaints were filed by the other women scientists starting in 2004, and I filed my first grievance in 2007. However, after filing six administrative grievances I realized that the Pacific West Area was not willing to address civil rights violations, so I filed an informal EEO complaint (with ARS), a formal EEO complaint (with USDA), and finally a complaint with EEOC in January 2009.

Now (a year later), one of Alaska's female research scientists has quit and one has been removed from your supervisory control, leaving me as the sole target of your retaliation, with no relief in sight (i.e. no EEOC Hearing scheduled). You have denied all of my meeting abstracts and travel since October 2009, which is a serious blow to my career. You recently threatened (in writing) to fail me in a critical element of my performance plan if I did not engage in what I (and most, if not all journals) consider to be unethical authorship behavior. You neglected to tell the aquaculture scientists that you'd used our research funds to purchase a vehicle for Kodiak until the vehicle had arrived (several months after its purchase) and then you denied any knowledge of the program's upcoming move to Kodiak. You also excessively complicated (whether directly or through your staff) every issue I brought to your attention (e.g. something as simple as crediting ARS for a student's science fair project), even though you are my supervisor and I am required to inform you of these matters.

Your harassing and destructive management style was astutely described by Dr. Lori Winton (EEOC # 551-2009-00076x) as "Death by 1000 cuts".

Now, I have discovered once again that you are subverting my authority (as ADODR of Specific Cooperative Agreement #58-5341-8-411). As you recall, you previously interfered with that SCA by recommending a deadline extension to Dr. Andres Soria without consulting me (or even having the professional courtesy to notify me of your action). As usual, I was the last person to be informed. Now I've been told (by Dr. Soria, not by you) that you met with him last week and promised him \$20,000 that was "in the pipeline" so he could continue his gasification research.

I have always specified \$2,500 in my communications with him (and with you), so I'm not certain where Dr. Soria got the \$20,000 figure. Perhaps as fundholder for IPM, you were intending to encumber the additional \$17,500 from your entomology budget. In any case, I am still the ADODR of the gasification project until August 2010, and I resent that you are making promises on my behalf, and then not even mentioning them to me. As you are aware, gasification is NOT in my current 5-year CRIS plan. My gasification project with Dr. Soria achieved a successful conclusion. I extensively discussed this with you while justifying the funding one more paper (about greenhouse design) using \$2,500 drawn from my own research and travel budget. As you well realize, this project was important to bolster my upcoming RPES write up, and your unnecessary delay ensures that the key paper (highlighting my research creativity and innovation in proposing this project) will not be available to the RPES panel.

Since you have been unable to restrain yourself from devaluing my research programs, damaging my professional credibility, and diminishing my impact, I request that you ask to be removed as my supervisor. It is clear that neither of us is satisfied with the current arrangement and this will continue to be an untenable situation until key ARS administrators (and Human Resources personnel) choose to adopt and follow U.S. Civil Rights laws, which prohibit unlawful discrimination against women.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions regarding U.S. Civil Rights Laws and Harassment of Women.

Because you are currently my supervisor, it is my sincere hope that this memorandum impresses upon you the expectations for your performance as a Federal employee in following U.S. Civil Rights Laws. It is also to inform you that any further instance of you not following U.S. Civil Rights Law represents unlawful performance in your role as a supervisor. The Employee Assistance Program can help in a variety of situations, especially since the women scientists under your supervision have (on more than one occasion) expressed fear of becoming victims of workplace violence when you are angry. If you believe that the EAP can be of assistance, you are urged to call the EAP office at 1-800-222-0364.

If you have any questions or require further clarification, please contact me at 1-907-474-6732 during normal business hours. As usual, if you choose to contact me in person, come with an escort (as has been required since 2008) to assure my general safety in your presence.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email. Thank you.

Cindy