

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 = Request for RPES reevaluation

Andy Hammond, Acting Area Director
(Andrew.Hammond@ars.usda.gov)

07 January 2008

Dr. Hammond,

According to guidance from the ARS website, (<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/rpes/faq-page.htm>), I am entitled to file an RPES grievance directly with the Area Director to request that my position be scheduled for review by the next available panel for my peer group.

The "Checklist for Submitting Case Write-ups to the Area Office", (found on page one of the edited copy of my RPES sent from Bob Matteri to Alberto Pantoja on September 5, 2007), contained bulleted point #5, under "Drafts", which requires a signed cover memo from the RL, and clearly states, "any unique aspects of the case should also be conveyed". I strongly suspect that the following "unique aspects" of my case were not properly conveyed:

1.) ARS engaged in misconduct during my initial hiring

I was offered this job at lower GS and salary levels than the advertised position (GS 13/14) through misconduct of the RL and RPES panel (Exhibits 1 - 8)

2.) The RL established a hostile environment for women scientists in Alaska

I am the third of three female research scientists to file a grievance concerning the career-damaging events that have been occurring within the ARS in Alaska

3.) My research program was subjected to interference

CRIS-relevant projects were disallowed and collaborations were curtailed (Exhibits 9, 10, 11)

4.) I was denied mentoring and other career building opportunities

I am expected to function as an integral, contributing member of a "team" that actively excludes me (Exhibits 12, 13, 14)

5.) My authority has been undermined and I have been unfairly devalued

My career advancement is being intentionally limited by ARS supervisory personnel (Exhibits 15, 16)

6.) The RPE System, by design, does not evaluate all scientists fairly

The restrictive format of the RPES write-up excludes pertinent information and perpetuates societal biases (Exhibit 17)

7.) I currently meet or exceed written ARS criteria for GS 13

I was hired as a GS 12 level scientist, despite qualifications that clearly met GS 13 status, therefore my current classification should rightfully be GS 13 (Exhibit 19)

8.) RPES panels should not unwittingly fulfill the goals of ARS supervisory personnel who are engaging in EEO-prohibited activities to damage the stature of their subordinates

Because of the egregious nature of the (documented) wrongdoing by ARS supervisory personnel, I am requesting a review of my recent RPES results, so that I might be fairly evaluated on the range of research projects that I have successfully accomplished despite the supervisory constraints that have been levied against me. Additionally, I request a copy of the signed cover memo (AD 332) accompanying my case write-up from the RL to verify that no prejudicial information was included on the form. I look forward to hearing back from you with an equitable solution that proves satisfactory to us both.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Bower
Research Food Technologist
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Fairbanks, AK

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Legend for attached Exhibits

- Exhibit 1. Timeline detailing misconduct of ARS personnel during hiring process
- Exhibit 2. Vacancy Announcement offering a GS 13/14 position, (NOT GS 12)
- Exhibit 3. Handwritten SF-52 with reduced Grade (GS 12) and salary (\$56,425)
- Exhibit 4. Panel results (using GS 13/14 position description) assigning GS 12
- Exhibit 5. New Vacancy Announcement, opened AFTER the RPES Panel meeting
- Exhibit 6. ARS Recognition of "Superior Qualifications" suggesting salary of \$64,980
- Exhibit 7. Justification of \$64,980 based on US Dept. of Labor statistics for Alaska
- Exhibit 8. SF-52 with reduced Grade (GS 12) and salary (\$56,425)
- Exhibit 9. Ruminant SCA, proposed to and rejected by the RL
- Exhibit 10. Soils SCA, proposed with my name on it, but approved by RL without it
- Exhibit 11. Salmon oil (model system) collaboration, proposed to and rejected by RL
- Exhibit 12. Narrative describing RL's attempt to weaken impact of my RPES write-up
- Exhibit 13. Excluded from AAAS session organized and chaired by ARS co-worker
- Exhibit 14. Excluded from organization committee of upcoming By-Products Symposium
- Exhibit 15. Narrative describing RL's attempts to discredit me
- Exhibit 16. Narrative describing inappropriately low status accorded by Lead Scientist
- Exhibit 17. Narrative describing subjectivity and biases inherent within RPES
- Exhibit 18. References to ARS guidelines for assigning first author credit
- Exhibit 19. Narrative describing my stature and qualifications as a GS 13 level scientist
- Exhibit 20. RPES Evaluation Criteria (factor and level definitions)