



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

JUL 02 2009

The Honorable William E. Reukauf
Acting Special Counsel
U.S. Office of Special Counsel
1730 M Street, N.W., Suite 218
Washington, DC 20036-4505

Dear Mr. Reukauf:

Pursuant to your letter of February 25, 2009, referring a whistleblower disclosure (OSC File No. DI-09-0428) for investigation, I forwarded your referral to the Office of Inspector General for the Department of the Interior. The Office of Inspector General has completed the investigation, and I am enclosing a copy of the report as requested by your office. Based on the report's findings, no further actions by the Department are warranted with respect to the immediate complaint.

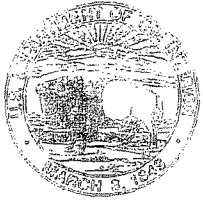
If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Ms. Mary Kendall, Acting Inspector General, at (202) 208-5745 or Mr. Arthur E. Gary, Deputy Solicitor, at (202) 208-4722.

Sincerely,

Pam Haze
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Budget and Business Management

Enclosure

cc: Acting Inspector General Mary Kendall
Deputy Solicitor Arthur E. Gary



United States Department of the Interior
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
Washington, DC 20240

JUN 16 2009

Memorandum

To: Secretary Salazar

From: Mary Kendall *Mary Kendall*
Acting Inspector General

Subject: OSC #DI-09-0428 Whistleblower Complaint Regarding DOIU

We have completed our investigation regarding a whistleblower disclosure alleging that employees of the U.S. Department of the Interior University (DOIU), Leadership and Performance Division, Government-wide Acquisition Management Intern Program (GAMIP) openly engaged in cheating while completing several required on-line courses.

We found that the whistleblower was not terminated for disclosing the cheating but for creating a hostile work environment. Her removal resulted from several confrontations she had with interns at the Department of Defense (DOD). We further found that several GAMIP interns admitted sharing copies of the on-line questions and answers, and that two interns claimed the complainant supplied them the copies.

Should you need additional information concerning this matter, you may contact me at (202) 208-5745 or your staff may contact John Dupuy, Assistant Inspector General for Investigations at (202) 208-5351.

Attachment



Investigative Report of Lynn McPheeters



United States Department of the Interior
Office of Inspector General

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case Title McPheeters, Lynn	Case Number PI-PI-09-0304-I
Reporting Office Program Integrity Division	Report Date June 15, 2009
Report Subject Closing Report of Investigation	



SYNOPSIS

We initiated this investigation at the request of Secretary of the Department of the Interior, Ken Salazar, who asked us to review a whistleblower disclosure allegation made to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) by LaRone President, a former Department of the Interior (DOI) intern. President alleged that as a result of disclosing widespread cheating during online course exams by her fellow interns with the Government-wide Acquisition Management Intern Program (GAMIP) at DOI University's (DOIU) Leadership and Performance Division, her employment as an intern was terminated on October 3, 2008.

We determined that President was not terminated due to disclosing the cheating but for creating a hostile work environment. Her removal resulted from several confrontations she had with interns at the Department of Defense (DOD). We further determined that several GAMIP interns cheated on the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) online course exams, specifically Acquisition 101 and 201A. Interns we interviewed admitted to sharing copies of the online exams, and two interns claimed that President supplied them with online questions and answers. Finally, we found that DAU had a general student academic policy that did not address or prohibit the sharing of online course exams/material.

DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION

On February 25, 2009, the OSC referred this complaint to the Secretary of the Interior for investigation (**Attachment 1**). The complainant, LaRone President, alleged that her employment with DOI was terminated as a result of her disclosure that fellow interns were cheating during DAU online exams.

Reporting Official/Title Steven A. Shillingford / Investigator, Program Integrity Division	Signature 
Approving Official/Title Alan F. Boehm / Director, Program Integrity Division	Signature 
Authentication Number: F86A6F8E94EEC301EDB4B80720D59566	

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01-002 (06/09)

We began our investigation by interviewing Robert Foye, Intern Program Manager, DOI University (**Attachment 2**). Foye stated that he hired 26 interns for DOI's Government-wide Acquisition Management Program, which began on June 23, 2008. He said President did extremely well during the interviewing process, appeared to be very smart and a perfect fit for the organization. However, within a week, behavioral problems arose. Foye said President used profanity toward several of her fellow interns in the computer lab at DOI headquarters. Foye said he asked President to monitor 12 of her fellow interns in the computer lab while he took 14 other interns to the seventh floor for a separate project. While upstairs, an incident occurred between President and some of the other interns where President "kind of went off on some of the interns downstairs in the computer lab."

In a memorandum dated July 31, 2008, Foye documented an incident where President was reportedly rude to one of her fellow interns (**Attachment 3**). President was allegedly "lamenting out loud about how she could not stand the 'people' who sit in the front of the class, how they think they are smarter than everyone else, how their professional experience does not warrant them thinking they are better than anyone, how they could never be qualified to be her supervisor, how she didn't care about anyone in the program because she wasn't there to 'make friends', and the program participants couldn't 'do anything for her,'" according to the document. An intern who overheard President's comments took personal offense and brought the situation to Foye's attention. Foye counseled both interns on teamwork and respecting one another.

In a memorandum dated August 26, 2008, Foye documented an incident where President and intern Kenneth Gipson got into a heated altercation near a Washington, D.C. metro station (**Attachment 4**). The argument was over the earlier computer lab incident. Gipson confronted President on her attitude toward him since their confrontation at DOI. President claimed that Gipson had put his finger in her face and she threatened to seek a restraining order. Gipson wrote an e-mail explaining his side of the argument (**Attachment 5**). He said he had approached President to speak with her about her behavior toward her fellow interns. Gipson stated that, on a daily basis, President would not speak to them even when spoken to. Foye investigated the incident by interviewing the other interns that were there during the altercation. Foye then counseled President and Gipson on teamwork and respecting one another. According to Foye, both agreed to treat each other with respect in the future.

Foye related that by mid July 2008, President and the other interns had completed the DOIU orientation and were being assigned to various government agencies. President was assigned to DOD's Arlington, Virginia office along with several other interns. In late September, Foye learned that the behavioral problems involving President had carried over to DOD (**Attachment 6**). Foye received an e-mail from Maria Jose Vant Hof, DOIU intern, dated September 23, 2008, which related complaints about an altercation she had with President while at DOD. On September 24, 2008, President wrote an e-mail to Foye expressing her dissatisfaction with her fellow interns and how assignments within their group were distributed (**Attachment 7**). Foye received other e-mails on September 24, 2008, from DOIU interns Wendi Lott and Aseia Chaudhry (**Attachment 8**). The e-mails stated that President was difficult to work with, unpredictable in her attitude, and causing conflict within their group at DOD.

On September 25, 2008, DOIU intern Isaac Bellamy wrote a letter to Foye (**Attachment 9**). The letter stated, "Offensive, hostile and aggressive are just a few of the terms that can be used to describe the type of environment that I have experienced while working with LaRone." The intern's letter further depicted numerous conflicts President was allegedly having within the DOD group and the stress it was inflicting on the interns since their assignment to DOD. As the conflicts, e-mails, and complaints

mounted, Foye called President to his office on September 25, 2008. Foye stated that his intent was to inform President that her behavior at DOD had to change or she would be terminated from the intern program (**Attachment 10**). President was given a written notice of disciplinary action for her behavior toward her fellow interns and encouraged to take advantage of professional counseling. According to Foye, toward the end of the meeting, President alleged that several of her fellow interns were cheating during DAU online course exams. Foye stated that President would not identify the interns who were cheating and would only say, "You'll hear from EEO, I've already told them." Foye advised Lynn McPheeters, President, DOI University, of the allegations and interviewed the interns within President's group, all of whom denied the allegations. Foye then documented President's assertions in a memorandum (**Attachment 11**).

Both McPheeters and Foye stated that despite the problems they had with President and her attitude, they were still willing to work with her (**Attachment 12**). McPheeters stated that over the 2 to 3-month period, she and Foye had several discussions with President, two of which McPheeters was directly involved. McPheeters said the discussions were an effort to understand the problems President was having with her fellow interns and to "try to find some kind of resolution that was beneficial to Ms. President and the program." McPheeters said she even told President that she would work with her by providing some feedback, coaching, and possibly an independent mediator to work on the issues President was having with her fellow interns. However, sometime between September 26, 2008, and October 2, 2008, Foye received a direct request from Melanie Alston, DOD Division Director, asking that President be removed from their offices in Arlington, Virginia (See Attachment 2). Alston was President's onsite supervisor and claimed that President's lack of professionalism was creating a hostile work environment and was the reason for removal (**Attachment 13**).

On October 3, 2008, President was terminated as a contract specialist with the Intern Program (**Attachment 14**). Four days later, President wrote an e-mail to Jonathan Higgins, an employee with DAU (**Attachment 15**). Containing the subject line of the e-mail was, "Cheating on Certification Exams at DOD by Several DOD Interns." President stated in her e-mail to Higgins that she had repeatedly made attempts to report cheating on ACQ101 and ACQ201 to McPheeters and Foye, but they refused to investigate. President further stated in her e-mail, "Because I was terminated in retaliation of reporting this unethical and violation of integrity issue, it appears to be broader than I expected. At least 7 individuals are involved and should not be given certification to hold government warrants nor should they be granted security clearances based on their involvement."

We interviewed President who stated that she was terminated from the intern program for "divulging that several of my colleagues, who were interns in the government-wide Acquisitions Management Intern Program, were cheating on certification exams" (**Attachment 16**). President claimed that she was repeatedly asked for copies of her completed online questions. She said that after repeatedly lying to her fellow interns, saying that she had not completed the exams, she finally told one of them, "I can't give you copies. It's wrong." After President refused to supply copies of the online test, President claimed the interns still openly distributed copies of the tests they received from another intern amongst themselves. When asked if she ever told anyone about the cheating prior to her disclosure to Foye on September 25, 2008, President stated, "I didn't speak to anyone about it. I kept it to myself."

We interviewed President's supervisors at DOD, all of whom said she had difficulty working with others. Melanie Alston, the DOD Division Director who worked with President, said President was very smart and willing to take on a leadership role, but as time progressed, she was not working well with the other interns (**Attachment 17**). According to Alston, because President was doing well,

catching onto assignments faster than the other interns, she looked to President to help the other interns where needed. She recalled President telling her that she was not willing to help the others because it was not her job to do so. Alston identified this as a problem because the world of acquisition often involved working as a team to get difficult projects accomplished in a timely manner. Alston said the decision to remove President from their facility was due to President creating a hostile work environment.

Michael Murtha, DOD Supervisory Contracting Officer, explained that he directly supervised four DOI interns, including President, for approximately 2 weeks, and part of his job was to teach them how to work together and share the knowledge taught to them (**Attachment 18**). One intern, Maria Vant Hof, lacked computer skills, he said, so he relied on the other interns to assist him with Vant Hof's computer problems. According to Murtha, President appeared to feel that by not helping Vant Hof, President would do better. Murtha further stated that President "really was not good working with her peers," so "that would really make it tough for her to really become successful."

Lauren Uher, DOD Deputy Division Director, said she and her supervisor, Frances Sullivan, a DOD Director, had a meeting with McPheeters and Foye about another office issue but also discussed President (**Attachment 19**). Uher said Foye told her that President had gotten in a verbal altercation with one of the other interns. She said DOD made the determination that President had been creating a hostile work environment and that it would be good for her to leave for a period of time. Uher insisted that the decision to remove President was only temporary.

In addition to interviewing President's DOD supervisors, we also spoke with several interns who interacted with President. We questioned them about disputes involving President as well as the alleged cheating. Aseia Chaudhry, a DOIU intern, stated that she was part of the DOD rotation with President but was not part of her group (**Attachment 20**). Chaudhry said President would "yell at us out of nowhere." She explained, "One time, I was passing by her computer, I was talking to another coworker right next to her, and she believed that I was looking at her computer screen, because she was away. She walked in, and she accused me of looking at her screen. And she started yelling at me, 'What are you looking at? Do you need anything?'" She described President as "unprofessional."

Chaudhry admitted that she received the questions and answers to online acquisition exams from Chris Henshaw, another DOIU intern. She also indicated that President asked her for the online test questions and answers. Chaudhry said President told her she wanted the material to give to "Rodney." Chaudhry stated that there were two Rodney's in the DOIU program, Rodney Brooks and Rodney Walters.

Rodney Brooks told us he met President during their initial orientation at the DOIU in late June 2008 (**Attachment 21**). Shortly after being fired, he said, President called him to vent, telling him that she had been "let go for creating a hostile work environment or something to that nature." President admitted to Brooks that there were problems between herself and the other interns because she was being asked to train her fellow interns and she did not feel she should have to do that. Brooks said President told him that other interns, specifically Aseia Chaudhry, had asked her for the questions and answers on the acquisition exams, but President refused to give them to her. He admitted that he received the questions and answers to Acquisition 201A from President, stating, "She provided [the questions and answers] to her friends," referring to himself, Alfredia Allen, and Rodney Walters.

Rodney Walters said he heard from hearsay that President was terminated because of "the ruckus she was causing over at DOD" (**Attachment 22**). Walters admitted that President sent him the questions

and answers to Acquisition 101 and 201A. He said she knew he was coming up on the deadline to submit his online answers and he asked her, "Hey, is there anything you can share, to help me?" President sent him the summaries and answers to the online exams via e-mail, he said.

Alfredia Allen, a DOIU intern who worked with President, said she met President in late June 2008 through the DOIU intern program (**Attachment 23**). Allen initially claimed no knowledge of allegations made by President that her fellow interns were cheating during online exams or receiving questions and answers from President. Later, however, Allen admitted receiving the material via e-mail from President. Allen said President sent the exams "to show what was happening, just to show what was going on." Several attempts to clarify Allen's statements were unsuccessful, but under further questioning, Allen admitted, "I think it was [receiving the questions and answers] to show me possibly what they did, and it could have been for me to use."

Henshaw said that he was part of the DOD rotation with President but was not part of her group (**Attachment 24 and 25**). Henshaw stated that he had heard rumors of trouble between President and her fellow team members and had been told by other interns of the confrontations President had with Aseia Chaudhry and Maria Vant Hof. When President was terminated from the program, he said, Henshaw's DOD supervisor told the team members that President's attitude and hostility toward her fellow interns was what resulted in her dismissal. Henshaw said that from his interaction with President, he was not surprised that she was terminated. He said she was "very assertive in what she felt was, you know, the correct answer, didn't really listen to other people's opinions...." According to Henshaw, during Contract 110 at DOIU, he was on President's team and had difficulty working with her. "You know, it was just kind of like, 'well, I can't even talk here because, you know, whatever I say you're going to shoot down and think that you're right, and that's that,'" he said. "So that was my experience with it."

Henshaw admitted that he gave the online questions and answers for Acquisition 201A to Chaudhry.

We re-interviewed President on April 8, 2009. Prior to the start of the interview, President's attorney requested a few minutes for his client to clear up a possible discrepancy or omission from her initial March 27, 2009 statement to the OIG (**Attachment 26**). Later, President explained that she had made a mistake when she said she had told no one about the cheating until her disclosure to McPheeters and Foye in late September 2008. President said she had actually given Rodney Brooks and Alfredia Allen exam answers prior to her disclosure to McPheeters and Foye. She claimed that she only gave them the exam answers as evidence that the other interns were cheating. President claimed that the reason she did not disclose this during her initial interview with the DOI-OIG was for fear that Brooks and Allen might be retaliated against. She also claimed that the reason she did not give this same evidence to DOD supervisors was because she felt they would not believe her.

ATTACHMENTS

1. U.S. Office of Special Counsel Complaint.
2. Robert Foye transcript – March 23, 2009
3. July 31, 2008, Memorandum for the record by Robert Foye.
4. August 26, 2008, Memorandum for the record by Robert Foye.
5. September 26, 2008, Kenneth Gipson e-mail.
6. September 23, 2008, Maria Jose Vant Hof e-mail.
7. September 24, 2008, LaRone President e-mail.

8. September 24, 2008, Wendi Lott and Aseia Chaudhry e-mails.
9. September 25, 2008, Isaac J. Bellamy letter.
10. September 26, 2008, Disciplinary Warning to LaRone President.
11. September 26, 2008, Memorandum for the record by Robert Foye.
12. Lynn McPheeters IAR - May 13, 2009.
13. October 3, 2008, Melanie Alston e-mail.
14. October 3, 2008, Termination Letter to LaRone President.
15. October 7, 2008, LaRone President e-mail.
16. LaRone President Transcript – March 27, 2009.
17. Melanie Alston, IAR - April 2, 2009.
18. Michael Murtha, IAR - March 31, 2009.
19. Lauren Uher, IAR – March 31, 2009.
20. Aseia Chaudhry transcript – April 2, 2009.
21. Rodney Brooks, IAR – April 3, 2009.
22. Rodney Walters, IAR – April 6, 2009.
23. Alfredia Allen, IAR – April 6, 2009.
24. Chris Henshaw transcript - April 1, 2009.
25. Chris Henshaw transcript - April 2, 2009.
26. LaRone President, IAR – April 8, 2009.

1



U.S. OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL
1730 M Street, N.W., Suite 218
Washington, D.C. 20036-4505
202-254-3600

4420

February 25, 2009

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: OSC File No. DI-09-0428

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Pursuant to my responsibilities as Special Counsel, I am referring to you a whistleblower disclosure alleging that employees in the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), Department of the Interior University (DOIU), Leadership and Performance Division, Government-wide Acquisition Management Intern Program (GAMIP) openly engaged in cheating in completing several required on-line courses. The whistleblower, LaRone President, was an intern in the program from June 22, 2008, until October 6, 2008, and has consented to the release of her name.¹

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is authorized by law to receive disclosures of information from federal employees alleging violations of law, rule, or regulation, gross mismanagement, gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety. 5 U.S.C. § 1213(a) and (b). As Special Counsel, if I find, on the basis of the information disclosed, that there is a substantial likelihood that one of these conditions exists, I am required to advise the appropriate agency head of my findings, and the agency head is required to conduct an investigation of the allegations and prepare a report. 5 U.S.C. § 1213(c) and (g).

As stated on the DOIU website, GAMIP "is a three-year full-time program designed to employ federal government Contract Specialists and to develop them into procurement professionals and government business leaders of the future."² Following several weeks of on-site orientation, GAMIP Interns spend two years completing four to six month rotational assignments in sponsoring departments and agencies. After successfully completing their rotational assignments, each intern completes a year-long apprenticeship with one of the sponsoring agencies.

¹ Ms. President may be contacted through her attorney, Cary Devorsetz, Esq., Alderman, Devorsetz & Hora, 1025 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 615, Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 969-8220.

² U.S. Department of Interior University (DOIU) Home Page, Feb. 2009. U.S. Dept. of the Interior. 18 Feb. 2009 <<http://www.doi.gov/gamip.html>>.

According to the whistleblower, a class of 25 individuals, Ms. President among them, began their GAMIP Internship on June 22, 2008. In accordance with the terms of the program, the interns attended an orientation program at DOIU for several weeks prior to beginning their rotational assignments. Upon completion of the on-site portion of the internship, Ms. President and 15 of the 25 interns began their first rotation at the Department of Defense, Acquisition and Procurement Office. Other interns were assigned to agencies such as the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education, and the Environmental Protection Agency. While the interns reported to their rotational assignments on a day-to-day basis, they remained DOI employees during the course of their internship.

In addition to this onsite practical experience, GAMIP Interns are required "to complete a prescribed curriculum of procurement and acquisition courses." According to the DOIU website, this course work is based on the Defense Acquisition University's Core Competencies for the Contract Specialist. In addition to courses such as "Team Building," "Time Management," "Diversity Workshop," and "Ethics," each intern is required to successfully complete at least two online courses, ACQ 101 Fundamentals of Systems Acquisition Management and ACQ 201A Intermediate Systems Acquisition, Part A. To complete each online course, the GAMIP Interns are required to read through the course materials which are accessed online and divided into units called "modules." After reviewing the material, the interns are required to complete a short review at the end of each module in order to advance to the next module. Upon completion of a set of modules, the interns must take and pass an online exam to become eligible to advance to the next group of modules. Once they have completed the modules and the online exams associated with the modules comprising a course, GAMIP Interns are deemed to have completed the course and are awarded a Defense Acquisition University Certificate in recognition of their achievement. While the interns are free to manage their online course work based on the demands of their onsite rotational assignment, Robert Foye, GAMIP Program Manager, imposes deadlines for the completion of the online courses.

Ms. President disclosed to OSC that during her tenure as a GAMIP Intern, she observed widespread cheating among the interns in the taking of the online exams. On several occasions, Ms. President observed at least one intern, Aseia Chaudhry, collecting copies of exam results, which included the correct answers, from fellow interns who had already successfully completed the exam. Not only did Ms. President personally observe Ms. Chaudhry asking other interns for copies of the completed exams, Ms. President herself was asked by Ms. Chaudhry to share her test results. In addition to collecting exam results, Ms. President observed Ms. Chaudhry copying and distributing the compiled exam results. Further, Ms. President witnessed Ms. Chaudhry faxing the exam results to GAMIP Interns on assignment to other agencies. On one occasion, Ms. President was asked by Ms. Chaudhry to assist her in the operation of the fax machine for this purpose. It was only after Ms. President had provided assistance that she realized the fax was being sent to another GAMIP Intern, Kenneth Gibson, for the purpose of providing him with test answers. Finally, Ms. President repeatedly observed other interns openly in possession of and/or referring to copies of exam results while taking the online tests. These interns included Isaac Bellamy,

Maria Vant Hof and Wendy Lott. Ms. President disclosed that the collecting, copying, onsite distribution, faxed distribution and use of test results while taking the exams was done openly and without regard to the possible consequences or ethical ramifications.

Ms. President disclosed to OSC that, on September 25, 2008, she informed Mr. Foye and Lynn McPheeters, DOIU President and Chief Learning Officer, of her observations regarding the improprieties of the GAMIP Interns and the online test taking. Because she was terminated from the GAMIP Intern Program effective October 6, 2008, Ms. President does not know whether any action has been taken with respect to her disclosures.

Based on the above, I have concluded that there is a substantial likelihood that the information Ms. President has provided to OSC establishes that GAMIP Interns have openly engaged in cheating in completing their required online coursework. These allegations, if true, violate the Standards of Ethical Conduct for federal government employees found at 5 C.F.R. Part 2635, the Standards of Ethical Conduct specifically for DOI employees found at 5 C.F.R. Part 3501, and the Standards of Conduct for DAU students found at DAU Directive 704. Accordingly, I am referring this information to you for an investigation of the whistleblower's allegations and a report of your findings within 60 days of your receipt of this letter. By law, the report must be reviewed and signed by you personally. Should you delegate your authority to review and sign the report to the Inspector General, or any other official, the delegation must be specifically stated and must include the authority to take the actions necessary under 5 U.S.C. §1213(d)(5). Without this information, the report may be found deficient. The requirements of the report are set forth at 5 U.S.C. §1213(c) and (d). A summary of §1213(d) is enclosed. As a matter of policy, OSC also requires that your investigators interview the whistleblower as part of the agency investigation whenever the whistleblower consents to the disclosure of his or her name.

In the event it is not possible to report on the matter within the 60-day time limit under the statute, you may request in writing an extension of time not to exceed 60 days. Please be advised that an extension of time is normally not granted automatically, but only upon a showing of good cause. Accordingly, in the written request for an extension of time, please state specifically the reasons the additional time is needed.

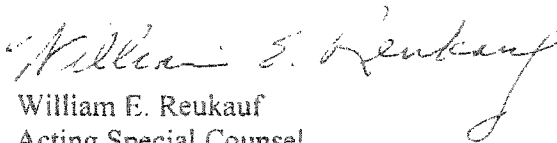
After making the determinations required by 5 U.S.C. §1213(e)(2), copies of the report, along with any comments on the report from the person making the disclosure and any comments or recommendations by this office, will be sent to the President and the appropriate oversight committees in the Senate and House of Representatives.
5 U.S.C. §1213(e)(3).

Unless classified or prohibited from release by law or by Executive order requiring that information be kept secret in the interest of national defense or the conduct of foreign affairs, a copy of the report and any comments will be placed in a public file in accordance with 5 U.S.C. §1219(a).

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Page 4

Please refer to our file number in any correspondence on this matter. If you need further information, please contact Catherine A. McMullen, Chief, Disclosure Unit, at (202) 254-3604. I am also available for any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William E. Reukauf".

William E. Reukauf
Acting Special Counsel

Enclosure

Requirements of 5 U.S.C. § 1213(d)

Any report required under subsection (c) shall be reviewed and signed by the head of the agency¹ and shall include:

- (1) a summary of the information with respect to which the investigation was initiated;
- (2) a description of the conduct of the investigation;
- (3) a summary of any evidence obtained from the investigation;
- (4) a listing of any violation or apparent violation of law, rule or regulation; and
- (5) a description of any action taken or planned as a result of the investigation, such as:
 - (A) changes in agency rules, regulations or practices;
 - (B) the restoration of any aggrieved employee;
 - (C) disciplinary action against any employee; and
 - (D) referral to the Attorney General of any evidence of criminal violation.

In addition, we are interested in learning of any dollar savings, or projected savings, and any management initiatives that may result from this review.

¹ Should you decide to delegate authority to another official to review and sign the report, your delegation must be specifically stated.

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1 PI-PI-09-0304-I

2 Interview of Robert Foye

3 March 23, 2009

4

5 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: This is Investigator Shillingford
6 with the Office of Inspector General, OIG's office. The time is
7 approximately 2:45 on March 23rd, 2009, interviewing Mr. - and
8 would you just say your name and spelling for me?

9 ROBERT FOYE: Robert Foye, it's F-O-Y-E.

10 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: F-O-Y-E?

11 ROBERT FOYE: Um-hm [yes].

12 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And also present is?

13 KATIE BALESTRA: Katie Balestra, K-A-T-I-E, B-A-L-E-S-T-R-A,
14 Investigator with the Inspector General.

15 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Robert, just give us a brief
16 background on yourself. I was looking at your card. You are
17 the Intern Program Manager for the Department of Interior's
18 University?

19 ROBERT FOYE: Exactly.

20 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, how long have you been in that
21 position?

22 ROBERT FOYE: It'll be two years in May.

23 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay. We received a complaint from
24 the Office of Special Counsel, and I know you're familiar with
25 that, the complaint, and it was filed by a Ms. President. I
26 guess she was an intern here.

1 ROBERT FOYE: Right.

2 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Can you just give us some history
3 about what happened?

4 ROBERT FOYE: Yeah, LaRone President was an intern within
5 the Department of Interior's government-wide Acquisition
6 Management Intern Program in the class of 2008. I hired
7 26 interns. She was one of the ones that did extremely well
8 in the interview process and everything. It seemed like she
9 would be a perfect fit for our organization.

10 I brought her into the program on I believe it was June 22
11 of 2008. Within a week of being in the program, I had an
12 incident occur where she used profanity and kind of went off on
13 some of the interns downstairs in the Computer Lab. I'm thinking
14 at that time, it was on, I'm not sure, 4th or 5th Floor.

15 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Can you tell us a little bit about,
16 when you say she "went off," what happened? You said that was
17 within a week of her coming on.

18 ROBERT FOYE: That was in the second week. It might have
19 been the first week. They have a two-week orientation that they
20 go through. It was within that orientation week. What had
21 happened was DOI, Department of Interior has a certain amount of
22 orientational training courses that you have to take. I had
23 26 interns, so I couldn't put them all in the Computer Lab at the
24 same time. LaRone is very, very bright, and I've always told her
25 that she was very bright. She was able to catch on to the system
26 very, very quickly, because I had some people upstairs and people

1 downstairs, I said, "LaRone, could you monitor this and sort of
2 kind of help people get in? And I'm going to go back upstairs
3 with the rest of the class." I believe it was about 12 folks
4 that were in the Computer Lab. These folks ranged from Ph.D.'s
5 to Master's degrees, so they have all kinds of educational
6 backgrounds, to undergraduate degrees.

7 What happened was some of the folks in the back or in the
8 middle of the classroom came up with a better idea of getting
9 the information faster, being able to log into the system faster.
10 When they did that, LaRone just kind of lost it, because she felt
11 like she was in charge and that, you know, "How dare you?" type
12 thing. But from that stemmed some non-communications with some
13 of her fellow class members where she just refused to speak to
14 them or talk to them, which was not a major problem. I mean, I
15 thought that, you know, because I had taken them through team
16 building and whatnots, and they should be able to get along with
17 each other. But I started getting phone calls.

18 Let me just digress for a second, because they do four
19 rotations. And within their rotations, they rotate outside
20 the Department of Interior through different Federal agencies.
21 LaRone and 15 folks in the '08 class were assigned to the
22 Department of Defense, and two people from the '07 class were
23 assigned to Department of Defense. LaRone was in a team I say
24 of maybe four or five people in her team, plus some other folks
25 that was outside her team while she was there.

1 I started getting phone calls from several folks within that
2 team and the supervisors at the Department of Defense complaining
3 of LaRone sort of kind of being hostile towards the other interns
4 or saying thing that were inappropriate to the other interns. I
5 had one lady who went out on maternity leave who was terrified of
6 LaRone.

7 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Who was that?

8 ROBERT FOYE: Her name was {Iceah} Chudhry

9 KATIE BALESTRA: Can you spell her name?

10 ROBERT FOYE: Let me look it up.

11 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Is it C-H-U-D-H-R-Y?

12 ROBERT FOYE: H-R-Y, exactly. She's out on maternity leave
13 now. But she was terrified of LaRone. And I started getting
14 emails saying, "I'm working in a hostile environment. This is a
15 hostile environment." There was another young lady over there,
16 {Maria Van Hall}, who I also moved out of DoD. And I moved Maria
17 for a different reason. I moved them both on the same day,
18 LaRone and Maria on the same day, because Maria had more of
19 a language difficulty in speaking English, and I felt that
20 she needed to be in a smaller place so she can catch on to what
21 contracting was more, so I moved her within the Department of
22 Interior just to get her started, because she was a backfill, and
23 she started late. But LaRone treated her like she was nothing.

24 And on several occasions, I called LaRone in and talked with
25 LaRone and said, "LaRone, look, we need to, you know, just - I
26 mean, you're smart. You're doing everything great. You're a

1 GS-9 with a career ladder to GS-13. You're very, very smart.
2 And all you need to do is be able to get along with people.
3 That's the only problem that I see in you." And I said,
4 "LaRone," I said, "This is off the record." I said, "But I
5 can't keep putting this off the record," I said, "because I have
6 to start writing this up, because I really want you to do well.
7 I don't want to have to, you know, start writing you up," I
8 said, "because you're in excepted service," and, you know, with
9 excepted service, you can be fired. But I didn't put that out
10 there to her like that, but I just, you know, I just kept saying,
11 "You're in excepted service, and that it's important that you
12 be a team player and that these other agencies all talk to each
13 other."

14 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: What was her reaction to that?

15 ROBERT FOYE: Not a problem. Not a problem, you know, and
16 then two days later, or a day later, or that day, I would start
17 getting emails again, the same exact thing. And it had gotten to
18 the point that the Deputy Director of DoD called and said, "Rob,
19 we don't even want her in the building."

20 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Now who was that person?

21 ROBERT FOYE: That was Lauren Uher, U-H-E-R. She said, "We
22 don't even want her in the building, that she's nasty. She's
23 like poison to our building and that the environment is spreading
24 around because of her negative attitude."

1 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: What did Ms. Uher share with you that
2 brought her to that point to call you and say she doesn't want
3 LaRone in the building? What did she say happened?

4 ROBERT FOYE: Well, no more than what I had already knew,
5 that she knew that I was counseling LaRone. She knew that, you
6 know, that LaRone had come over. When we had the situation with
7 the hostile work environment, I pulled all of them out of DoD
8 and had them come over here, because I got emails saying "This is
9 a hostile work environment." So immediately I pulled them out.
10 I brought them over to the Department of Interior, and we sat
11 in this - I brought a witness in, because my boss was out on
12 sick leave. So I brought Denise Bailey in, who was the Budget
13 Officer. I brought her in as a witness, because I just wanted -

14 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Denise in this building?

15 ROBERT FOYE: Denise is down in the Admin Office now.

16 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, what's Denise's number?

17 ROBERT FOYE: I don't know her phone number right off.

18 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: But she's part of the Department of
19 Interior?

20 ROBERT FOYE: Yes, yes, yes.

21 KATIE BALESTRA: And around what time was this that you
22 brought her in?

23 ROBERT FOYE: Oh, man, I'm not sure. I can't remember what
24 time it was, but it was maybe - I don't even want to guess,
25 because I can't remember.

1 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: How many incidences had occurred up to
2 this point?

3 ROBERT FOYE: Prior to that? Several. Several.

4 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, and so you brought Denise Bailey
5 in, and you brought yourself and who in?

6 ROBERT FOYE: And the other interns that alleged that there
7 was a problem. And I talked to them all at one time, then I
8 separated them and talked to them. And LaRone got really, really
9 upset. She said, "Look, I'm going to file an {ECHR} now."

10 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Was Denise in this meeting when she
11 made this (inaudible)?

12 ROBERT FOYE: Um-hm [yes], Denise was in the meeting. Now
13 I called my boss, Lynn McPheeters, into work. She was out sick,
14 and I asked her to come in to work, because it had sort of kind
15 of escalated, and I could tell that LaRone was very upset. And I
16 basically told LaRone, I said, "LaRone, this can't happen. It
17 cannot happen again. Folks come to work to work. You know, you
18 cannot treat people any kind of way that's on your team or folks
19 within the government anyway. I mean, you have to have a sense
20 of responsibility as, you know, 'I'm a GS-9.'" Come on. She had
21 a career ladder to 13, that you have to be fair to everyone. "I
22 mean, everyone is saying you're doing this. You know, no one
23 is saying that LaRone was being picked on. Everybody's saying
24 you're doing this."

25 Now as soon as we sort of kind of brought LaRone on the
26 carpet and said, "LaRone, this is what's going on," she

1 immediately said, "Well, there was a situation where one of the
2 other interns was called 'gay,' and you didn't do anything about
3 it." I said, "Well, this is the first time I've heard about it.
4 I've never heard this before until you just told me this." And
5 she said, "Well, there is another situation where, you know, they
6 take online training." I said, "Well, it's classroom. It was
7 instructor-led training." She said, "Well, there's another
8 situation where folks are cheating on tests and asking me for
9 questions and you haven't done anything about that." I said,
10 "Well, LaRone, you're only just telling me about this. You know,
11 so I would have investigated that as well."

12 You know, I didn't respond to her with it, but I went and
13 investigated it, and I didn't find any of her evidence to be
14 true. Now I'm not saying it wasn't true, but I didn't find any
15 evidence that it was true. And I shared that with her, and
16 I said, "LaRone, I have not found any evidence that this
17 information was true."

18 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Did you share that with her and tell
19 her?

20 ROBERT FOYE: I shared it with her, and she said, "Well,
21 I'm going to file an EEO complaint."

22 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Can you give us a time frame - and
23 to be very honest with you, that's one of her allegations is
24 that she brought this to you about them cheating on these online
25 tests, and that the DOI University didn't do anything about it.

1 ROBERT FOYE: This was the same exact day, and I wrote that
2 up. When I gave her a disciplinary warning that day, it was the
3 same exact day that she came, that we brought her in. It was on
4 September 25th, and we brought her in. And I have 2:00 here,
5 2:00 p.m. in the office.

6 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: You brought her in.

7 ROBERT FOYE: Yeah.

8 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And Ms. Bailey was there?

9 ROBERT FOYE: And Ms. Bailey was a witness to that. And I
10 also called Lynn McPheeters back into work that day.

11 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, and she came, too?

12 ROBERT FOYE: She came in, too. Now I told LaRone, I said,
13 "LaRone, I said, "this is it." I said, "We can't keep going
14 through this with you with the agencies. This has to stop. This
15 is your last warning. It cannot continue after this."

16 Once I said that, I mean, she started telling on everything
17 she could tell on. I mean, she started coming up with stuff that
18 I'm like "Where is all this coming from?" And she's beginning to
19 raise her voice at Lynn. Lynn said, "Well, you know, LaRone, you
20 really have to bring your voice level down." But she got really
21 hysterical and upset and started raising her voice at Lynn.

22 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: So that was the first time you ever
23 heard about this alleged cheating on the test was on the 25th of
24 September?

25 ROBERT FOYE: Yes, exactly. That's when she blew the
26 whistle and to tell me that folks were cheating on the tests.

1 And this is once we told her "Look, there's a problem here. You
2 know, and it's a problem. It's escalating not just to one person
3 but to several people."

4 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Who did she allege was cheating on
5 tests?

6 ROBERT FOYE: She didn't even name names. She didn't name
7 any names of the folks that were cheating. She just said that -
8 and I figured it was the folks on her team, but I went even
9 further than that. But I thought that, you know, because they
10 all sat together.

11 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Did you ask her for names, and she
12 didn't give you names?

13 ROBERT FOYE: I asked her - yes, I did. I said, "LaRone,
14 if someone was cheating on" - and she actually took a - she wrote
15 a letter to the Director of Department of Defense DAU and said
16 that, you know, folks were cheating on the tests and this and
17 that, I mean, just giving -

18 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Do you have a copy of that letter that
19 she wrote, by any chance?

20 ROBERT FOYE: I would have to pull it up on my email. She
21 emailed them. They never responded to it. But she emailed them
22 and said that folks were cheating on tests. Now as soon as we
23 let LaRone go - and I'm going to digress, too, because there's
24 some other stuff ahead of that. But as soon as let LaRone go,
25 there was two things that happened. You know, I called over
26 and asked her to come over to the office to talk to her onsite

1 supervisor, who was Melanie Alston. I told her to talk with her,
2 you know, bring her stuff and come back over here. I didn't tell
3 her she was being terminated or anything. I said, "Come over
4 here." But we had already made the decision to terminate.

5 Now when LaRone came over, LaRone took files from DoD, and
6 she also took her access card from DoD. When she came over, I
7 said, "LaRone, do you have any property that belongs to DoD?"
8 And she says, "No, Rob, I don't." You know, so I was in the
9 process of typing up her termination letter and, you know, I
10 said, "Well, LaRone, could you sit in the secretary's office for
11 a little while?" And the time kind of went by, because you know
12 these letters have to go through everybody and their mother. And
13 I said, "LaRone, well, could you go to lunch and come back?"

14 And when she came back, I said, "Well, you know, this is
15 going to be a lot longer than I expect," because I need everybody
16 to look at this prior to. I didn't say that to her, but I just
17 know that it's going to be a lot longer than I expect. This is
18 a Thursday. I said, "Could you come back on Friday?" And she
19 said, "Well, I'm off on Friday." And I said, "Well, Monday will
20 be better anyway. It'll give me a little bit more time, so would
21 you come back on Monday?" So she came back on Monday.

22 Between that, DoD is calling me, Security from DoD is
23 calling me saying, "We don't have our access card. We're missing
24 government files" and the whatnots. So I called LaRone, asked
25 LaRone did she have the files? "No, Rob, I don't have the
26 files." Now Security calls me and says, "Rob, give us the

1 phone number. We need to get this, especially our access card
2 back, because it's a secure building, back from her." So they
3 called her, and you know she came up with that ID card. She
4 said, "Yeah, I got it." So she never came up with the files,
5 but he said, "Yeah, I got it."

6 Now once we give her the termination letter, DoD calls me
7 back again and says, "Rob, we just got a fax into the Director's
8 Office of one of the interns who she alleged was, you know, that
9 folks were picking at because he was gay." And what she had done
10 was - and I'm not saying she did it. I mean, they're thinking
11 she done it. But what had happened was she sent a copy of his
12 Face page into DoD and she -

13 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: You're talking like Facebook page?

14 ROBERT FOYE: His Facebook page. I'm really not familiar
15 with those -

16 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: That's okay.

17 ROBERT FOYE: - those pages. But she sent that into DoD,
18 and she said, "Is this acceptable?" Because, apparently, he put
19 on there I work for DoD, his place of employment was DoD. "Is
20 this acceptable for him to use, you know, DoD on this Facebook
21 page?" And, you know, they just said take it off and bam, that
22 was that. But it's like she was trying to get him as well.

23 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Is that Isaiah?

24 ROBERT FOYE: That's {Isaac Bellamy}.

25 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Isaac Bellamy.

1 ROBERT FOYE: Nice guy, you know, and I even asked the
2 question about that was "Did you feel that you were in an
3 uncomfortable position? Did someone pick on you or something
4 that I need to know about?" You know, I didn't want to say
5 "gay" or anything like that, but I was just trying to get him
6 to express if there was a problem, to talk to me about it. And
7 he said, "No, Rob, not that I know about."

8 And I asked other folks, "Was anybody picking on anyone in
9 the class?" You know, a team with people, 26, they make jokes
10 and play with each other, and some things I'm not going to see.
11 You know? But for the most part, this class is very, very
12 professional because of the educational levels they have.

13 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: But what happened from the - you know,
14 I read through the documents that you gave Special Agent Baugh,
15 and you documented, you know, basically telling her that she had
16 used some foul language, she was treating people inappropriately,
17 and I think she acquiesced a little bit and said, "Yeah, okay,
18 I'm going to try and do better."

19 ROBERT FOYE: Each time she said she was going to do better,
20 each time.

21 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: What brought, from the 26th to - I
22 guess when did you make the decision to terminate?

23 ROBERT FOYE: We terminated on, let me see, the termination
24 letter was on October 3rd, but it was actually - that's the date
25 it was written, I believe. Effective October 2nd. It was
26 October 2nd I believe, yeah, that same day.

1 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: So you made the decision October 2nd?

2 ROBERT FOYE: That same day I went and talked to HR and
3 to my boss, and we decided that because it was so many people
4 involved in it, and that it was the situation had escalated, not
5 just -

6 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Did something happen from the 26th to
7 October 2nd?

8 ROBERT FOYE: Well, the (inaudible) of DoD called and said
9 they didn't want her in their building anymore.

10 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, and so after that meeting of the
11 26th, DoD called and said -

12 ROBERT FOYE: They called on October 2nd.

13 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: - they didn't want her. They called
14 October 2nd.

15 ROBERT FOYE: They said that "She's like poison in our
16 building."

17 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, had something happened that
18 you know of between the 26th and the 2nd from that meeting that
19 caused it, or was this something that just had built up?

20 ROBERT FOYE: No, it was just ongoing from June until then.
21 You know, there was a situation with {Kia Mouse}, where Kia Mouse
22 came back in my office. One day they were in training class and
23 said that, you know, "She's just rude. She's talks to me any
24 kind of way. I'm a grown woman, and why is she treating me like
25 this?" You know, and LaRone had a habit of saying, "I'm from
26 South Chicago." And from South Chicago -

1 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: She was trying to send a message, is
2 that what you're saying?

3 ROBERT FOYE: I don't know what she was trying to do but,
4 you know, I was like "Well, you're in D.C. now." I never really
5 wanted to feed into that with her about the South Chicago thing,
6 but she would always say, "I'm from South Chicago."

7 And she had a situation occur with her and {Kenneth Gibson},
8 and they had had a GSA training that they had went to. And I
9 was actually headed to DoD to meet with the Deputy Director over
10 there, because I do site visits as well. And my boss was going
11 with me, and we were just walking down the street, and LaRone was
12 coming down the street, and she was just puffing a cigarette as
13 hard as she could and out of breath. And I'm like, you know,
14 "What's going on? You know, is something wrong? I mean, you're
15 supposed to be headed back to work." And she says, "Well,
16 Kenneth Gibson got in my face, and he threatened me, and I'm
17 taking a restraining order against him. And, you know, it's got
18 really, really bad." And I had just seen him, him and another
19 group of people in the class, you know, talking, and they could
20 have been talking about that. But I just saw them, you know, as
21 I went out the - they went out the E Street exit standing there
22 talking. And they were going to lunch and then back to work.

23 So what I did was I called Kenneth Gibson and asked him to
24 stay here, because they worked in the same building. And I said,
25 well, I don't really want any conflict over there, so until I can
26 get back, because I had this meeting at 1:00. And so I asked him

1 to come back here to Interior and asked LaRone to go ahead and
2 go back to DoD, and that I would try to work it out after the
3 meeting was over with.

4 So after the meeting was over with, I called LaRone and
5 asked why - I walked out from where I was having the meeting, and
6 she was sitting there. I said, "You know, come on back to DOI
7 with me. Let's see if we can discuss what happened." I got a
8 chance to interview all of the folks that were involved or
9 standing there. And they said that Kenneth asked her, "Why don't
10 you speak to me?" You know, this was the situation that had
11 occurred from the Computer Lab that she was still upset with him
12 and Valerie Greene. And from that point, she said, "Well, this
13 is not the time for this and, you know, we shouldn't be having
14 these conversations."

15 And it was no profanity I don't think that was done, but
16 apparently Kenneth was talking with his hands, is what I was
17 told. She alleged that he was pointing his finger in her face.
18 When we sat down and talked about it, they agreed that, you know,
19 that they made a whole big deal of it. It wasn't as bad as what
20 they thought it was and that they were going to squash it. And
21 that's what I believed, that they were going to squash it. And I
22 had my boss come in to the meeting after we talked, so they can
23 tell her the same thing, that it was squashed, that this was over
24 with.

25 KATIE BALESTRA: Who was at that meeting?

1 ROBERT FOYE: That was just me, LaRone and Kenneth. I asked
2 Lynn to come in afterwards, Lynn McPheeters to come in afterwards
3 so that -

4 KATIE BALESTRA: And Lynn is your boss.

5 ROBERT FOYE: Lynn's my boss, so they can express to her
6 what the outcome of the meeting was. I want them to tell her as
7 well what the outcome of the meeting was. And I noticed that
8 when they got ready to leave, LaRone wouldn't leave at the same
9 time. She just refused to leave at the same -. Ken said, "Well,
10 come on, LaRone, let's walk out together." She said, "No, I
11 don't really want to go right now."

12 So I'm thinking to myself, I'm saying, "Well, is it really
13 over with? Is this really over with between them?" And it
14 really wasn't over with, because things kept escalating even
15 after that.

16 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Did anybody corroborate that he
17 pointed his finger in her face?

18 ROBERT FOYE: No.

19 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: No one corroborated that?

20 ROBERT FOYE: No. Now one person said that LaRone could
21 have felt intimidated, only because Ken's a big guy, but he was
22 talking with his hands. The other folks said nothing happened.
23 They said - well, this is basically what I heard from my interns.
24 They said, "Rob, you know LaRone. LaRone is loud. And if there
25 would have been a situation, she would have got really, really

1 loud. We were all standing there, and she never got really
2 loud."

3 But she was upset when I saw her. She was very, very upset
4 when I saw her, and she said that - and she later came back
5 and told me, she said, "Rob, I pressed a restraining order out
6 against him." Now this is after we've talked and everything's
7 going to be squashed, she said, "Yeah, I did press a restraining
8 order against him." I'm like, you know -

9 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Yeah, with who, with what police
10 department?

11 ROBERT FOYE: I guess D.C. Police Department.

12 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Did you find that to be true?

13 ROBERT FOYE: No, I didn't find -

14 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Did you check?

15 ROBERT FOYE: Well, I called D.C. Police Department, but
16 they didn't have any information or anything on record from
17 her doing anything. So I'm thinking that, you know, this is
18 something that's not true.

19 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: But she categorically told you she
20 did that?

21 ROBERT FOYE: That she did that. And I said, "Well, Ken, if
22 at all possible" - you know, this is a class, mind you. I said,
23 "Try to stay away from her." You know, but they take trainings
24 together. They do everything together, basically. You know,
25 even the ones that are from different places, they come back,

1 you know, and do stuff together. And that's why we take them for
2 this team-building, so that they can get along with each other.

3 And so I talked to LaRone again. I said, "LaRone, this
4 has got to stop. You know, it's got to stop." Every day, I'm
5 getting something about LaRone from somebody in the class.
6 You know, when I started getting email saying "hostile work
7 environment," I have to respond to that. You know, folks are
8 sending me emails saying, "Rob, I'm afraid to come to work." You
9 know, "She's threatened me. She stares at me." You know, and
10 "She cusses at me" or she -."

11 You know, Maria is a Latino and Maria was totally afraid of
12 this lady. Maria's probably maybe 48, 49 years old. You know,
13 she's not an older lady, but she was afraid. She was actually
14 afraid of LaRone. The other lady, Iceah, was also afraid of
15 LaRone. {Wendy} Lott was also a part of this and wasn't afraid
16 of LaRone. You know, Wendy treated her differently. Wendy was
17 like "whatever" type thing, but there was a problem there between
18 them. Then there was Isaac, who was also a part of this, who
19 Isaac just said, you know, "Rob, this is my very first job in my
20 life. I've never experienced anything like this, and I didn't
21 know that people talked that way to each other at work. You
22 know, and this is shocking to me. I didn't sign up for this."

23 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: So let's get again back to the alleged
24 cheating. She discloses this after you sort of counseled her on
25 the 25th, 26th, whichever one it was.

1 ROBERT FOYE: This is when I told her this is going to be
2 the very last time.

3 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: That if something else happened, you
4 would have to fire her or that she might be terminated.

5 ROBERT FOYE: That we would start the process for
6 termination if something else happened.

7 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, that's when she drops all this
8 about the cheating.

9 ROBERT FOYE: Yes.

10 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: She wouldn't name names?

11 ROBERT FOYE: She didn't name any names.

12 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, but you did ask.

13 ROBERT FOYE: Yes.

14 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay.

15 ROBERT FOYE: I asked her who were the folks involved.
16 First, I said, "LaRone, I've never heard that before," because
17 I mean, she said this in front of my boss. And, you know, I'm
18 like "This is new to me. I've never heard this before."

19 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: What was her response when you asked
20 for her to give you names? What did she say?

21 ROBERT FOYE: She said something like "You'll hear from
22 EEO," you know, "I've already told them--"

23 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And so did you ever hear from EEO?

24 ROBERT FOYE: Yeah.

25 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, who from?

1 ROBERT FOYE: Let me see if I've got this lady's name
2 written down. I have it somewhere, but -. I'm sorry; I'm
3 getting so many people investigating me, it's like is it worth
4 it, you know? Let me see if her name's on here. {Elizabeth
5 Felton}.

6 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Elizabeth?

7 ROBERT FOYE: Uh-huh [yes]. She is a contractor, I believe,
8 with {DSC}.

9 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Do you have a number?

10 ROBERT FOYE: There is not a number on here. Well, yes, it
11 is. It's 202/374-1602.

12 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, but as a result of her making
13 that allegation, you did do some investigations into it.

14 ROBERT FOYE: Yes.

15 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: What did you do? What steps did you
16 take?

17 ROBERT FOYE: First of all, the interns that were there in
18 the building -

19 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: You assumed since she was making this,
20 that there were people that were on her team, which would have
21 been who? Ms. Chudhry?

22 ROBERT FOYE: Isaac Bellamy, Wendy Lott, L-O-T-T, Iceah
23 Chudhry, it seems like somebody else on this, I don't know if
24 {Keith Johnson} was on that team or not.

25 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Was Gibson on that team?

26 ROBERT FOYE: No, Kenneth wasn't on that team.

1 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, all right. And so what steps
2 did you take? Is there a way other than talking to them and
3 asking them?

4 ROBERT FOYE: Um-hm.

5 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Is there anything that you could have
6 done other than talking to them, which I think you did. You
7 talked to some of them.

8 ROBERT FOYE: Um-hm [yes].

9 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Which ones did you talk to, the ones
10 you just mentioned?

11 ROBERT FOYE: I talked to those (inaudible) and I actually
12 wrote that up, too. But I asked them, I said - I didn't say
13 that she alleged this or anything. I said, "Do you guys know
14 of any instance where anyone was cheating?" And I went to
15 them separately. I didn't say, "Guys." I went to each person
16 separately. I said, "Has there has been an incidence where
17 you've seen someone cheating on a online test or a classroom
18 test?" And everyone said no. They said, "No, Rob, we've never
19 seen that happen before."

20 Because what happens when they take the online test, each
21 time they take it, they get a different test. They don't get the
22 same test when they take the test. And they're saying "There's
23 no way we can cheat because we get a different test every time we
24 take the test." And, you know, so each one of them said pretty
25 much the same thing, that there hasn't been incidents.

1 Then I talked to a person that was not in their class. Her
2 name is {Kelly Easterly}, and I asked Kelly, I said, "Kelly,
3 well, have you seen anyone cheating? Have you noticed any
4 problems?" because she actually had an office, and they were in
5 a cubicle outside of her office. "Have you actually noticed any
6 problems outside the office or anything going on?"

7 First, she was like, "Rob, I really don't want to say
8 nothing because, you know, I just want to kind of stay out of
9 this. It just seems like there's always a situation going on,
10 but I don't hear anything." So, I'm like, you know, she don't
11 want to talk to me really, so I didn't press the issue, and I
12 kind of left it alone. But she said, "I've never seen anyone
13 cheating or anything."

14 KATIE BALESTRA: So how many people total did you talk to
15 about - everyone that was in that class basically?

16 ROBERT FOYE: No, well, they all took the class, several
17 different classes. I don't know which one that LaRone was
18 piggybacking on, that they were cheating on. They had some
19 Acquisition courses. They had to do with the DAU courses that
20 they were taking. And they all had to satisfy this before they
21 can take the classroom part of it. And I had given them till
22 January to finish the course.

23 Now LaRone finished fast. Again, I tell you, LaRone was
24 smart. She's very, very smart, and that was, you know, it wasn't
25 her performance that was the problem. Her performance was, in my
26 opinion, was good. It was just her attitude and her conduct that

1 was the problem. I mean, she could not get along with anyone.
2 I'm not going to say management, because it seemed like she got
3 along with management pretty well. But with her peers -

4 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: What do you think is behind that?

5 ROBERT FOYE: You know, I have absolutely no idea. I really
6 wanted to find out, and we had started the process of trying to
7 get some counseling and some different type of - there was a
8 program that Lynn used in the SES program that she wanted to
9 invite the whole group of them into to try to do some mentoring.
10 But it actually had gotten worse faster than we can get the
11 program, and so we wasn't able to provide that.

12 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Did you get a chance to know anything
13 other than what she said about being from South Chicago? Did you
14 know anything about her personally at all?

15 ROBERT FOYE: No.

16 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Nothing.

17 ROBERT FOYE: No. I mean, I really didn't think it was
18 up to me to ask. I mean, I didn't really understand where she
19 was saying when she was saying "I'm from South Chicago" until
20 recently. And be honest with you, like last week, I'm like
21 saying "Now should I be careful walking out this door?" You
22 know, because what is she saying to me when she says, "I'm from
23 Chicago"? You know, and she's made the comment a couple times.

24 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Did you ever hear anything about an
25 incident where a test was faxed over to someone?

26 ROBERT FOYE: No, never.

1 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Never?

2 ROBERT FOYE: This is the very first time that I've heard
3 that, a test faxed to anybody. I have never heard that before.

4 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And just so we're clear, her
5 characterization to you about cheating was that there were
6 interns cheating. She didn't give any names, and she didn't
7 (inaudible) specifics.

8 ROBERT FOYE: Lynn was in the office. Lynn McPheeters was
9 in the office when she said it. She said, "You will hear from
10 EEO."

11 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And she didn't give any other
12 specifics?

13 ROBERT FOYE: Um-um [no]. She said, "I've already discussed
14 this with EEO, and the counsel will be contacting you." And this
15 was before we even decided to terminate her. I had given her
16 that final warning that this is it, but we had not, you know,
17 thought about termination, I mean, not in the fact that we're
18 going to do it like right now.

19 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Is it fair to say that the reason you
20 decided to terminate was because of that subsequent call from
21 DoD, or is that -?

22 ROBERT FOYE: That was part of it. I didn't really want
23 to put her in a different location, because I thought that the
24 problem would just escalate wherever she was at with her peers,
25 because everywhere she would work, there would be other interns

1 involved in it. It was more so with the hostile work
2 environment.

3 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, but what I'm trying to get at,
4 Rob, is on the 25th, 26th, whichever one it was, you hadn't made
5 a determination at that point that you were going to terminate,
6 right?

7 ROBERT FOYE: No.

8 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Although there were things that had
9 brought it to that point, you hadn't made that determination.
10 What brought it in your mind and the Director, Ms. McPheeter's
11 mind, that between the 25th and ultimately October 2nd that you
12 decided to terminate? What brought you to that? What was it
13 that pushed it over the edge?

14 ROBERT FOYE: Well, when I called LaRone over from DoD, at
15 that point, we had decided to terminate.

16 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And what date was that?

17 ROBERT FOYE: That was - I can't remember, and I don't want
18 to say the wrong date. Let me see, I believe it was October 2nd.

19 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And what had happened from that five
20 days, you know, or so whatever that was, seven days? What had
21 happened from the 25th - do you understand what I'm saying?

22 ROBERT FOYE: Yeah, I was still getting calls from other
23 interns. I was still getting the calls from Wendy -

24 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Well, were those retroactive calls,
25 or were those subsequent?

26 ROBERT FOYE: No, they were retroactive.

1 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, that was stuff that had happened
2 before.

3 ROBERT FOYE: Well, no, not retroactive then. They were
4 calls that followed each other. It was every day or every other
5 day, people were complaining.

6 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And hopefully I'm being clear of what
7 I'm saying. Did something happen from the 25th when you said,
8 "Okay, this is your final opportunity. Okay, you got to
9 straighten up" - and these are my words - "straighten up and
10 fly right." What happened on the 26th? What happened on the
11 27th? What happened on the 28th?

12 ROBERT FOYE: The call from DoD that they didn't want her
13 over there was a major thing. The other thing was that Maria
14 Van Hall had called also, not on that particular day, but a day
15 before that and said, "Rob, you know, I'm afraid. I'm afraid to
16 come to work."

17 KATIE BALESTRA: You don't know what date she called, what
18 date Maria called?

19 ROBERT FOYE: No.

20 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: I think you just said it was before -

21 ROBERT FOYE: It was right before we called her over here to
22 end everything.

23 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: I understand, you know, what you're
24 saying. I'm wondering if there was something specific. Did she
25 violate your counsel to her on the 25th to straighten up and fly
26 right after the 25th? Can you point to something that she did?

1 ROBERT FOYE: Just that the harassment towards the other
2 folks never stopped. It never stopped. And I specifically said
3 that "These are the things that have to stop."

4 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay.

5 ROBERT FOYE: And they didn't stop. They continued. Even
6 with the point of Lauren Uher calling me and saying, "Rob, she's
7 like poison over here. This is starting to spread amongst my
8 people who are permanent employees, and we just want her out of
9 our building." You know, and for DoD to do something like that
10 to an intern, who really doesn't have a whole lot of rights, it
11 was big.

12 It was big for that to happen, which is, I mean, they're
13 a big sponsor in our program, but just to have something like
14 that happen from an agency, and I've never had it happen before,
15 nor do I ever know of it happening within this program, of them
16 saying "We don't want her in the building anymore."

17 DoD has a dress policy at their building, and they ask, you
18 know, that because they work with the Pentagon, they're really
19 high profile, they said that we'll give you guys dress-down day,
20 but you can't wear any jeans. You still have to wear casual
21 clothes, meaning khaki pants or no tennis shoes, but shoes, and
22 a collared shirt. Now LaRone came to work with short pants and
23 sandals on.

24 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: So it was after being told she
25 couldn't do that?

26 ROBERT FOYE: Exactly.

1 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: She went over to DoD -

2 ROBERT FOYE: DoD hit the roof. They were upset about it.
3 They were very upset about it. They said, "Look, you know, the
4 Pentagon is a part of us. We have certain things that we have to
5 abide by. You cannot come in here like this." So she basically
6 canceled the dress code for everybody, because she did that.

7 Now I'm not saying that was a major, major thing by itself
8 right there. That was, you know, small. That was something that
9 I had never even really addressed with her, because DoD handled
10 it. There was nothing I could say about it at that point, but
11 just that "Make sure that you dress okay when you come to work."
12 You know? But why she didn't get along with anyone in the class,
13 or what was the reasons why she didn't get along with anyone in
14 the class, I don't know. I mean, it seemed like she would get
15 along with you for a while, and then if you said something that
16 you weren't supposed to say or something that she didn't want to
17 hear, then -

18 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Did she have any friends at all? Did
19 she have anybody within the program that she was a friend with?

20 ROBERT FOYE: I don't know. I mean, you know, this is what
21 I would do. Because I realized there was a problem in the class,
22 I would seat-assign them, you know, because I saw people sitting
23 together, starting to sit together, and I said, well, I need to
24 split folks up. So I would do the tent cards, and I would move
25 the tent cards in different places and make circles of tables for
26 them to sit at. And then, even after lunch, I would come back

1 and move them again. And I wasn't even the instructor. I was
2 just trying to be proactive and get folks to talk and meet with
3 different people instead of developing groups, and really trying
4 to show diversity in doing that so that everyone can be a part
5 of the group together. And it was always a problem. No matter
6 what group she was in, there was always a problem.

7 I'll be honest with you. I didn't really want to fire
8 LaRone, you know, because I thought LaRone was on top of her
9 game. The only problem that I had with LaRone was LaRone could
10 not get past this conduct. I mean, no matter what I did or said
11 to her, she couldn't see past that. Even though she said, "Well,
12 Rob, you know, I'm going to work on this, and I'm going to do
13 this," she couldn't get past it. There was always another
14 situation. And I couldn't see sending her to FDA or NIH or
15 back here to DOI and just bring that problem right back here,
16 when she couldn't get along with the folks where she was at.
17 I mean, this is only a two-year program.

18 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Where did she come from from here?
19 Do you know anything about her background, like?

20 ROBERT FOYE: She came from Chicago here. She flew in from
21 Chicago here.

22 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Where did she go to school?

23 ROBERT FOYE: Let's see, I have her resume right here.

24 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: What kind of -

25 ROBERT FOYE: I have her transcripts.

1 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Do they do a background or do anything
2 like that?

3 ROBERT FOYE: Well, I mean, we do a reference check, and DOI
4 does do a background. They never finished a background on her.
5 They do a basic background on her. No, but she was in Chicago
6 prior to coming here. It looks like there were some breaks in
7 her job that I guess we didn't catch.

8 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Can I get a copy of her resume?

9 ROBERT FOYE: Of the resume? Sure you can.

10 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And I guess her reference.

11 ROBERT FOYE: I think that's Concordia.

12 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Concordia College? Okay.

13 ROBERT FOYE: Of River Forest, Illinois.

14 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Yeah.

15 ROBERT FOYE: She had a degree in Organizational Management,
16 smart girl, 3.3 grade point average. I mean, she's taking
17 courses right now. She goes on DAU website to take courses.
18 (Inaudible) take those courses, I approve them. I don't have
19 a problem with her taking the courses. They're online courses;
20 they're free courses. But she can't take them unless I approve
21 them. I've been approving them for her, because I'm not upset
22 with her.

23 {Defense} - this other Federal agency called for a record
24 check of her. I called HR and said, "HR, what can I say?" You
25 know, because her SF50 has "terminated" on it, and I don't want
26 to give her, do any injustice to her for a Federal position. So

1 I asked them what could I say to these folks when they called
2 back, because I asked the guy to call me back, because I wanted
3 to make sure I was, you know, saying the right things or not
4 saying the right things. And so HR said, "Well, Rob, what you
5 want to do is be as gentle as you can." You know, and I even
6 told the guys, he said, "Look, Rob, this is termination. What
7 was the reason why you terminated her?" You know? And I said,
8 "It was conduct-related, but I really don't want to get any
9 further than that, because I think that, you know, she's had
10 time, maybe she's grown. I don't want to be the reason to say
11 that she doesn't get the job."

12 You know, they had offered her a contingent position. I
13 don't know if she got the position or not.

14 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: With who again?

15 ROBERT FOYE: It was one of those military contracting
16 agencies, but it was in D.C., which she'd have been an intern in
17 their program as well. But the Human Resources folks flagged it
18 when they saw that she was terminated, and the HR guy was like,
19 "You know, I need to go and talk to management."

20 And I told him again, I said, "Look, you know, she's smart,"
21 and I wanted to key in on that she's smart, just to give her the
22 opportunity because maybe there has been a change. And, you
23 know, and I don't want this to be why she doesn't get another
24 job. You know?

25 But LaRone, she really needs to do a drastic change in her
26 personality. She just has one of those personalities that she

1 don't know how to talk to people or treat people, and she just
2 feels that, you know, she can say anything she wants. I mean,
3 she took all of the online training courses, whistleblowing, all
4 that stuff. She took all those training courses. You know, she
5 knows that you can't do those things, but she continuously kept
6 doing it. And then when we called her in and talked with her,
7 she comes back to us and says, "Well, what about this? What
8 about this?" It wasn't even about what we was talking about.
9 She started throwing everything else into the game, and then
10 she tells us, "Well, EEO will be contacting you."

11 You know, I know that during the break between the time I
12 met with her and the break, I gave them a break, because I was
13 waiting for Lynn to come, because Lynn was out sick that day.
14 During that time, apparently she went down and filed the EEO
15 complaint, you know, because when she said that "EEO will be
16 contacting you," you know, I'm like, I know she was going to
17 see HR, but where did the EEO part come in?

18 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Who did she talk to down in HR?
19 Do you know?

20 ROBERT FOYE: Well, I sent her downstairs to Human
21 Resources. She didn't talk to them. I sent her down to see
22 {Julia Picassi}, who's our HR Specialist. But I sent her down
23 because, I mean, she's the only one down there, and I think {Ann
24 Preetchie} was in the process of leaving or whatever the case
25 was. But I sent her down to talk to her. I said, "{David} is

1 not the person you want to talk to. You really want to talk to
2 Julia."

3 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: But she never talked to her.

4 ROBERT FOYE: She said Julia wasn't there when she went
5 down, because she asked me could she go down and talk to her. I
6 said, "Sure you can." I said, "You know, David's not the person
7 (inaudible), but you can go down and talk to Julia."

8 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: The numbers that you gave to Special
9 Agent Baugh, you gave a couple different numbers. I guess
10 Ms. Uher, that's going to be her work number over at -

11 ROBERT FOYE: DoD, yes.

12 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: - the Pentagon?

13 ROBERT FOYE: Um-hm [yes]. She's in Rosslyn. They service
14 the Pentagon, and they have an office at the Pentagon.

15 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Who is it Alston? Is it A-L-S-T-O-N?

16 ROBERT FOYE: Yeah, that's Melanie.

17 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And who is she again?

18 ROBERT FOYE: She was LaRone's onsite supervisor.

19 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: At DoD?

20 ROBERT FOYE: And she wrote a statement in there, also, and
21 I don't know if you saw it. But she also wrote a statement in
22 here.

23 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: She was the onsite supervisor at DoD?

24 ROBERT FOYE: At DoD, yes.

25 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And who is she? Is she an employee of
26 Department of Defense or -?

1 ROBERT FOYE: She's an employee of the Department of
2 Defense. I'm their supervisor, and they have an onsite
3 supervisor at the agencies where they do their rotations at.

4 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: I see. Okay. Is that something that
5 you gave to Special Agent Baugh?

6 ROBERT FOYE: Yes, it's in there. I'm just trying to put my
7 hands on it. But I asked them if they need to write this up, if
8 there was a problem over there. And they did.

9 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And where is Kenneth? Is he in the
10 field now still?

11 ROBERT FOYE: He's at DoD as well.

12 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: DoD, okay. And Ms. Chudhry is on
13 maternity leave, right?

14 ROBERT FOYE: Ms. Chudhry, yes, and I gave the other
15 investigator her home phone.

16 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Bellamy's at HHS right now?

17 ROBERT FOYE: Um-hm [yes]. This is the email that Melanie
18 Alston sent me, and this is from her, and it looks like some
19 other folks.

20 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: I have that. Okay.

21 KATIE BALESTRA: Just wanted to ask, did her accusations
22 about the test have anything to do with her termination?

23 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: No. I mean, at that point, we weren't
24 even, you know, thinking about termin- - we warned her that it
25 was a possibility. But my thing was that if LaRone could turn it
26 around, you know, it's easier for me to keep her than fire her,

1 because I still have to go backfill her position. You know, and
2 DoD said, well, when we did terminate her and DoD, they was kind
3 of wanting us to, too, but they was like, you know, "We don't
4 really want even backfill this position now."

5 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: But her allegation is that she was
6 fired because she came up with these allegations about cheating.

7 ROBERT FOYE: Um-um [no]. It was the furthest thing from my
8 mind. I mean, I can't answer for anyone else, but no. I mean,
9 you know, again, LaRone was smart. Again, I say she still is
10 smart. I think she's very, very smart. I just think that she
11 has one problem. It had nothing to do with, you know, her even
12 saying the things that she said about Isaac, or that other folks
13 are saying those things about him. It had nothing to do with any
14 of that.

15 You know, if she had just done her job and been a team
16 player and respected people and, you know, and been a person who
17 worked for the government, you know, and worked for people in
18 the government and had customer service towards people in the
19 government, then there would not have been any problem. But
20 she continuously and continuously and continuously displayed
21 behaviors that were negative, not just to Department of Defense,
22 but to Department of Interior, because we were the hosts. You
23 know, this is our program. And I think that she done more
24 damage by embarrassing the agency than anything, because she
25 was supposed to go over to Department of Defense and be a better
26 person than she is over here. And she didn't do that. And then,

1 you know, DoD is looking at Interior like. "Who are you guys
2 hiring?" You know, "What are you guys doing over there?" But
3 it had absolutely, absolutely nothing to do with her saying that
4 folks were cheating on exams.

5 You know, I investigated that. I talked to folks. I didn't
6 find any truth in it. You know, I didn't go back - I may have
7 told LaRone that I didn't find any truth in it, but I didn't send
8 her a written email and say it, because I had washed it at that
9 point, you know, and it was not in my radar as to a decision of
10 termination for her. You know, but she could have just pulled
11 herself together as far as her personality and her attitude and
12 conduct and her cohesiveness towards her classmates and the
13 folks that she worked with, I wouldn't have had any problems with
14 LaRone. And I told her that over and over and over again. You
15 know, "LaRone, it's just one thing that we're missing here. You
16 know, you're smart. You're going to be a 13. You know, from 13
17 and go 14, 15. And Acquisitions is a big field. It's wide open.
18 You know, this is a place to be right now in the government."

19 And she only had one problem, one problem, and she couldn't
20 address that. And I'm telling you, I kept saying, "LaRone,
21 you're so smart, you're so smart. Why are you going to give this
22 up? You're so smart. I mean, you have the opportunity just to
23 do well in this program."

24 Whatever you give her, she'd knock it out, just like that.
25 She'd knock it out just like that. But just don't get in her
26 way, you know? If you got in her way, you's going to get it.

1 You know, Wendy was one that - she tried Wendy a couple times,
2 but I think Wendy was maybe too strong for her, whereas Iceah and
3 - well, she tried Ken, too. Ken's a big guy. Ken's 10-something
4 years in the military, and she wasn't scared of him. You know,
5 so I guess it wasn't about size or anything.

6 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: As far as the test-taking, that's all
7 done online, right?

8 ROBERT FOYE: No, we have classroom instruction as well.
9 Most of our instruction is classroom. They only have a small
10 portion of it where they do online training.

11 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: I think that's what she was alleging
12 was the online training.

13 ROBERT FOYE: Yeah.

14 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And you had mentioned that the
15 students that you talked to said there was no way to do it,
16 because there are different tests all the time.

17 ROBERT FOYE: Um-hm [yes].

18 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Can you just real briefly elaborate on
19 that and how can we confirm that, that the tests are different?

20 ROBERT FOYE: Well, I don't know if you want to go in there
21 and take one, because there's some long tests. But they take a
22 course, Acquisitions 101 and Acquisitions 101A, I believe it is,
23 or 102A, which are very, very intense. They are intense course,
24 because the classroom (inaudible).

25 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Is there a way to print that out,
26 print the test out?

1 ROBERT FOYE: I don't know. I've never taken it. I've
2 never actually taken the course myself.

3 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Who's the administrator of the test
4 as far as on the computer? Who would I contact?

5 ROBERT FOYE: Defense Acquisitions University. I don't know
6 if there's a phone number for them.

7 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: You said Defense Acquisitions
8 University?

9 ROBERT FOYE: Yeah, you can go online and pull it up
10 yourself. But the course, this is a rigorous course. It's
11 pretty rigorous. But, again, our folks are smart people. I
12 mean, these guys all have like 3.7 grade point averages, you
13 know. I mean, between undergraduate, Master's and Ph.D.'s -

14 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Does it sound like something that
15 Ms. Chudhry would do, that Ms. Chudhry would come to her and
16 say, "Hey, give me a copy of your test"? Does that sound like
17 something that she would have done?

18 ROBERT FOYE: I mean, she was a schoolteacher. It doesn't
19 sound like it to me.

20 KATIE BALESTRA: So that was the issue was that they were
21 passing out copies of tests.

22 ROBERT FOYE: That's what LaRone is alleging was the issue.
23 It wasn't an issue with me.

24 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Is there a way to do that, not from
25 the in-class tests, but from the computer tests?

1 ROBERT FOYE: I don't know. I don't know. I don't know
2 if there is a way that you could do it. I mean, again, these
3 folks are smart. I mean, if there was a way, they would know.
4 They would know how to do it, yeah. But I don't know if that
5 happened. I did concern myself with that after. I talked with
6 them. I talked to the other folks about it. I'm hoping that
7 wasn't what was going on. No one admitted to that -

8 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: No one admitted to it.

9 ROBERT FOYE: No one admitted to it. That whole class
10 is right down the street, and they're in training this week.
11 They're down on 18th Street in Management Concepts. That's an
12 (inaudible) class.

13 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Let's see, is Ms. Lott available, do
14 you think?

15 ROBERT FOYE: She's down there, too. She's down in training
16 this week. They're in training.

17 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: If they came back here, would it take
18 them away from something that's mandatory?

19 ROBERT FOYE: (Inaudible) the training is mandatory. They
20 only can miss a percentage of the training.

21 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Would that affect something with her
22 to miss that?

23 ROBERT FOYE: I mean, I don't know where Wendy's at.
24 You're talking about Wendy Lott, right?

25 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Yes.

1 ROBERT FOYE: I mean, I don't know where she's at as far as
2 her learning curve in this particular training. I mean, some
3 folks are, you know, they get it just like that, and some don't
4 get it. It takes them a little longer, because they have a test
5 that they take on Friday that they have to pass.

6 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: From the week before?

7 ROBERT FOYE: Yeah. Now could you go up there and talk to
8 her?

9 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Yeah.

10 ROBERT FOYE: Yeah, I mean, I wouldn't want to keep her out
11 of class too long, though.

12 KATIE BALESTRA: We can do her lunch break or something?

13 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Where is she at?

14 ROBERT FOYE: I can walk up there with you one day that you
15 want to go up there.

16 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay. Well, what I'll do is if
17 you're -

18 ROBERT FOYE: I'm not here on Friday, but.

19 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, it might be tomorrow.

20 ROBERT FOYE: Yeah.

21 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Tomorrow.

22 ROBERT FOYE: I mean, should I tell her that -

23 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: No, let's hold off on that.

24 ROBERT FOYE: Okay, so don't mention anything to her?

25 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: No.

26 ROBERT FOYE: Okay.

1 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Can you think of anything else?

2 ROBERT FOYE: No, they go to lunch between - I need to check
3 with them and see what time. I'm thinking 11-11:30, but I don't
4 know if you'd want to do it at their lunchtime.


5 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, all right, we'll go off the
6 record at 3:32.

7

8 (End of Interview)

9

3



July 31, 2008

Memorandum

To: Memo for Record

From: Robert L. Foyel 

Subject: Reported Incident

On July 31, 2008 Kia Myles came to my office to report that she was disrespected by LaRone President while attending the GovWide 2006 graduation. When I spoke with LaRone she said that she did not disrespect Kia. I advised LaRone and Kia that it was important to be part of the team and that disrespect was not acceptable behavior while in GAMIP. LaRone and Kia both agreed and said that this would not occur again.

Below is the conversation that Kia Myles reported:

"On July 31, 2008, while attending the 2006 GAMIP Class Graduation Reception Kia was standing in the refreshments line behind LaRone President and another coworker. LaRone was lamenting out loud about how she could not stand the "people" who sit in the front of the class, how they think they are smarter than everyone else, how their professional experience does not warrant them thinking they are better than anyone, how they could never be qualified to be her supervisor, how she didn't care about anyone in the program because she wasn't there to "make friends", and the program participants couldn't "do anything for her". She proceeded to repeat these sentiments loudly several times in line. She then joined a larger group of interns that were seated in the room and repeated the sentiments again. Kia personally took offense to her feeling it necessary to voice these sentiments publicly and debated whether Kia should approach her or not. Kia finally decided that it would be best to voice my concern to the GAMIP Program Manager rather than risk a confrontation with LaRone."

4

#2



August 26, 2008

Memorandum

To: Memo for Record

From: Robert L. Foye

Subject: Reported Incident

On Wednesday, August 26, 2008 at approx. 12:00 PM, Robert Foye and Lynn McPheeters approached Kenneth Gipson, Michael Capobianco, Janice Bennett and Valerie Green on E Street in front on the Department of Interior. Kenneth immediately said that he needed to speak with me; I told Kenneth that we were headed to a meeting at DOD-WHS and would call him when I return. As we proceeded to the metro stop (Robert and Lynn) LaRone President approached us, she was vey upset and said that "she was going to take out a police report and restraining order against Kenneth Gipson for putting his finger in her face. I ask LaRone to go back to work and I would address this matter after our meeting, she agreed. I then called Kenneth Gipson on my cell phone and asked him to report back DOI and wait until I return because LaRone and Kenneth both worked for DOD-WHS.

During the meeting with Kenneth Gipson he explained that he approached LaRone President to ask LaRone if there was a problem because she never spoke when he acknowledge her. Kenneth stated "when he approached LaRone and begin telling her his concerns she began to get upset and said she was a grown woman and if I chose not to speak to you then that's my business."

I called LaRone and had her report back to DOI as well. In the mean time I called the witnesses Janice, Michael and Valerie.

Janice said that Kenneth was using has hands to talk and that it may have been misunderstood but that LaRone said that she did not want to discuss this at this time, however Kenneth continual to discuss this matter.

Valerie said that she did not notice anything unusual. Michael also said that he did not notice anything going on between LaRone and Kenneth.

I spoke with LaRone separately from Kenneth, her statement was:

“Kenneth put his fingers in my face when he approached me and I was violated because of this I am going to request a restraining order against Kenneth Gipson for putting his finger in my face.” When I finally got LaRone to calm down I had Kenneth join us in Denise Bailey’s office.

After counseling both LaRone and Kenneth on the importance being part of the team and respecting each other they both agreed that they would let this situation go. I ask Lynn McPheeters to join the meeting so that both LaRone and Kenneth could inform Lynn of the outcome. Again, LaRone and Kenneth agreed that this matter was over and they both were ok with the outcome. They agreed to treat each other in a respectful manner.

5

#5



"Gipson, Kenneth CIV
WHS/A&PO"
<Kenneth.Gipson@whs.mil>
09/26/2008 11:58 AM

To Robert Foye/NBC/OS/DOI@DOI
cc
bcc
Subject Statement of Event

To whom it may concern,

On the morning of August 26, 2008 around 11:30am I Kenneth Gipson approached Larone President. I wanted to speak with her about her behavior towards myself and fellow interns. Larone President had been walking past a selected few including myself and would not speak even when spoken to. This incident was happening on a daily basis. When I approached Larone and begin telling her my concerns she began to have loud out burst. She further went on to say that it was not the time nor the place. Shortly after that comment she followed the comment with "I am a grown woman and if I chose not to speak to you then that's my business". I said, "No problem I will have to address this issue with the Program Manager Robert Foye. She replied, "I don't care who you tell". At that point I walked off.

Later once I saw Robert Foye and his boss Lynn McPheeters I informed Robert Foye that I needed to speak with him later. Mr. Foye said OK they were headed to a meeting with DOD. About a half hour later I got a call from Robert Foye asking me to return to Department of Interior and wait on him. He said that he was aware that there was an issue with Miss President and myself. Once Lynn and Rob returned Lynn approach me and asked what happen.

I informed Rob and Lynn of the events that took place.

All the statements mention above is true to the best of my knowledge.

Statement _____ End of

Kenneth L. Gipson

Washington Headquarters Services

Contract Specialist

(703) 588-1795 (O)

(703) 588-1990 (F)

6

#6



Maria Jose Vant Hof
<maria.jose@verizon.net>
09/23/2008 08:46 PM

To Robert Foye/NBC/OS/DOI@DOI
cc
bcc

Subject Requested information

History: This message has been replied to and forwarded.

Dear Robert,

As requested, this is a follow on to the conversation we had Tuesday September 23, 2008 about Ms. President's lack of professionalism at work.

The problems became evident at the first weeks of our rotation at DOD. Coming to work is a gamble everyday. I am not sure if she is going to be in a sarcastic and cynical mood or if it is going to be one of those extra special days when she decides to scream at me, talk down to me and turn our work environment from an office setting to a market place. I have never worked with someone so unprofessional, undiplomatic, untactful and just plain nasty. I have not come to you sooner with this problem because I thought that I could manage it myself through ignoring her behavior and being professional. However, the verbal abuse is getting to be her only way of communication with me and I fear I won't be able to maintain my composure much longer.

Today we were tasked with gathering information for one of the managers. Each of us was to gather the information and give it to Ms. President to further assemble it in one large document. I went to gather the information and the contract specialist had it all ready in a spread sheet. I asked him to please send it to Ms. President and proceeded to inform her that the information was coming. Once I informed her that an e-mail was coming she started screaming at me. She was very angry that the information was getting directly to her. She did not understand the document and proceeded to scream at me that I have to "TALK TO YOUR (MY) PEOPLE GET THE INFORMATION" her tone was loud and condescending. I had to bring the other employee over to her desk to explain the document to her, her tone now no where near as nasty as before. After this incident I was very angry, I don't have any need to be screamed at. I don't understand her reasoning for treating me like that. I was filled with impotency and anger so I went outside in order not to respond to her in the same manner. On my way out other interns advised me that it was time to call you and informed you of the situation, for they had been witness to her behavior before.

On another occasion when asked if she knew what was going on with the printer, for it was down, she screamed that how is she supposed to know, that she was there the same as me. She did it in a very nasty tone obviously bothered by the simple inquiry. I was so embarrassed I wished I had never asked her anything.

When asked if she knew how to do something instead of cooperating she laud and clear tells you that she is not here to teach anyone. She makes it difficult to work in a team or share any type of information with her.

The atmosphere at the office is tense due to her behavior. She makes a very hostile environment not only for me, but for others around us, who have already come to me asking what is going on with her. Unfortunately I get to sit close to her and get to endure a lot more abuse than the rest.

I hope this information is useful to you. I am sorry to inform you of such uncomfortable news. If you have any additional questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Maria J Vant Hof

7



"President, LaRone CIV
WHS/A&PO"
<LaRone.President@whs.mil
>

09/24/2008 10:54 AM

To Robert Foye/NBC/OS/DOI@DOI

cc "Lott, Wendi CIV WHS/A&PO" <Wendi.Lott@whs.mil>,
"Bellamy, Isaac CIV WHS/A&PO" <Isaac.Bellamy@whs.mil>,
"Vant Hof, Maria CIV WHS/A&PO"

bcc

Subject FW: Hotlist Schedule

Rob:

I would like to address the following request from our group. As we are considered to be a group, I would like your direction on this scenario.

Last week, we were required, as a group, to assemble information and present this information related to contracts we are working on for a meeting with our Director, Melanie. Isaac volunteered to present for the entire group, Wendy, Maria, Me and himself. During the middle of the meeting, I was approached by Isaac who informed me that he was not familiar enough with my contracts to present my information, so at the last minute, I presented the information myself although he presented Wendy's, Maria's and his.

Yesterday, we were given an assignment to retrieve information from various staff members and compile that information into a spreadsheet for Melanie's use due by the end of the day. We drew numbers and my number was pulled to compile the information into a spreadsheet of which was completed and of which I had no problem with.

At the same time yesterday, we were given another assignment as to compiling information for a Hotlist by Melanie. Upon pulling numbers today, my number was again pulled to compile the first set of information of which I am opposed for the following reasons:

1. As we are considered to be a group, I feel the work should be spread out evenly, not that it should be expected that I contribute first all of the time or that my work is separate from theirs.
2. There are other members of this group who should be expected to contribute and take the lead instead of me.
3. As this is supposed to be a learning experience for all of us, I would like the benefit from learning from my peers as well.

Please advise the appropriate approach for this issue so we can move forward and complete this task in a timely manner. Thanks.

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

From: Lott, Wendi CIV WHS/A&PO
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2008 10:41 AM
To: Alston, Melanie CIV WHS/A&PO; President, LaRone CIV WHS/A&PO; Bellamy, Isaac CIV WHS/A&PO; Vant Hof, Maria CIV WHS/A&PO
Subject: Hotlist Schedule

1. Larone
2. Marie
3. Wendi
4. Isaac

Best regards,
Wendi J. Lott
Contract Specialist
WHS A&PO
Office- 703.588.0165
Fax-703.696.4164
wendi.lott@whs.mil

8



"Lott, Wendi CIV
WHS/A&PO"
<Wendi.Lott@whs.mil>
09/24/2008 12:00 PM

To Robert Foye/NBC/OS/DOI@DOI
cc "Bellamy, Isaac CIV WHS/A&PO" <Isaac.Bellamy@whs.mil>,
"Vant Hof, Maria CIV WHS/A&PO"
<Maria.VantHof@whs.mil>

bcc

Subject RE: Hotlist Schedule

Rob,

As we are assigned to work in a group we always conform to what Larone wants because she always disagrees with group. It was her decision to pick numbers & when her number was picked first again she said she wasn't doing it & said it wasn't up for discussion. She is very difficult to work with. Each encounter has her peers holding their breath for an altercation. We have to work in group, but it is ridiculous that the same person causes conflict each time. We are here to learn & the work is distributed evenly. We all have tasks that we don't like but we all do them. We are all under different stresses she is just another added stress. The work environment is tense and you cannot expect people to continue to hold their tongue because we all have feelings. Your assistance is needed in this matter.

Best regards,
Wendi J. Lott
Contract Specialist
WHS A&PO
Office- 703.588.0165
Fax-703.696.4164
wendi.lott@whs.mil

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

From: President, LaRone CIV WHS/A&PO
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2008 10:55 AM
To: 'Robert_Foye@nbc.gov'
Cc: Lott, Wendi CIV WHS/A&PO; Bellamy, Isaac CIV WHS/A&PO; Vant Hof, Maria CIV WHS/A&PO
Subject: FW: Hotlist Schedule

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information for a Hotlist by Melanie. Upon pulling numbers today, my number was again pulled to compile the first set of information of which I am opposed for the following reasons:

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Please advise the appropriate approach for this issue so we can move forward and complete this task in a timely manner. Thanks.

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

From: Lott, Wendi CIV WHS/A&PO
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2008 10:41 AM
To: Alston, Melanie CIV WHS/A&PO; President, LaRone CIV WHS/A&PO; Bellamy, Isaac CIV WHS/A&PO; Vant Hof, Maria CIV WHS/A&PO
Subject: Hotlist Schedule

1. Larone
2. Marie
3. Wendi
4. Isaac

Best regards,
Wendi J. Lott
Contract Specialist
WHS A&PO
Office- 703.588.0165
Fax-703.696.4164
wendi.lott@whs.mil



"Chaudhry, Aseia CIV
WHS/A&PO"
<Aseia.Chaudhry@whs.mil>
09/24/2008 02:03 PM

To Robert Foye/NBC/OS/DOI@DOI
cc
bcc
Subject Report.

Hello Rob

A few weeks ago I was having a conversation with a fellow intern (Isaac Bellamy) who sits right next to Larone President. Larone President had left her desk without logging out. Three of the interns (Maria, Isaac, and Larone) sit in one small area with no walls. While I was leaving Isaac's area, I happened to face Larone President's computer. Larone walked in at the same time and said "Do you need anything? Why are you all up in my computer?" This is all I can remember right now because I was in a real shock at the moment. I want to make this clear that I was no where close to her computer at the time. The tone of her voice was very insulting, and degrading. She basically yelled at me. I just walked away from her because I didn't want to create any scene at a professional workplace. Now I have to be very careful around her especially after seeing her disrespect the other interns. Every time she passes by me, I try not to look at her because she's unpredictable. You never know when she'll snap at you.

Witnesses: Isaac and Maria who were sitting at their desks when she yelled at me.

*Aseia Chaudhry
Contract Specialist
WHS-Acquisition & Procurement Office
1777 N Kent St, Suite 9100
Rosslyn, VA 22209
(703) 588-2183 Phone
(703) 696-3269 Fax*

9

#9

September 25, 2008

Dear Rob,

Offensive, hostile and aggressive are just a few of the terms that can be used to describe the type of environment that I have experienced while working with LaRone. The work environment began to decay when LaRone would express to me covertly her discontent with one of our team members, Maria Vant Hof. LaRone has made numerous derogatory comments to me and Maria which brought Maria's intellectual ability into question. Furthermore, I have personally been targeted by LaRone. During a conversation LaRone and I had about our lack of support from our supervisor at DOD, I was told that my problem was that I think that I am still in college. Since then LaRone has continued to harass her fellow employees. Moreover she has come to me for advice on how to complete an assignment and laughed my suggestions off as having nothing to do with the assignment.

The amount of stress LaRone's behavior has inflicted on the team makes it extremely hard to work with her. I have personally observed her maliciously berate a fellow employee she believed to be looking at her computer screen, she continues to criticize Maria's work in front of other employees and she has discounted me as not being an equal member of the team. September 25, 2008 I witnessed her downright refusing to acknowledge a team decision that had been made with her guidance. Prior to that incident, on September 24, 2008, after a group decision was made LaRone mumbled a series of profane remarks.

As a result of the aforementioned behavior and actions of LaRone the team's morale and productivity has declined. The conflicts LaRone has created have caused a great deal of stress on the team. The team is constantly working trying to find ways to complete assignments and productivity while minimizing the conflicts brought into play by LaRone.

I hope this written account helps you in solving this unfortunate circumstance.

Sincerely,


Isaac J. Bellamy

10

#10

September 26, 2008

LaRone President
P.O. Box 56243
Washington, DC 20040

Dear LaRone President:


Re: Disciplinary Warning

This letter serves as written notice to LaRone President. We have made the decision to take disciplinary action regarding this situation. For a verbal altercation that occurred between you and Maria Vant Hof on Tuesday, September 23, 2008 at DOD/WHIS at about 2 o'clock p.m. in the office, after your team was tasked with gathering information for one of the managers. When Maria informed you that an email was being forwarded to you from the contract specialist that was already in a spread sheet, you yelled at her, saying, "You need to talk to your people."

After receiving this complaint, I called you into my office and requested Maria Vant Hof, Isaac Bellamy and Wendi Lott be present because each of these people said they have witnesses you disrespecting Maria. Denise Bailey, was also present for this meeting. I asked you if you had said the words I quoted to you above. You said that you were upset at Maria she had a problem understanding, but did not yell at her. I asked if you were at all rude or threatening towards Maria Vant Hof, and you denied that you were. You also stated that several of the interns have attempted to acquire test exams and answers from the online training courses that your class was responsible for taking. We ended our meeting by saying that you wanted HR to be present in order to continue this meeting.

Interviewing Isaac Bellamy and Wendy Lott on Wednesday, September 24, 2008, I discovered that Isaac and Wendy both overheard you saying the words Maria Vant Hof claimed you said. They agreed that you were angry and your tone was loud and threatening. Isaac was in the office as well when he overheard your altercation with Maria Vant Hof.

I asked you if you had any explanation for your behavior, because this has happened at least four of times with other interns. You said there were no "real personal problems" between you and Maria are anyone else in the program.



I have decided to give you a written warning for your misconduct. You were previously given a verbal warning for yelling and swearing at other Government-Wide interns Kia Myles on July 3 of this year and Aseia Chaudhry on another date. At that time, I told you that you were expected to treat your co-workers with respect, particularly those in your program. You were warned that repeated incidents of such behavior would lead to further discipline. You have again failed to follow my direction, and I have no choice but to impose this written warning against you.

Once again, I must take this opportunity to remind you that any future repetition of disrespect or yelling towards co-workers will lead to further discipline, up to and including dismissal. Also, I am instructing you to bring all conflicts between you and Maria Vant Hoff to my attention, immediately. You will also immediately begin treating Maria, and other colleagues, in a respectful manner. You will not yell at anyone in the office or while on work time.

If there are any personal concerns you wish to talk to me about, please feel free to contact me. In addition, the Department of Interior and our insurance carrier, provides coverage for professional and confidential counseling, which you may decide to take advantage of.

Sincerely,



Robert L. Foye,
Intern Program Manager
Government-wide Acquisition
Management Intern Program

11



Memorandum

September 26, 2008

To: Memo for Record

From: Robert L. Foye

Subject: Requesting Answer and Test for On-Line Training

On September 25, 2008, I spoke with Isaac Bellamy, Maria Vant Hof and Wendi Lott in reference to requesting answers to test questions from other intern. Each of the above interns said that they never requested answers or copies of the on-line test.

12



United States Department of the Interior
Office of Inspector General

INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY REPORT

Case Title McPheeters, Lynn	Case Number PI-PI-09-0304-I
Reporting Office Program Integrity Division	Report Date May 22, 2009
Report Subject Interview of Lynn McPheeters	

On May 13, 2009, Special Agent (SA) Edward Baugh and Investigator Steve Shillingford, Office of Inspector General (OIG), Department of the Interior (DOI), Program Integrity Division, interviewed Lynn McPheeters, President, Department of Interior University (DOIU) at DOI-OIG, Washington, DC, concerning LaRone President's whistleblower complaint to the U.S. office of Special Counsel (OSC). McPheeters agreed to have the interview audio recorded. The interview was not transcribed, but the recording is available in the case file. McPheeters provided the following information:

McPheeters stated that prior to President's termination from the DOIU intern program; several issues had arisen between President and some of her fellow interns assigned to the Department of Defense (DOD). McPheeters stated that DOIU program manager Robert Foye had several discussions with President during a two to three month period about the issues, two of which McPheeters was directly involved. The discussions were an attempt by McPheeters and Foye to understand the problems President was having with her fellow interns and to, "Try to find some kind of resolution that was beneficial to Ms. President and the program." According to McPheeters, the last conversation before President's termination, McPheeters told President that she would work with her by providing some feedback, coaching, and possibly an independent mediator to work on the issues / problems President was having with her fellow interns. Before that could occur however, DOD called stating that, "they wanted her out of the building immediately." McPheeters stated that she did not have firsthand knowledge of the call, but was told by Foye that because of President's ongoing behavior at DOD, other interns had come to DOD supervisors stating that they were, "fearful" of President and that it was creating a problem within the work environment. McPheeters explained that President "has a way of conducting herself that can seem threatening or intimidating," and that McPheeters and Foye had been working with both President and the interns to resolve the problem.

McPheeters stated that despite the problems they were seeing, they were still willing to work with President until DOD requested her removal. McPheeters stated that at that point, knowing President was having behavioral issues; McPheeters could not place her with another government agency.

McPheeters stated that President alleged to her during one of their meetings that the reason she was

Reporting Official/Title Steven A. Shillingford / Investigator	Signature 
Authentication Number: 6E7C2DED1816AC51DFE07BA721DAC142	

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being terminated was because she disclosed that her fellow interns were cheating on DAU online test. McPheeters denied the allegation. McPheeters stated that President also alleged that she and Foye failed to investigate the cheating, and again McPheeters denied President's assertion stating that Foye interviewed several interns and all denied cheating.

13



"Alston, Melanie CIV
WHS/A&PO"
<Melanie.Alston@whs.mil>
10/03/2008 03:25 PM

To Robert Foye/NBC/OS/DOI@DOI
cc "Uher, Lauren CIV WHS/A&PO" <Lauren.Uher@whs.mil>
bcc
Subject Ms Larone President

Rob,

Below are my team leads and my statements about LaRone President behavior.

LaRone did not model or demonstrate professional standards that are essential to contracting profession and that are A&PO standards. She didn't work collaboratively with others when instructed to or asked too. She didn't contribute to a positive atmosphere that fosters cooperation, trust, and team building. She created an uncomfortable atmosphere that fostered tension, mistrust and destroyed team cohesive. When asked to share relevant knowledge and information that had been given to her with the other interns she refused to do so. Although LaRone was polite and respectful to me but she was disrespectful and disvalued individuals who were difference from her. Also her tone of voice was always short and curt. In addition, I received complaints from other interns that LaRone was rude and disrespectful and that it was difficult to work with her.

Melanie Alston
WHS-A&PO
FMOD Division Director
703-696-3860

Melanie,

Larone never cooperated in times where she was requested to work with others. This included refusing to train another intern.

John Hite

Melanie,

As you may be aware, I make regular efforts to teach both contracting skills and office decorum to the interns. As time has progressed it has become more difficult to ensure that all the interns received instructions as a group and so I have exhorted them to share my teachings with whoever is not present. About two weeks ago Maria Vant Hof was working with JoAnn Avants when I helped the interns walk through task order preparations. Both Isaac Bellamy and LaRone President were instructed to assist her when she returned. The next day Ms Vant Hof reported that she needed my direct assistance because Ms president had a hostile attitude when she asked for assistance. Unfortunately, I was on my way to a meeting and was unable to discuss this with Ms President at that time. Worse, contracting issues with the recently completed Pentagon Memorial prevented a follow-up discussion.

v/r

Mike Murtha

14

#13



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
NATIONAL BUSINESS CENTER
Washington, DC 20240



October 3, 2008

Ms. LaRone President
P.O. Box 56243
Washington, DC 20040

RE: Termination During Probationary Period

Dear Ms. President,

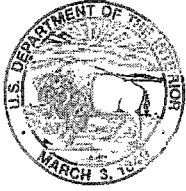
On June 23, 2008, you received an appointment to the excepted service at the Department of the Interior as a GS-1102-9, Contract Specialist in the Government-Wide Acquisition Management Intern Program. The program requires a 2-year internship and 1-year apprenticeship. As an excepted appointment employee, you serve in a probationary period for the first two years of federal service.

After being contacted by another intern, I counseled you on July 3, 2008 about the disrespectful behavior you showed to that intern and the impact your behavior was having on the effectiveness of the intern program. You agreed that you would exhibit more positive work place behavior and work towards becoming a more productive team player.

On August 26, 2008, you indicated that there was an issue between you and another intern. After bringing all involved parties to the table, the issue was identified as disrespect shown to a fellow intern. All parties agreed that teamwork was of paramount importance to the success of the individual intern and the intern program and without positive interpersonal communication, success is compromised. You agreed that all future communication would be positive, respectful, and courteous.

On September 23, 2008, three interns contacted me about your loud verbal and aggressive exchanges with other interns at DOD-WHS, your unwillingness to work with your fellow interns, and their concern that they were working in a hostile work environment. You were counseled on the allegations that your behavior was creating a hostile and unsafe work environment. In that meeting with Denise Bailey, the DOI University Business Manager, Lynn McPheeters, the President of DOI University, and myself, we witnessed the same loud and aggressive verbal communication behaviors that had been alleged by the interns. Ms. McPheeters called your attention to these behaviors and you agreed that they were inappropriate for the workplace and highly unprofessional. Once again, you agreed to focus on changing these behaviors.





United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
NATIONAL BUSINESS CENTER
Washington, DC 20240



Lauren Uher, the program coordinator at DOD-WHS, and Melanie Alston, your on-site supervisor at DOD-WHS, called Robert Foye on October 2, 2008, and stated that the work environment at DOD-WHS had deteriorated due to the unprofessional and disrespectful behaviors displayed by you towards the other interns. Both Ms. Uher and Ms. Alston stated that they wanted you removed immediately from the DOD-WHS facility and that you return your access card upon your departure from the building.

Due to your continued behaviors that contributed to a hostile work environment and the sponsoring agencies request for your removal from their agency, you are being removed from the GS-1102-9, Contract Specialist position and from the federal service during your probationary period. Your appointment in the Government-Wide Acquisition Management Intern Program at the Department of the Interior is terminated effective October 6, 2008.

This letter is a factual statement of the events leading up to your termination and sums up the information discussed in the meeting with Robert Foye, Program Manager, Government-Wide Acquisition Management Intern Program on October 6, 2008. If you have any questions or need additional information in regards to this letter, please contact Ann Pricci, Chief, Human Resources Operations Branch – East, at 202-219-0135.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Foye
Robert L. Foye

Intern Program Manager
Department of the Interior

15

#14



LPREZ
<laroneprez@yahoo.com>
10/07/2008 10:13 AM

To Robert Foye/NBC/OS/DOI@DOI
cc
bcc
Subject Fwd: Cheating on Certification Exams at DOD by Several
DOD Interns

History: This message has been forwarded.

Rob:

Can you please place a copy of this correspondence in my employment file. Please make sure this is attached with copies of my records requested yesterday. Thanks

LPREZ <laroneprez@yahoo.com> wrote:
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 07:06:18 -0700 (PDT)
From: LPREZ <laroneprez@yahoo.com>
Subject: Cheating on Certification Exams at DOD by Several DOD Interns
To: jonathan.higgins@dau.mil

Mr. Higgins:

I have repeatedly attempted to reporting cheating on ACQ101 & ACQ201 courses by students involved with DOI's Governmentwide Acquisition Management Intern Program interns. I have reported this behavior to Lynn McPheeters (President of DOI) and Robert Foye (Intern Program Manager). They repeatedly refused to launch any type of investigation and have completely ignored the fact that students have attempted to acquire test exams from me and have acquired them from another intern and have completed certification courses as a result.

Because I was terminated in retaliation of reporting this unethical and violation of integrity issue, it appears to be broader than I expected. At least 7 individuals are involved and should not be given certification to hold government warrants nor should they be granted security clearances based on their involvement.

Please feel free to contact me via e-mail regarding this issue and I will be happy to provide names of involved parties. As this issue has been ignored and was not acted upon immediately, I believe it poses a grave image to the process of certification.

16

1 PI-PI-09-0304-I

2 Interview of LaRone President

3 March 27, 2009

4

5 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: The time is approximately quarter
6 after one on March 27th, 2009. We're at the Inspector General's
7 Office, Program Integrity Division, interviewing - and just state
8 your name.

9 LaRONE PRESIDENT: LaRone President.

10 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And would you go ahead and spell it
11 for us please?

12 LaRONE PRESIDENT: L-A-R-O-N-E, capital "R,"
13 P-R-E-S-I-D-E-N-T.

14 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Also present is her attorney.

15 CARY DEVORSETZ: Cary Devorsetz, Cary is C-A-R-Y, last
16 name D-E-V-O-R-S-E-T-Z, Devorsetz.

17 EDWARD BAUGH: And Special Agent Ted Baugh, B-A-U-G-H,
18 DOI OIG.

19 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And Steven Shillingford, Investigator.
20 Spelling is Steven with a "V," last name S-H-I-L-L-I-N-G-F-O-R-D.
21 Ms. President, is it LaRone?

22 LaRONE PRESIDENT: It's LaRone.

23 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Is it okay if I say LaRone?

24 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Absolutely.

25 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay. LaRone, this complaint came to
26 us from the Office of Special Counsel, and I've read through the

1 complaint. And if you would, just go ahead and let us know what
2 happened, and what brings us here today.

3 LaRONE PRESIDENT: I was terminated in retaliation for
4 divulging that several of my colleagues, who were interns in
5 the government-wide Acquisitions Management Intern Program, were
6 cheating on certification exams.

7 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: When did you start with the program?

8 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Officially June 22nd. The first day of
9 report was June 23rd; that was a Monday.

10 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: So 2008?

11 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes.

12 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And you come to us from where?

13 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Chicago.

14 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: From Chicago?

15 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes, I was previously employed with the
16 Jesse Brown Veterans Administration Hospital.

17 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay. And, go ahead and just take us
18 through it. How did things go? You started with the program in
19 June 2008.

20 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Um-hm [yes].

21 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And you said that you, at some point,
22 divulged that there was some cheating. What was the cheating?

23 LaRONE PRESIDENT: We were required to complete several
24 courses for Level 1 certification within the Contracts Specialist
25 field, series GS-1102. Within the series, it's pretty laid out
26 as to what courses you have to take in order to become certified.

1 And there are some electives involved as well that the program
2 determines are used.

3 CARY DEVORSETZ: Can you step back for a moment? From
4 a bigger picture point of view, just to the extent that these
5 gentlemen might not know, what is the program?

6 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Okay.

7 CARY DEVORSETZ: And what do they train you for? And how
8 many of you were there, and what was the point of you being
9 hired?

10 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Okay.

11 CARY DEVORSETZ: And how long is the program?

12 LaRONE PRESIDENT: The program actually hired 26 interns
13 from different regions of the United States, as well as some
14 locally. But the vast majority I would think came from different
15 cities. The Acquisitions Management Intern Program trains
16 Contract Specialists for performance of Contract Specialists'
17 duties within different agencies throughout the Federal
18 government.

19 We were initially scheduled to rotate between four different
20 agencies within six months and, in the third year, complete a
21 one-year apprenticeship at an individual agency of our choice.
22 It had to be a match; it was like a job interview. One of the
23 previous four agencies we were scheduled to be at would select
24 us for a one-year internship or apprenticeship after the two-year
25 completion of the program.

26 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: One of the four?

1 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes. Yes. Upon my arrival, the program
2 had changed quite a bit. We were not scheduled to go to four
3 internships as outlined in the brochure and as told to us during
4 the interview process. It ended up we would have two rotations.
5 Most of us were selected to go to the Department of Defense
6 for three rotations, or two rotations - I personally had two
7 rotations - and two rotations at other agencies, for a total of
8 three. The program was supposed to provide us with mentorship -

9 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: I'm sorry to stop you. Do you know
10 why it changed from four to two?

11 LaRONE PRESIDENT: No.

12 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: They just told you it'd be four, but
13 it changed so that you'd only go to two, but you have no idea
14 why?

15 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Right. Many things changed after we
16 packed up, moved and relocated here.

17 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: When you say "packed up," where did
18 you pack up from?

19 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Chicago.

20 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Oh, I'm sorry. When you say, I
21 thought you -

22 LaRONE PRESIDENT: I relocated here. I paid my own
23 transportation. There were no expense reimbursements. We took
24 this opportunity as a - well, personally, I did, as a promotional
25 opportunity in a career position. So I invested the money in my
26 move here. I gave up everything to be here, and another Federal

1 job, to participate in this program, because it had been noted
2 within the government as a prestigious program, which has been
3 contradictory to what -

4 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Were you told that you would be
5 compensated for your move?

6 LaRONE PRESIDENT: No. That was never agreed upon. No.

7 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, but ultimately, you get here,
8 it's changed as far as that part of it.

9 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Quite a bit.

10 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: So I'm sure some other things changed
11 as well.

12 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Um-hm [yes].

13 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay. So, you said there were
14 26 interns along with yourself?

15 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes.

16 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay. And how did that go with the
17 other interns? I understand from reading though the complaint
18 that there were some problems with the other interns, whether
19 perceived or not perceived, but there was some conflict there.
20 Go ahead and tell me about that.

21 LaRONE PRESIDENT: In terms of the cheating or in terms -

22 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Yes, about the cheating.

23 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Much of the conflict stemmed from the
24 fact of the cheating. Rob Foye, who was the Program Manager,
25 does not have the ability to maintain any confidences whatsoever.
26 He, in my opinion, created an environment of discord and

1 competition amongst the interns. Even though we were all
2 guaranteed positions, he made it in to a competitive position,
3 as opposed to everyone has a job, and let's do the best that
4 we all can to be a team and to learn.

5 He sent out documentation of the status of our class
6 completion. There were several classes that we could work on
7 independently. There was formalized class training that everyone
8 participated with together, but there were two courses we were
9 allowed to take online independently that were required for the
10 course. This is where the problem comes. Rob regularly sent
11 out -

12 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Would you just give me a timeline on
13 that. So these two courses you were able to take online, when
14 was that?

15 LaRONE PRESIDENT: I think they would - we could work
16 on them at any point after class started. They were due
17 approximately the first one in August, then the second one's
18 completion I believe was in November. Don't quote me on that
19 because I don't have documentation on that. I'm just giving
20 you a rough estimate.

21 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay. And these were things you
22 were supposed to take online?

23 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes.

24 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Is this something that you are to do
25 while at work? Because I understand some of the things, and I've

1 taken courses online as well, you can do some of that stuff at
2 home. But is this something that was strictly done (inaudible)?

3 LaRONE PRESIDENT: It was not specified. And the reason
4 why I worked on mine personally at the worksite, because myself
5 and 16 other interns were scheduled to work at the Department
6 of Defense. The Department of Defense was not prepared for
7 16 people to be there at the same time. We did not receive
8 any mentorship as promised in the brochure. They did not have
9 adequate supervisory staff to deal with the number of people
10 that had come there, and they did not divide us up by experience
11 level.

12 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Do you have the brochure, by the way?

13 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes, I have a copy of it.

14 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Do you have a copy that I can keep?

15 LaRONE PRESIDENT: They have some up at DOI University, but
16 this is what it looks like.

17 CARY DEVORSETZ: I can email it to you.

18 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: No, no, no, if they have it, I'll go
19 get one.

20 LaRONE PRESIDENT: And the mentoring piece is specifically
21 in here.

22 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: I see. Okay.

23 LaRONE PRESIDENT: DoD told us they were not participating
24 in that process, of which they told us they were not
25 participating in *many* of the requirements of the program. They
26 gave us a temporary two supervisors, but they really did not give

1 us any work for several months, at least up until September 1st.
2 We started there on July 7th, I believe. We weren't given
3 anything but maybe one or two busy-work assignments. They were
4 not related to contracting.

5 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: So what did you do between June 22nd
6 and July 7th?

7 LaRONE PRESIDENT: I did my classes.

8 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: The online classes?

9 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Um-hm [yes].

10 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And you said this is where the
11 cheating comes in?

12 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes.

13 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Tell me about that.

14 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Rob sent out notifications on a periodic
15 basis as to the status of completion of the interns' classes.
16 It was a roster, and it would state who completed what. I
17 progressively completed my class, unbeknownst that he would be
18 sending the information out publically. There was an employee by
19 the name of Aseia Chaudhry. She worked on another floor, but she
20 was an intern. She was assigned to a different department. She
21 would come upstairs every day.

22 CARY DEVORSETZ: And could you spell her name?

23 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: I think it's in here. A-S-E-I-A, is
24 that correct?

25 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes, that's the first name.

26 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And then it's C-H-A-U-D-H-R-Y?

1 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Is the last name.

2 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, just so that I'm clear, you said
3 that when you would finish your online course, he would send it
4 out publicly. What do you mean?

5 LaRONE PRESIDENT: He would send out notification, a class
6 roster and the status of completion and due dates.

7 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: So, basically, if there's 26 people
8 in the class, he would send out a roster saying these people have
9 completed their classes?

10 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes. I might have a copy of it,
11 just for illustrative purposes. Here we go.

12 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay. All right.

13 LaRONE PRESIDENT: This is one of the last ones I received
14 prior to my termination, but we have the different classes, and
15 people had not completed it, but you had the due dates on there.
16 If it wasn't completed, there was a due date. But since these
17 classes were completed, everyone completed it, he overwrote the
18 date and put the -

19 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, and just so that I'm clear, was
20 this a problem for you that he was sending it out?

21 LaRONE PRESIDENT: It wasn't really a problem for me, but it
22 let everybody know that I was completed with all of the classes.
23 I was the first person complete with everything. And that leads
24 up to the discussion that we will have.

25 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, yes.

1 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Well, Aseia Chaudhry had already been
2 asking me for the status and for copies of the modules that I had
3 completed. Those were tests. After you complete a module, you
4 take a test, and your scores appear on screen, the answers appear
5 on the screen. You had the opportunity on three occasions to
6 retake the test if you failed. If you failed on the third
7 attempt, you were kicked out of the system, and you would have
8 to contact DAU University, go through a discussion with the
9 professor as to what problems you were having, why, get some
10 detailed information.

11 CARY DEVORSETZ: Defense Acquisitions.

12 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes.

13 CARY DEVORSETZ: DAU.

14 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Defense Acquisitions. They would reset
15 the test and allow you to take the balance of the questions that
16 you didn't get right. You had to score 100 percent on these
17 tests. You could also print the screen after you got your
18 culmination of answers and scores, and it would give you the
19 questions that you got right. So the checkmark was there.

20 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: It would also give the answers?

21 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes. Not for the questions that you got
22 wrong.

23 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: But the ones you got right?

24 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes.

25 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: So, if you got them all right -

1 LaRONE PRESIDENT: It would give you they entire test. Even
2 if you went back in a second time and took the test, with the
3 balance of the questions that you initially got wrong, if you got
4 them right the second time, it would give you the answers. So,
5 you had the answers to the complete task. Aseia Chaudhry was
6 collecting those tests, and she was attempting to get them from
7 me, initially.

8 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, and this is early on? This is
9 within that June 22nd, 2008?

10 LaRONE PRESIDENT: No, this is within the mid to last part
11 of July throughout August.

12 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, but you said that you were
13 taking your test. I asked you what you were doing between
14 June 22nd, when you first came on, and July 7th, when you went
15 to the internship with DoD. You said you were taking some of
16 the tests. Was she asking for the tests?

17 LaRONE PRESIDENT: I was taking the courses.

18 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: The courses, okay, but you weren't
19 taking the test yet.

20 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Not as of yet. There's lots of course
21 material you have to complete, several modules what they're
22 called, prior to being able to take a test. So, it may take
23 you a week to read the material, review the material, go through
24 the synopses to make sure that you're comfortable with the
25 information to take the test because, again, you only get three

1 attempts. And these tests were not easy, even though they were
2 online.

3 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, two-prong question, and I'm
4 sorry about two prongs.

5 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Sure.

6 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: The first one: Was she the first
7 person that started asking you for tests, assuming that there
8 more than one?

9 LaRONE PRESIDENT: She was the *only* person. She was the
10 designated representative of the group.

11 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, well, I'm sure we're going to
12 get to that.

13 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Um-hm [yes].

14 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: So, she started asking you for that.
15 And then a timeline: When did she start asking you for the test?
16 So it must have been after the 7th.

17 LaRONE PRESIDENT: I would think sometime late in July. But
18 I can't be specific about it, because initially, when she asked,
19 I just kind of blew it off. But she became persistent and came
20 up every day; that's when it became a problem.

21 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: How did that manifest itself?

22 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Aseia worked on the, I believe,
23 7th floor; we worked on the 9th floor. Myself and two colleagues
24 shared a cubicle area, a workspace about the size of this office.
25 There were three desks, which it was the only workspace to my
26 knowledge in the building set up like that. That's how I know

1 so much about this situation. She would come up from the
2 9th floor and pretty much visit like a butterfly every day. And
3 she had personal relationships with some of the people who shared
4 the workspace with me, so it wasn't uncommon for her to come up
5 and visit on a daily basis.

6 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Come down?

7 LaRONE PRESIDENT: No, she was on the 7th floor, and we were
8 on the 9th, I believe. It's been a while since I've been there,
9 so don't quote me exactly. But there were floor differences.

10 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Wherever, she would come to you?

11 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes, she worked on a different floor.

12 Initially, they started talking about it because they realized
13 they could print the classes on the screen and get the scores.
14 The classes became progressively difficult, and they knew, based
15 on the sheet, that -

16 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And when you say "they," who were you
17 talking about?

18 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Those who had started this whole cheating
19 fiasco.

20 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Give me the names.

21 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Aseia Chaudhry, {Wendy Lott, Isaac
22 Bellamy, Maria Van Hort}.

23 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: The four of them?

24 LaRONE PRESIDENT: There were more, but they come in a
25 little bit later.

26 CARY DEVORSETZ: That was five, though.

1 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: That's four.

2 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Aseia, Wendy - that's four.

3 CARY DEVORSETZ: Aseia, Wendy, Isaac, Maria, you're right,
4 sorry.

5 LaRONE PRESIDENT: It's four. But there are a couple more
6 people involved, and I'll tell you those names as we progress
7 through the story.

8 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, go ahead.

9 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Aseia would come up every day. They
10 had somehow determined through previous tests that they could
11 print the test out and share the tests. Well, they were unable,
12 unwilling or did not want to do their work, so they did not work
13 on their classes independently.

14 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Let me ask you. Is it obvious, and
15 you explained to me what way it is, that this is cheating? How
16 is it obvious?

17 LaRONE PRESIDENT: I'm going to get to that.

18 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: You left off, so she started initially
19 asking you for it.

20 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Right.

21 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And it was apparently for the four.

22 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Right, to distribute. It was obvious that
23 they were cheating because they were not doing any work at DoD.

24 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: What did you say to her when she asked
25 you for the test?

1 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Initially when she asked, I told her
2 I was not finished. I lied, because I didn't want to become
3 involved in it. I had heard the discussions, because we shared
4 a cubicle, but I did not participate in the discussions because
5 I knew it was wrong.

6 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: You heard the discussion between the
7 four of them?

8 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes, it was openly talked about between
9 the four of them. But I did not participate in the discussions,
10 I kind of tuned them out, like I was working on something else,
11 because I didn't want to become involved. Once Rob sent out the
12 listings of the status of completion, she started asking me for
13 them every single day. She did it initially in a joking way, and
14 then it became more aggressive as if she was demanding the tests
15 from me, that I participate in supplying them with the answers
16 for the tests.

17 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: When you say "became demanding," what
18 do you mean?

19 LaRONE PRESIDENT: She came up every day, sometimes twice a
20 day, asking the status of my completion, asking when she could
21 have copies.

22 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And what would you say?

23 LaRONE PRESIDENT: I haven't finished them yet. I tried
24 that tactic until Rob sent out the public sheet because, see, I
25 could lie and no one knew what the status of my completion was

1 until he sent out the sheet. Once he sent out the sheet, she
2 started coming up daily.

3 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Then what did you say?

4 LaRONE PRESIDENT: "Well, I can't give you copies. It's
5 wrong."

6 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And what did she say?

7 LaRONE PRESIDENT: She just laughed. She just laughed.
8 But immediately after I refused to give them copies, they started
9 openly distributing copies amongst each other. She would sit
10 them in their chair - again we shared a cubicle -

11 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Do you know where they got them from?

12 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Aseia? Chris Henshaw. What is his name?
13 Hang on, I'm going to give you the exact spelling of his last
14 name.

15 CARY DEVORSETZ: While you're looking for that, can I make a
16 comment? I don't know -

17 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Sure.

18 CARY DEVORSETZ: The Department of Interior University
19 invests, and I think they say this, about 155- to \$160,000 per
20 intern.

21 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Hundred and fifty?

22 LaRONE PRESIDENT: It's 156 to 165, and let me tell you
23 how I have that particular figure. On our very first day of
24 employment, they had us sign an employment agreement under
25 duress that we had to not leave this program for the duration
26 of the period of three years, or we would have to reimburse the

1 University the cost, the entire cost, \$165,000, of the program.
2 We were not allowed to seek employment elsewhere. We were not
3 given a copy of this agreement. We were told it was put in our
4 file. It was not sent out with our offer letters or introduction
5 packets. We only received this letter for approximately
6 10 minutes. We had a chance to sign it and return it to them
7 with no advance notification. I can't even tell you what all of
8 the contents of the letter is, but we were told in the training
9 room on our first day that if we did not sign this letter, our
10 employment would be terminated on that day.

11 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay. So you said Chris -

12 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Henshaw, H-E-N-S-H-A-W.

13 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: H-E-N-S-H-A-W?

14 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes.

15 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, so Henshaw - are you saying that
16 since they didn't get it from you, they ended up getting it from
17 him?

18 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes.

19 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay. And so how do you know that?

20 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Because Chris Henshaw and myself, there
21 are two reasons. Chris Henshaw and myself, first of all, we
22 talked about the difficulty of the classes. I had gotten kicked
23 out of the system previously and had to contact DAU University to
24 get the refresher information and get relogged onto the system.
25 He in turn, a couple weeks later, got kicked out and tried to
26 do his work. And he came - because he didn't know what the

1 procedure was to get signed back onto the system, he came to
2 me and talked to me about it, because he knew I had finished
3 the course. And I explained to him what he needed to do, what
4 procedures he needed to follow in order to get back into the
5 system and complete the course.

6 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, so as a result of that, I guess
7 you had a conversation with him, and he told you that he'd given
8 the test to them?

9 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes.

10 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, what did he say?

11 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes, he pretty much said that they were
12 copying the test, and he was giving them the answers after he
13 printed it out. And let me say this: Chris did not cheat; he's
14 a very ethical person. But some of these individuals have a
15 very close relationship with Rob Foye, and they have a lot of
16 influence over Rob Foye. And he was probably afraid for his
17 job, and he didn't want to cause waves. Therefore, he just
18 participated -

19 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Is that what he told you, or is that
20 what you're surmising?

21 LaRONE PRESIDENT: I'm surmising that, based on my
22 interactions and my observations.

23 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay. And can you give me a time
24 frame on that, when he told you that he gave the test to them?

25 LaRONE PRESIDENT: It probably started in the end of July,
26 maybe the beginning of August. You know, I didn't think that

1 those specific time frames would be important, therefore, I
2 didn't bring my notepad.

3 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: It's okay. We deal in timelines in
4 law enforcement, unfortunately, so that's why I'm asking that,
5 but I do understand.

6 LaRONE PRESIDENT: But it was in July and August, but I
7 can't give you July 10th, July 15th.

8 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay. So, now, what else was
9 occurring related to this test cheating from that point on, say
10 the middle of July to August when you found out that Chris had
11 given them the test. What else was going on?

12 LaRONE PRESIDENT: And it may have continued on some in
13 September, and I'll get to that. Aseia was assembling the tests
14 with all the answers. She was actually writing the correct - if
15 there are 50 questions on the test, and you get 45 right, and you
16 have five wrong answers, she was actually going through the test
17 and writing the right answers on those wrong answers.

18 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Can I see that? I'm sorry, where they
19 completed it, because I just want to see when they completed
20 each.

21 LaRONE PRESIDENT: It doesn't say. He overwrote the dates.
22 Once you completed it, he overwrote it.

23 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, I'm sorry, I thought maybe that
24 would show me when they completed theirs. Okay.

1 LaRONE PRESIDENT: No. I don't know if he kept detailed
2 records to that degree of what their completion dates were.
3 I lost my train of thought; what was your last question?

4 CARY DEVORSETZ: You were saying that Aseia was assembling -

5 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Oh, yeah, she was assembling the tests
6 and bringing them upstairs. Now I know for sure, for a fact,
7 that she gave them to Maria, Wendy and Isaac. She either handed
8 them to them or sat them in their chairs.

9 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, how do you know that for a fact?

10 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Because Maria, Isaac and myself shared a
11 cubicle.

12 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay. Go ahead.

13 LaRONE PRESIDENT: I have a little floor plan here you
14 can see. I just drew up a rough draft. And Wendy oftentimes
15 came over and had the discussion within my cubicle about her
16 possession of these tests. Wendy even told me personally she
17 did not know that I already knew that they were distributing the
18 tests, and Wendy told me that they had the tests available. And
19 I told her I really wasn't interested in the answers.

20 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: This is before the sheet came out
21 saying that you had completed yours.

22 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

23 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: She basically said, "Hey, (inaudible),
24 hey, look, I've got the tests if you need it."

25 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

26 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: And what did you tell her?

1 LaRONE PRESIDENT: I wasn't interested.

2 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay.

3 LaRONE PRESIDENT: As you can see, this is just a little
4 rough mock-up. This is the cubicle. I sat here at a desk.
5 Isaac sat here, Maria sat here. There were probably three or
6 four feet in between us. So, it's a small work area; you could
7 see everything that was going on. And their chairs were here,
8 their desks were here. She pretty much came from another floor,
9 walked in. If they were not at the desk, as oftentimes they were
10 not, she would leave it on their desk or in their chair.

11 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: I see you have other people sort of
12 indexed in there. Do you know why Aseia was so closely aligned
13 with Isaac and Maria and Wendy?

14 LaRONE PRESIDENT: They had a relationship -

15 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Did they know each other from
16 somewhere else or something?

17 LaRONE PRESIDENT: You know, they went to lunch everyday
18 together.

19 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: So they just were close. Not
20 necessarily because they knew each other prior to the job,
21 but just they must have just gravitated to each other?

22 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Right. Everyone in the program pretty
23 much aligned themselves with people in their same age group,
24 people they had things in common with.

25 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Are they young people?

1 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes. With the exception of Maria,
2 they're in their 20s.

3 CARY DEVORSETZ: And you told me once something about not
4 just physically taking answers to places, but there was also
5 faxing?

6 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes. Actually, there was another
7 gentleman by the name of {Kenneth Gibson}, and I'm only speaking
8 of the people that I know for sure participated. I can't speak
9 outside of the ones I didn't physically see and have an awareness
10 of. But Aseia came up one day - fax machine was right here.

11 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Give me a time, if you can, a
12 timeline.

13 LaRONE PRESIDENT: I can't. It's in August maybe.

14 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Is this after you told them, "Look,
15 this is cheating," or "I can't do this."

16 LaRONE PRESIDENT: It was before. See, they didn't really
17 get down to the wire until that Acquisitions 201 class was due.
18 So Rob did not distribute that until that Acquisitions 201 class
19 was coming due. He didn't send it out on a regular basis. I
20 cannot recall the specific date that he sent it out, but it was
21 closer to the completion of Acquisitions 201. We had to complete
22 all classes within a certain time frame, and they were work at
23 your own pace. But you had certain scheduled dates.

24 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Do you think that the reason why,
25 however, he sent that notice, if you will, out was that was a
26 more efficient way to tell everybody, you know, "Hey, you need

1 to complete." I know that was a problem for you because it then
2 sort of put them on notice that you were completed with your
3 stuff, and that made them sort of amp up asking you for the
4 answers. But as far a practical reason for why he sent that out,
5 he sent that because it was an efficient way to tell everybody,
6 you know, either you're completed or you're not.

7 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Are you asking my opinion?

8 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: I'm asking, yeah.

9 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Well, my opinion is, in a real world or
10 a good situation, yes. But knowing Rob and his behavior, no.
11 It was to incite discord. It was to make it a competitive
12 environment. It wasn't, in my opinion, to put everyone on notice
13 this is where you are, this is where you need to be. It was more
14 to put a spotlight on certain people and either to demean people
15 or to pat certain individuals on the back. I don't think it was
16 for the intent that you just mentioned now.

17 CARY DEVORSETZ: And you were if not the number one, then
18 top two or three in terms of having completed things more quickly
19 than any of the other interns?

20 LaRONE PRESIDENT: I was the first.

21 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, so he was trying to highlight
22 that you had completed your tasks, and these people needed to
23 complete theirs?

24 LaRONE PRESIDENT: That's a possibility.

25 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay. So you were going to explain
26 to us about the faxing.

1 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Oh, okay. After all the tests were
2 assembled, I guess they had little side conversations, because
3 they were very close to Wendy. She sat on the other end of the
4 floor in pretty much a shared office with people who work for
5 DoD. There were no other interns back there with her. So,
6 oftentimes, they would go back and have discussions.

7 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, wait a minute. Is this DoD's
8 location?

9 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes, this is Department of Defense. This
10 is the floor that we worked on. This is management. I just draw
11 a little rough sketch. This is the interns here, there's some
12 interns here, and Wendy sat alone by herself. Aseia sat on
13 another floor with Chris. Kenneth Gibson worked in another
14 building approximately two blocks away. So he wasn't available
15 to have these discussions, but what happened is no one else was
16 available, Aseia came upstairs, this was before she realized I
17 wasn't going to participate and give them answers. She had been
18 getting information from Chris. She brought the tests upstairs.
19 She didn't know how to use our fax machine. I took her over to
20 the fax machine and showed her how to -

21 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: I'm just laughing, didn't know how to
22 use a fax machine. Go ahead, I'm sorry.

23 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Maria didn't know either. Maria didn't
24 even know how to send a email or make a copy.

25 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay. Sorry.

1 LaRONE PRESIDENT: I know it sounds ludicrous, but it's
2 true. Aseia had me show her how to use the fax machine. I in
3 turn saw the cover sheet as I was walking her through the process
4 of using the fax machine. She faxed the test to Ken Gibson.

5 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, now that fax, how did you know
6 that the test was being faxed to Gibson?

7 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Because they openly walked around with
8 it. I saw it personally.

9 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: So you saw that it was one of the
10 tests?

11 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

12 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Or was it *the* test? Can I ask you
13 also do you know which test it was?

14 LaRONE PRESIDENT: All of them.

15 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: All of them?

16 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Let me explain how the course is run.

17 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Did you have to get 100 or could you
18 get 80?

19 LaRONE PRESIDENT: You had to get 100.

20 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Every time you had to get 100?

21 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Every time, in order to get the
22 certificate.

23 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, so the reason I'm asking that
24 is if I was to go and try to pull all the tests, it wouldn't tell
25 me anything, correct?

26 LaRONE PRESIDENT: It might.

1 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Tell me how it would tell me.

2 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Let me tell you how the tests were
3 structured and let me tell you a way you can possibly tell.
4 In those tests, they had, what, maybe three or four modules.
5 The modules were like chapters. Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 is
6 Module 1; Chapters 6 through 10 is Module 2; Chapters 10 through
7 15 is Module 3. After every module, you took a test. So it
8 would be a summary, a culmination of five chapters of information
9 that you would be tested on.

10 CARY DEVORSETZ: And these tests were required; they were
11 conditions for obtaining a certain certification as a Contract
12 Specialist?

13 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes. Same thing, Module 2, maybe
14 Chapters 6 through 10.

15 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: But you had to get 100 on each module,
16 right?

17 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes.

18 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: The only reason I was trying to
19 expedite was, ultimately, you've got to get 100. I guess maybe
20 I'm confusing what I'm asking. It wouldn't tell me anything,
21 because they're all going to have 100, right?

22 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Eventually.

23 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Eventually, okay.

24 LaRONE PRESIDENT: But there is a way to tell -

1 EDWARD BAUGH: What happens if you miss a question? You
2 just take that same test over, or do they give you a new test on
3 that entry?

4 LaRONE PRESIDENT: In some instances, it may repeat the same
5 question. In some instances, it may give you a new question.

6 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay.

7 EDWARD BAUGH: But you can take as many times as you need to
8 get 100 percent?

9 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Three times?

10 LaRONE PRESIDENT: You only have three opportunities per
11 module.

12 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay. I'm sorry. So let's just go
13 back to you see that she's faxing a test. Do you know which
14 test?

15 LaRONE PRESIDENT: A package.

16 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: A package of them, which is almost all
17 of them?

18 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Almost all of them.

19 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay. And she faxed them to him, Ken
20 Gibson?

21 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes. I showed her how to use the fax
22 machine; that's how I know she personally sent it to him.

23 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Did you question her about that, ask
24 her what -

25 LaRONE PRESIDENT: No, because oftentimes, in the past, and
26 this is another reason why I didn't make any waves or really say

1 very much about it. I've been personally attacked by my peers,
2 not physically, almost physically. But in helping them out, and
3 I have emails to document it, the day after I helped them out
4 or even five minutes after I helped them out, they all would
5 double-team me, because they were probably, and I hate to use
6 the word "jealous," but for lack of a better word (inaudible),
7 that I had certain skill sets that they did not have. And also,
8 on a couple of occasions, Rob made me the center of attention and
9 gave me public accolades, so that caused a lot of angst amongst
10 my coworkers as well. So, every opportunity they got, they
11 retaliated or it was a bunch of backlash behind it.

12 So I had gotten to the point, and I have it documented
13 in my emails, that I kind of tried to separate myself from my
14 coworkers. I would participate in group activities, but outside
15 of things that were required, I kind of kept myself standoffish
16 from them, because I was constantly the center of their angst and
17 their friction.

18 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay. So, you never confronted her
19 about that. What happened I guess after the faxing incident?
20 It became clear, because that was before -

21 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Um-hm [yes].

22 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: - it became clear that, "Look, you
23 know, I'm not going to participate in this cheating." Now we're
24 into August; did you say there was still more cheating going on
25 through August?

1 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Yes, through August and probably through
2 the beginning of September. I can't remember when the classes
3 were due, but we had deadlines for the classes.

4 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay.

5 LaRONE PRESIDENT: I can't remember off the top of my head
6 exactly at what point they were completed. I was just concerned
7 with mine.

8 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: At this point, you're in DoD, you're
9 doing whatever, but they're not really giving you a lot of work
10 to do, but you're still there?

11 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Right, and I'm pretty much focusing on -
12 I took some additional classes after I finished those that were
13 not required of the program, because I wanted to improve my
14 knowledge base. So I was pretty much keeping myself busy with
15 free classes, rather than sitting around being idle, playing
16 on the internet. One of those individuals, the Pentagon Police
17 confiscated his computer and found out he was spending six hours
18 a day on his computer. He would sleep at work.

19 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Who was that?

20 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Isaac -

21 CARY DEVORSETZ: Not just on his computer, but on personal
22 websites.

23 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Personal websites.

24 STEVEN SHILLINGFORD: Okay, what got them onto that?

25 LaRONE PRESIDENT: Excuse me?