

Report of Investigation of Prof. Akbar Sayeed

May 31, 2017

This is a report of an investigation of Professor Akbar Sayeed of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, directed by the Provost of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Dr. Sarah Mangelsdorf. The letter confirming an investigation and outlining the allegations, dated January 17, 2017, is attached as Exhibit 1.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVESTIGATION

Provost Mangelsdorf initiated this investigation at the request of Ian Robertson, Dean of the College of Engineering. In October of 2016 Dean Robertson had a conversation with the parents (P) of a recently deceased graduate student (GS) in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE). ([REDACTED]) P had concerns regarding the behavior of Prof. Akbar Sayeed (AS), a professor in ECE and the director of The Wireless Communication and Sensing Laboratory (WCSL). GS had been employed as a research assistant in the WCSL for seven years. P's concerns related to AS' "abusive" behavior toward GS as well as toward other students employed in the WCSL, resulting in a stressful and "toxic" work environment (Exhibit F).

Dean Robertson found these concerns to warrant investigation and asked Jason Jankoski, Assistant Dean for Human Resources for the College of Engineering, to look into these matters. After conducting several interviews with students, consulting archival data, and reviewing information provided by P, Jankoski prepared a report summarizing his findings and submitted it to Dean Robertson (Exhibit H). Dean Robertson found this report to warrant further consideration and investigation, if appropriate, by the Provost according to Chapter 9 of Faculty Policies and Procedures (Exhibit D).

Provost Mangelsdorf determined that a *prima facie* case existed for the imposition of discipline according to FPP 9.05C (Exhibit C) and appointed me, Professor Emerita

Professor Patricia Wolleat, to conduct an investigation. Prof. Sayeed (AS) was informed of the charges and procedures on January 17, 2017 (Exhibit 1).

CHARGES (Exhibit 1)

1. The concern that:

A. You engaged in behavior that could be described as, “unwelcome” behavior pervasive or severe enough that a reasonable person would find it hostile and/or intimidating and that does not further the university’s academic or operational interests” (11-232, part 1).

B. Your behavior “is unacceptable to the extent that it makes conditions for work inhospitable and impairs another person’s ability to carry out his/her responsibilities to the university” (11-332, part 1).

2. The concern that:

Your behavior evidences an “abuse of authority, such as using threats or retaliation in the exercise of authority, supervision, or guidance...” (11-332, part 1).

3. The concern that:

Your behavior has included “abusive expression... directed at another person in the workplace, such as derogatory remarks or epithets that are outside the range of commonly accepted forms of disagreement, disapproval, or critique in academic culture and professional settings that respects free expression (11-332, part 1).

4. The concern that:

You have engaged in “conduct which adversely affects (your) performance of (your) responsibilities to the university but which is *not* serious enough to warrant dismissal” (FPP, chapter 9.02).

PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND OF INVESTIGATION

The Jankoski Investigation

The Jankoski Investigation took place roughly during the last two weeks of October and early November 2016. Thus, interview data from current and past members of the lab was collected in close proximity to the death of GS.

Dean Jankoski received data from 11 current and former students who had worked in the WCS in the past 5 years. Three of these former members of the lab submitted written statements (Exhibits J, K, L). Seven students agreed to be interviewed either in person (Exhibits M, N, O, P, Q, and R) or by telephone (Exhibit S). Additional interviews of a [REDACTED] (Exhibit U) and an ECE faculty member ([REDACTED])(Exhibit W) were also obtained. Assistant Dean Jankoski conducted the interviews between October 21-28, 2016 and November 15, 2016. Tricia Drees, Human Resources Manager in the College of Engineering, took contemporaneous notes of the interviews.

(See Exhibit X for the language used to invite current and former lab members' participation.)

In addition to these interviews and written statements, Dean Jankoski had access to several types of information provided by P. These included (a) emails from GS directed to P and other family members; (b) emails from GS sent to AS and other faculty in the Department (e.g. Exhibits Y, Z); (c) email sent by P to Dean Robertson (Exhibit E); (e) a letter from Dean of Students Berquam and P's response (Exhibits F and G); (f) several text message threads from GS to his family and other lab members. Professor [REDACTED] [REDACTED] also volunteered to be interviewed (Exhibit V).

The Current Investigation

The current investigation began with a review of the materials gathered for the Jankoski investigation. It was supplemented by interviews with several College of Engineering

faculty and administrators, including Associate Dean [REDACTED], Associate Dean [REDACTED], ECE [REDACTED], ECE Professor [REDACTED], and ECE Professor [REDACTED]. P was invited to submit any additional information--he submitted additional text message threads and several voice memos from GS.

The Jankoski student informants were invited to review their earlier comments and informed that absolute confidentiality could not be promised at this stage of the investigation. (Exhibit X.2 adjusted promise of confidentiality). None of the invited students added any information to that collected by Jankoski.

In addition, information was obtained from two students who were still working in the lab during [REDACTED]. One of these, an undergraduate, who did not know an investigation was underway, voluntarily contacted Dept. Chair Booske, whose notes from the interview appear as Exhibit i.1. A grad student contacted in [REDACTED] updated how he was then experiencing working in the lab (Exhibit i.2)

Notes from the Jankoski student interviews that had been handwritten (Exhibits J-T, V) were typed out by the note taker, Drees, for purposes of legibility.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Charge 1A: Unwelcome behavior resulting in hostile environment

A framework for looking at “hostile and/or intimidating” behavior is provided in a GS email attachment dated October 20, 2015, captured by P (Exhibit I). This document is titled “LabEnvironment.docx” and was shared by Gmail as “Written down thoughts.” Because of its now posthumous status, the critique will be supplemented with data gathered in October 2016 and January-April 2017. The document was shared with at least one other student.

The working environment in the lab has become increasingly toxic and dysfunctional. This has resulted in the current situation where the lab is

In the process of completely imploding. The root causes of this dysfunction are the anger management issues and extremely abusive behavior exhibited by professor Sayeed when interacting with the students in the lab. Although professor Sayeed has exhibited such behavior in the past, since June 2013 when prototyping work on the CAP-MIMO system began it has massively increased in both intensity and frequency. The students in the lab have had discussions with Professor Sayeed on several occasions in the past 7 months. However, this has not led to any noticeable improvement in the situation and if anything Professor Sayeed's behavior has gotten worse in the past few months. This has led to a breakdown in the lab...(Exhibit I).

The alleged toxic environment in the WSCL goes back at least four years when the CAP-MIMO prototype went into production (GS). Several potential deterrents or inhibitors to the toxic climate in the lab were either unavailable or ineffective. According to Associate Dean Blanchard of the College of Engineering and ECE Department Chair Booske there are no routine procedures for evaluating lab climate or the mentoring function of faculty. In addition, because of large numbers of research labs and students in the College of Engineering and Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, lab attrition is not monitored, even though there may be an unusually high percentage of students leaving their positions.

Repeated attempts by GS and other students to deal directly with AS did not result in changed behavior. Voice memos of lab meetings, recorded by GS and presented by P reveal attempts to provide AS with immediate feedback about his behavior. AS would apologize and acknowledge the inappropriateness of his conduct, but would then continue with the tirades. One student reported speaking with the ECE department chair, but the significance of the distress experienced by the student was not appreciated and no further action was taken (Exhibit L). Perhaps more significant, GS had consulted with Prof. Novak in the fall of 2015 about his concerns for the climate in the lab (Exhibit Z1). Although Prof. Novak recognized the seriousness of his concerns and offered him several

options for dealing with the situation, GS decided to wait until any action was taken. Prof. Novak observed that the “catharsis” might have been a sufficient remedy for the moment.

When GS made another appointment with Prof. Novak a year later in October 2016 (Exhibit Z.2), Prof. Novak proactively notified Chair Booske. GS, however, did not keep that appointment.

Charge 1B: Inhospitable behavior impairs members’ ability to carry out responsibilities

GS in the “Written-down Thoughts memo” (Exhibit I) summarized three areas in which AS’ behavior impaired other persons’ abilities to carry out their responsibilities to the University—communication, collaboration, and progress.

A bit of background about the CAP-MIMO project may help to understand the seriousness of the claims in these areas. According to AS this project represented a new direction for him insofar as it involved creating a hardware prototype as opposed to theoretical analyses. There are at least three conditions of employment affected by the nature of the project: first, it was necessary that much of the work be conducted on the lab premises; second, because the project had many aspects, individuals assigned to each aspect had to collaborate with the rest of the team on a frequent basis; and third AS depended on the students’ work to fill in gaps in his own knowledge base. These parameters of the project were significantly affected by AS’ behavior.

Communication

Students found it difficult to communicate with AS, their discussions often resulting in yelling and verbal abuse. As one student reported: *Professor Sayeed is always shouting...mostly at group meetings. If he is not satisfied with answers, he will scream and use dirty words...*(Exhibit R).

Another student offered this example:

*Would lose temper and blow up over small things—would scream, yell, curse.
Weekly meeting—almost every week he would yell...Would come to lab to*

check on progress –would scream, curse, and use personal insults...Language and behavior weren't constructive—being abusive with no purpose...(Exhibit J)

A visiting scholar who supervised 50 people in a lab in another country, observed:

Temper is not good. Cannot control temper.

There is too much work, not enough people.

GS and another student were the only people in the lab when he arrived.

AS expected too much out of GS and the other student.

They were too tired (Exhibit U).

P noted to Dean of Students Berquam that VS had planned to spend 15 months in the lab but left early because of the toxic environment (Exhibit E), even though AS behavior was not directed at him personally.

These types of interactions, often in front of other members of the team, discouraged students from communicating further with him. Students would frequently not ask for help because they were afraid that they would be publically insulted. Furthermore, his yelling replaced what could have been constructive feedback. Students dreaded attending lab meetings, where the presenter of the day was often interrupted, berated, and humiliated.

One student described a situation where GS was the presenter in a group meeting:

...in the middle of a presentation by GS, AS kept interrupting without giving GS a chance to get to that part of the presentation. AS got frustrated with GS and then proceeded to look up and say, "God give me the strength to deal with this shit." (Exhibit Q).

Another type of incident was observed:

In meetings he would pick on one student—he would be working on parts of the Prototype work. Would focus anger on him during meetings in front of the others. Summer 2013-2014. Would threaten to fire (a particular student) if he didn't work harder (Exhibit J).

A typical interaction illustrating the vicious cycle of communication was reported by an international student and the effect it had on him. He reported that these did not occur when he was working on an independent study, but escalated once he became a paid research assistant:

We had an individual meeting every week to discuss my research program. In the meetings he always yelled at me when he was unsatisfied with my work and sometime call me with insulting words like "monkey" and like "babies who do not use the brain to think." Occasionally he even shouted the F-word to me. I felt nervous in the meeting every time and could not express my work clearly as a result and it made him even more angry. It became a vicious circle and I felt stressed and even could not sleep at night. So I decided to quit after the one-year RA contract (Exhibit K).

Collaboration

What GS labeled a "siege mentality" stifled collaboration, a necessary component of advancing the project. Instead of working toward project goals, much of the students' collective energy went toward trying to determine how "to avoid future episodes of abuse" (Exhibit I).

Progress

Progress toward desired outcomes had interrelated project and individual implications. There were four important negative outcomes for individual lab members attributable to AS' conduct:

1. They left the lab, sometimes mid-contract, even if they had no other promise of support. At least 4 of these defections were due to self-described extreme stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns (Exhibits K, L, M, Q.2). A student, who often worked 40-60 hours a week in the lab, reported that working in the lab *was one of the most stressful experiences of his life* and that he quit after 7 months because of mental breakdown (Exhibit Q.2). He emailed GS about his intent to leave:

I'm going to be leaving the research group in the immediate future. I'm

not really cut out to handle the stress that working with Professor Sayeed entails, and for my own mental/emotional health, I'm going to seek work elsewhere (Exhibit Q.2).

2. They changed their degree objective. At least two students, who had planned to work toward the Ph.D., gave up those wishes or plans and left the University with an M.S. degree (Exhibits L and Q.2).

One such student described his experience this way:

Every Monday the lab had a meeting with Professor Akbar Sayeed, and honestly I was always afraid of this meeting because of his yelling screaming and anger. The situation just got worse and worse....and [REDACTED]. He used to tell me that he didn't want to waste his funding for me and wanted me to go back to my home country, I finally did not see any good thing about continuing my PhD studies for my health. I had to make a difficult decision to quit the RA position and leave the College with only my master's degree although getting my PhD. had been my dream of my life.

...I was proud of myself when I passed a qualification exam on my first attempt. I felt I was getting closer to the Ph.D., and that has been my life goal even though I had to leave everything in my home country to come to UW Madison for my goal. However, Professor Akbar's behavior made me give up the Ph.D. It was the most painful decision of my life. I know I still lose a lot of things from not finishing up my Ph.D. just graduating with only a master's degree. It is still my dream and I always think about getting a chance to go to grad College some day if I can meet respectable advisers (Exhibit L).

3. They changed advisors or labs or both and may have had to start over on their research. Along with the self-reported data from individuals who left the lab,

Professor Novak reported that he had taken on a student who left the AS lab, at least in part, because of the stressful environment.

4. Those who remained in the lab had their responsibilities increased to the extent that their own academic progress was delayed, e.g. prelims, dissertation. This was the case particularly for GS for whom the attrition created substantially increased responsibilities for training and lab coordination. He had completed his prelim as early as [REDACTED] but had not yet had an oral scheduled the time of his death in [REDACTED] (Exhibits E and J).

The dysfunction in the lab was particularly difficult for GS. He felt he had to run interference for the younger, less experienced members as well as constantly train new members. He said in his *Written down Thoughts* memo:

The work in the lab has devolved to the point where all efforts are being made to deal with the latest problem that Professor Sayeed has gotten angry and abusive about. This constant putting out of fires has led to an environment where no progress is made on longer-term projects, like writing papers. Since I am the only student who has been a member of the group for more than 1.5 years, I almost always have to help out with putting out the latest fire. This has been particularly detrimental to completing my PhD, since it feels like I am constantly working toward putting out the latest fire to avoid more abuse from Professor Sayeed rather than working towards finishing my PhD.

...turnover has led to a situation where the students who do not leave must spend a significant amount of time. In particular, since I have been the only student who has been in the lab more than 1.5 years, a large portion of this work has fallen on my shoulders. This results in slower progress on the lab's work, which in turn leads to more anger and abuse from Professor Sayeed resulting in yet another exodus of students (Exhibit I).

In addition to the negative outcomes for individual students, AS' behavior was antithetical to the outcomes of the very project he directed. Of course, the energy drained from individuals to deal with interpersonal interactions affected their contributions to the project. As important, however, was the effect of the attrition of lab members. Not only was there difficulty in recruiting new members, (Current lab members would advise potential recruits against working there.), but remaining members had to spend a significant amount of time training new members, getting them up to speed. The training of new members fell particularly to GS, who had the longest tenure in the lab. (Exhibits N and J)

GS recounted the incidence of attrition:

... Sayeed's behavior has led to difficulty in recruiting for the lab. Since the beginning of the prototype project, there have never been more than 4 students in the lab for any appreciable time. However, during this time frame (about 2 years) a total of 6 students have come and gone. Of those 6 students, only one stayed in the lab for more than a year and the latest student to leave lasted only 1.5 months (Exhibit I).

Charge 2. Abuse of authority

Three sets of observations evidence an abuse of authority—unreasonable expectations of loyalty, threats of physical harm, and inhibiting academic progress. Several students expressed the belief that they were expected to subordinate their academic progress, time and energy, and personal relationships to their responsibilities in the lab. On several occasions members were advised that their academics were not as important as their work in the lab. Students' perceived that if there was a conflict it was to be resolved in favor of the lab. These perceptions of loyalty were based on statements such as "no one looks at grades after you get your degree" (Exhibit J).

One of the recipients of AS' prioritizing the lab over academics.

In a group meeting (in March 2015) AS was frustrated with (the student) because he wasn't getting enough done. (The student) was taking a course with AS. AS threatened to give him a poor grade if he spent too much time on class and not enough in the lab. AS immediately backtracked to say he wouldn't do that but he didn't seem sincere (Exhibit J).

Another student reported a similar incident. He was struggling with classes where AS was his instructor. AS told him “no one is going to give a shit about your grades once you graduate” (Exhibit F).

Further indications of abuse of authority were unreasonable expectations of time to be spent in the lab. Because of the necessity of doing work on hardware it was necessary that work be done on the premises. Some members talked about spending 60 to 70 hours a week in the lab (Exhibits I, L, and M). Others expressed that 40-60 hours were expected for a 33% appointment. Prof. Sayeed countered that it is not at all uncommon for labs in the College of Engineering to require considerably more time than contracts specify. Several text messages sent among members of the lab indicate they were sent late into the evening or after midnight. In one of the last communications P had with GS, P noted it came from the lab at 1:40 am (Exhibit E). One member (Exhibit L) reported that AS had said grad students are “slaves” who must learn to endure pain because it would last only 4 or 5 years. Another member reported that AS threatened to pull his contract if he complained about his hours (Exhibit J). GS’ parents reported that he took only 1 week of vacation a year and that he spent most nights and weekends in the lab (Exhibit E).

AS’ insistence that research assistants work excessive hours may have been in part related to expectations. A student recalled AS equating the assistantship to working for a small company. He believed that expectations for assigned tasks were difficult to meet. Students were expected to produce ideas. If these expectations were not met AS would insult the members calling their work mediocre or not up to the level expected of a graduate student (Exhibit P).

Some members believed that AS did not have respect for students and their personal lives. One student whose wife lived in a different city, told how AS interrupted by yelling during a phone call he had made to his wife during his lunch break. AS also tracked him down while he was grocery shopping with his wife (Exhibit L).

Relative to threats of physical harm, no one reported actual physical harm. Several students, however, told of ambiguous physical threats, e.g. frequently beat on the table, threw objects, or told students he wished he had a punching bag, (Exhibits Y.1, J, E.1, U). GS communicated to AS how he felt about such an ambiguous threat in October 2015:

A consistent thing you've said is "your words matter." Since yesterday I've been considering some words you said to the effect that you could (and implicitly would) beat me up if I showed you too much sass. Even though you followed them up with an "I'm kidding," your words still matter .

Even if you felt I was out of line, you could have let me know without making a threat of violence. Furthermore, I am unwilling to work in an environment where such threats are seen as acceptable....(Exhibit Y).

Another student noted, "...a lot of times AS would verbalize his desire to hit a student. Wished aloud for punching bag due to his frustration" (Exhibit M).

Although the students did not report an abuse of authority in such things as authorship of papers or discrimination, there is perhaps one situation in which it may have played a part. As mentioned earlier, GS' progress toward his Ph.D. was slowed considerably between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in the scheduling of a prelim. Although not definitive, a comment made by VS stated that he did not know how AS could continue if GS were to graduate. Because GS was also AS' advisee there is a speculation that the delay may have been related to GS' indispensability to the project (Exhibits E, J).

In a letter to Dean Robertson P reported:

GS had finally set on the path of finishing paperwork for his oral prelim and had received approval. My understanding was all that remained was to schedule and hold it. It was strange to me that when GS told me that it wasn't unusual to have a short while before your thesis defense, but it was a detail that was continually delayed as he was yet again, year after year, charged with bringing another group of students up to speed with lab operations only to have most/all of them leave before they were able to make a substantial contribution (Exhibit E).

Charge 3. Abusive expression

Nearly all of the informants reported being the target of or had observed others being targeted with abusive expression and insults. These comments were made in the context of an environment where there was already an excessive amount of screaming, yelling, and cursing. In addition, few student members of the lab or associates were immune from these insults, including a professor colleague (Exhibit V) and a visiting scholar (Exhibit U)

An international student recounted a particularly distressing incident in a meeting, which included the observer of the incident, GS, AS and Prof. [REDACTED]. When the discussion got heated, AS banged hands on table and called [REDACTED] a f****) twice (Exhibit O).

Also damaging to the students was the fact that the abusive expressions were delivered in front of others, e.g., in group meetings. To a large extent constructive feedback and critiques were replaced with personally directed insults. No detail was too small to be excluded from his attacks, e.g. formatting of a slide.

Following is a list of epithets that were experienced or witnessed by informants: animal themes (Exhibit M) *chimpanzee, monkey--*, *stupid, dumbass, incompetent, babies, and fucker*. Among the derogatory statements were: a student left the lab because he “shit his pants;” “God give me the strength to deal with this shit;” “What are you guys pissing on your brains?” graduate students are “slaves” who must endure any pain because such pain would last only 4 or 5 years; compared intelligence to that of his two-year-old son.

In an email to Dean Robertson, P recounted several examples of abusive expression that GS had experienced directly in summer 2016:

sack of shit
you guys have betrayed my trust
you walked out on me like a no integrity moron
I'm a bully, yes and you are the liars
get your head out of your ass
incompetent
sloppy, lazy

It cannot be overemphasized that even if an expression was not abusive or offensive on its face, it was the repeated attacks on competence that was wearing on the students.

This phenomenon was described as:

AS would speak in a way to make you feel like nothing. He would say "This is not the work of a grad student..." (Exhibit P).

Another lab member reported similar feelings, "He would indirectly insult them—such as saying he doesn't want mediocre work in front of the whole group. It was demoralizing" (Exhibit N).

AS admitted to GS of being a "bully" and "pathetic" (Exhibit G). Yet he claims not to have been aware until recently that his behavior was unproductive or the damage his tirades inflicted, "...and to me it was an epiphany" (Exhibit E). He reports that after an outburst, the situation was over for him. He did not seem to comprehend that there were lingering repercussions for the students.

These expressions cannot be interpreted to be an aspect of free expression. They were invectives directed at individuals. When a member prematurely left the lab because of stress he would report to the remaining members that the student was not capable. It was on one of these occasions that he said the student had "shit his pants" (Exhibit J).

An international student expressed how deeply these offensive words affected him:

..he was always criticizing tiny details of tasks, Importantly, his Criticizing was not academic at all, He usually screamed and yelled in front of other students with swearing words and offensive gestures. Also, he didn't hesitate to swear in front of other professors. I honestly felt insulted every time he swore in front of others. I also asked him to quit swearing but he said students should endure such expression (Exhibit L).

For some students being insulted in front of the group added to the abusive conduct. Several noted that they were open to feedback, but would prefer to be scolded in a private conversation; e.g., one such student suggested ...”if he has concerns about an individual, he should discuss it with him in private, not in front of everyone” (Exhibit N).

Charge 4. Adverse effects of behavior

Many students believe that Prof. Sayeed engages in high quality, interesting research. Indeed, in May 2016, the prototype was successfully demonstrated within the deadline. However, the success of the project was extracted at great cost to students and their families. His research mentoring responsibilities are the issue here.

As enumerated earlier, at least four students experienced stress and anxiety to the point that they left the lab before their contracts had expired. Others changed their degree objective; at a minimum, nearly all had their progress on lab tasks hindered.

The stress and anxiety the students experienced is only part of the picture; they report that AS did not offer either appropriate guidance or constructive feedback. His primary motivational technique when there was a mistake was to yell and scream rather than to guide them through a problem-solving process. One student noted that he used fear as a primary motivator (Exhibit J). Another noted: ...”honestly, I was still sitting at my desk in the lab because of fears rather than my interest in research” (Exhibit L).

AS appeared to be oblivious to individual learning styles and cultural differences in learning. Several countries of origin were represented among the graduate students.

While some students may have been able to weather the toxic environment, others were deeply affected to a self-reported debilitating extent.

On a prospective note, AS did not serve as a good role model for students, especially those for whom an academic or supervisory position was a possibility. Not only did he manage the lab members poorly, but also berated a faculty colleague (■■■■) in front of the students (Exhibit N).

Two students who were in the lab during ■■■■■■■■■■ reported that although his abusive behavior had attenuated somewhat at the beginning of the semester, it reappeared frequently as time went on (Exhibits i.1, i.2)).

Prof. Sayeed's Perspective

For the most part, Prof. Sayeed does not deny that his behavior toward members of his lab is problematic. He admits to screaming, yelling, calling people out with invectives, and throwing nearby small objects. He was once observed saying, "I run on an emotional circuit on steroids" (Exhibit F).

At the same time although he received plenty of feedback from lab members, he claims not to have been aware of the effect this had on the lab members. As stated earlier once he had an outburst, the anger was over for him. In the past, he tended to rationalize the excessive attrition on the students' incompetence, not being able to live up to expectations, or their sensitivity.

Prof. Sayeed has always had high expectations for his students. He wants them to succeed to the best of their abilities. He attributes his inappropriate behavior to a period of time in which he had a lot of stresses in his personal life.

Moreover, Prof. Sayeed reports growing up in a patriarchal, militaristic family and culture. He has not been aware recently that he may be replicating many of the

interpersonal behaviors that his father had used with him. He states that he has sought counseling for anger management.

SUMMARY OF FACTS

1. THE CONCERN THAT:

A. YOU ENGAGED IN BEHAVIOR THAT COULD BE DESCRIBED AS, “UNWELCOME BEHAVIOR PERVASIVE OR SEVERE ENOUGH THAT A REASONABLE PERSON WOULD FIND IT HOSTILE AND/OR INTIMIDATING AND THAT DOES NOT FURTHER THE UNIVERSITY’S ACADEMIC OR OPERATIONAL INTERESTS” (11-232, PART 1

1. The behavior engaged in by AS after 2012 was *unwelcome*.
2. The unwelcome behavior began as early as 2012 and continued through the time the investigation began.
3. The unwelcome behavior was pervasive, being experienced directly or indirectly by most students who worked in the lab.
4. AS’ abusive behavior was known not only to students working in the lab, but also by a visiting scholar, other ECE faculty, and GS’s family.
5. The unwelcome behavior consisted of yelling, screaming, personal invectives, insults, ambiguous physical threats, and throwing things.
6. The unwelcome behavior was hostile and intimidating, resulting in a stressful working environment.

1. B THE CONCERN THAT

YOUR BEHAVIOR IS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE EXTENT THAT IT MAKES CONDITIONS FOR WORK INHOSPITABLE AND IMPAIRS ANOTHER PERSON’S ABILITY TO CARRY OUT HIS/HER RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE UNIVERSITY”

(11-332, PART 1).

1. The hostile environment had an effect on the students' productivity in the lab.
2. The hostile environment resulted in considerable stress for most of the lab members.
3. The unwelcome behavior has had deleterious effects students' academic goals and accomplishments.
4. The unwelcome behavior had a negative effect on students' emotional and mental health and personal relationships.

2. THE CONCERN THAT

YOUR BEHAVIOR EVIDENCES AN “ABUSE OF AUTHORITY, SUCH AS USING THREATS OR RETALIATION IN THE EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY, SUPERVISION, OR GUIDANCE...”

(11-332, PART 1).

1. Most students were required to work many more hours than their contracts specified.
2. Some students were threatened with their contracts being pulled if they complained about excessive hours.
3. Students were told that they should have the lab as their priority and to relegate academics and personal relationships to a lesser status.
4. AS threatened students with ambiguous physical threats.

3. THE CONCERN THAT

YOUR BEHAVIOR HAS INCLUDED “ABUSIVE EXPRESSION...DIRECTED AT ANOTHER PERSON IN THE WORKPLACE SUCH AS DEROGATORY REMARKS OR EPITHETS THAT ARE OUTSIDE THE RANGE OF COMMONLY ACCEPTED FORMS OF DISAGREEMENT, DISAPPROVAL, OR CRITIQUE IN

**ACADEMIC CULTURE AND PROFESSIONAL SETTINGS THAT
RESPECTS FREE EXPRESSION (11-332, PART 1).**

1. AS abusive expressions were frequently directed at individuals who worked in the lab, as well as to others.
2. These expressions were derogatory, profane, offensive, and/or personally insulting.
3. Most of the abusive expression was tendered in front of other individuals or groups.
4. These expressions do not fall into commonly accepted forms of academic or professional discourse.

**4. THE CONCERN THAT YOU HAVE ENGAGED IN “CONDUCT
WHICH ADVERSELY AFFECTS (YOUR) PERFORMANCE OF (YOUR)
RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE UNIVERSITY BUT WHICH IS NOT
SERIOUS ENOUGH TO WARRANT DISMISSAL.” (FPP, CHAPTER 9.02).**

1. The alleged conduct has adversely affected performance of mentoring responsibilities.
2. The alleged conduct has limited the academic goals and achievements of several students and caused emotional distress, and, thus, is serious enough to warrant discipline

DISCUSSION

Limitations of Procedures

The data from interviews with lab members is self-report and the reported incidents occurred over a period of years, affecting their recollection. Also, most of these reports were gathered following a [REDACTED] in the lab. While then-current members were aware of the death of GS, it is not clear if former members were aware of the death. Two additional features of the data are that, other than the dates the information was gathered, specific dates, times, and places of instances of AS behavior are not always

documentable. What can be inferred, however, is that the offending behaviors took place over a period of at least five years. Moreover, because AS behavior was often discussed among the lab members it cannot be ascertained in every case whether certain behaviors were experienced by the reporter him/herself, observed as happening to another member, or were heard from a third party.

Exceptions to Limitations of Procedures

An exception to the lack of specificity in lab members' reports is the GS data, provided by P. GS' close relationship with his family had resulted in many exchanges of communications. P had saved or retrieved from GS's electronic devices many of these exchanges, e.g., from emails, text messages, and voice memos. For the most part these exchanges can be traced to specific dates. Although most of these messages were exchanged between GS and his family members, some contained copies of messages exchanged between GS and other lab members.

In addition to the specificity of the P data, there is a cross check on student reports by non-students, e.g., from other faculty and administrators, whose observations corroborated the student data.

This investigation took place following the [REDACTED] death of a senior graduate student in the Wireless Communication and Sensing Lab in the College of Engineering. Without the urging of his/her parents it may never have taken place. In the College of Engineering and the Graduate College there is no oversight of the mentoring function neither of faculty nor of the climate or work environments for students. Although students are notified in a handbook of how they might proceed in the case of a problem, they rarely do so ([REDACTED])

[REDACTED] This investigation has produced plenty of evidence that lab members informally confronted AS about his behavior several times. None, however, filed a formal complaint.

In the WCSL, student concerns were most often funneled toward the grad student coordinator GS or discussed with each other. Informal complaints to AS resulted in few if

any behavior changes. Thus, many of the informants for this investigation were pleased to hear of the investigation.

According to administrators the numbers of graduate students in the Department of ECE militates against identifying incipient problems. A lot of students switch labs during their academic careers and many change their career objectives. However, what is perhaps critical here is the linking of a professor's abusive conduct to so many students' academic and personal wellbeing

Offsetting procedural limitations, however, are the archival records supplied by P. Over the years GS and his father had been in close contact through email, text messages, and voice memos. P had saved many of these communications. These records also contain information from and about other students in the lab. Perhaps the most useful of these records as to the lab environment and AS behavior is the document prepared by GS and shared with E1 in anticipation of a meeting with AS in October of 2015. It is of interest to note that P is [REDACTED] who was able to discuss technical matters with AS as well.

In the main, facts about AS' behavior were corroborated among students' interview reports, other observers, e.g. faculty, and GS's communication, and P's emails.

Substantive Issues

Perhaps the most distressing aspect of AS behavior is the extent to which expected challenges in a lab of this type were compounded, particularly the attrition due to stress and the difficulty in recruiting new members. As AS' behavior escalated, more students left, and more burdens fell to the remaining members, particularly GS. *Exploitation* may not be too strong a word to describe how AS's behavior impacted GS' in his position as grad coordinator.

Another unfortunate outcome of AS angry outbursts were the missed opportunities for learning. Epithets and derogatory comments were substituted for specific guidance or

problem solving. Insults and fear were used in place of other, more productive, cognitive or motivational strategies.

As a result of this investigation, AS purports to see how his behavior affects others. He appears to be motivated to change for both professional and personal reasons. He has sought counseling for anger management. In addition, he is reviewing his “teaching” strategies to learn more effective ways to manage his research staff. This work, however, is not yet finished.

CONCLUSION

Professor Sayeed is found to be in violation of all 4 charges posed by Professor Mangelsdorf in the charge letter:

- (1) FPP 11-232**
- (2) FPP 11-332 PART 1a & b**
- (3) FPP 11-332, PART 1**
- (4) FPP, CHAPTER 9.02.**

It is, thus, concluded that appropriate discipline be imposed according to **FPP 9.05C**.
(See page 2 for language of these charges.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. An unpaid leave of absence to underscore the seriousness of these charges.
2. Frequent monitoring of lab climate and grad students’ experience.
3. Resources to modify lab-mentoring behavior:
 - a. Involvement in Teaching Academy
 - b. Appointment of a teaching mentor
 - c. Continuing education to practice providing constructive feedback and guidance to students.
4. Consider modification of lab staffing plan to eliminate the need for grad students to supervise each other.
5. Continue counseling for anger management and personal issues.

LIST OF EXHIBITS

A	Provost's Charge Letter	24
B	Faculty Policies and Procedures 11-332 Defining Language Describing Hostile and/or Intimidating Behavior.....	27
C	FPP Chapter 9.....	30
D	Dean Robertson transmittal letter to Provost Mangelsdorf.....	36
E	Parent email to Dean Robertson.....	37
F	Dean of Students Berquam notes from parent phone conference.....	39
G	Parent response to Dean Berquam.....	40
H	Assistant Dean Jankoski report on School of Engineering Investigation.....	43
I	GS memo Written Down Thoughts	47
J-T	Lab Students' comments.....	50-64
U	Visiting scholar comments.....	65
V	Jankoski comments on Professor [REDACTED] interview.....	67
W	Comments by 2 students in lab Semester [REDACTED].....	69-71
X	X.1 Jankowski invitation to participate in School of Engineering investigation..	72
	X.2 Revised confidentiality statement for current investigation.....	73
Y	Y.1 GS memo to AS August 1, 2015.....	74
	Y.2 GS memo to AS October 21, 2015.....	75
Z	Z.1 GS memo to Nowak October 20, 2015.....	76
	Z.2 GS memo to Nowak October 6, 2016.....	77
i	i.1 Parent last email to GS.....	78
	i.2 Meeting with Undergraduate ECE student January 1., 2017.....	79
ii	Original handwritten notes.....	81



January 27, 2017

Professor Akbar Sayeed
Dept. of Electrical and Computer Engineering
3617 Engineering Hall
1415 Engineering Drive
Madison, WI 53706

Akbar.Sayeed@wisc.edu

VIA Campus Mail & E-Mail

Re: FPP Chapter 9 Charge

Dear Professor Sayeed:

I received a complaint against you pursuant to Chapter 9 of the UW-Madison Faculty Policies and Procedures (FPP), dated November 3, 2016. This complaint alleges that you have engaged in misconduct (other than scholarly misconduct) that could warrant discipline or dismissal from your faculty employment at the University. The complaint alleges that your conduct with students in your lab appears to have created a difficult work and learning environment in violation of the University's policy on hostile and intimidating behavior.

A copy of the letter from Dean Ian Robertson accompanies this letter. A copy of FPP Chapters 8 and 9 is enclosed. Also enclosed is the University's Faculty Legislation "II-332 – Defining Language Describing Hostile and/or Intimidating Behavior."

Pursuant to FPP 9.05.C, it is my duty to determine whether a prima facie case exists for the imposition of discipline or for dismissal. The test regarding a possible prima facie case is a consideration only of the complaint and the information submitted in support of it, without regard to any rebuttal information. That is what is meant by the following language from FPP 9.05C: "considered on its face to be true and not subject to refutation or exculpatory explanation." This is not a finding by the University regarding the truth of the allegations. Rather, it is the standard required to move to the next phase, which is an investigation.

Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

150 Bascom Hall University of Wisconsin-Madison 500 Lincoln Drive Madison, Wisconsin 53706
608/262-1304 Fax: 608/265-3324 E-mail: provost@provost.wisc.edu www.provost.wisc.edu

I have concluded that the allegations concerning your conduct with regard to your duties as a faculty member constitute a prima facie case for discipline or dismissal. I have also concluded that the complaint is timely.

I am appointing Professor Emerita Patricia Wolleat to investigate this matter. Professor Wolleat is specifically charged to investigate the following:

1. The concern that:
 - a. You engaged in behavior that could be described as, “unwelcome behavior pervasive or severe enough that a reasonable person would find it hostile and/or intimidating and that does not further the University’s academic or operational interests” (II-332, Part I).
 - b. Your behavior “is unacceptable to the extent that it makes the conditions for work inhospitable and impairs another person’s ability to carry out his/her responsibilities to the university” (II-332, Part I).
2. The concern that your behavior evidences an “abuse of authority, such as using threats or retaliation in the exercise of authority, supervision, or guidance...” (II-332, Part I).
3. The concern that your behavior has included “abusive expression ... directed at another person in the workplace, such as derogatory remarks or epithets that are outside the range of commonly accepted forms of disagreement, disapproval, or critique in academic culture and professional setting that respects free expression” (II-332, Part I)
4. The concern that you have engaged in “conduct which adversely affects (your) performance of (your) responsibilities to the university but which is not serious enough to warrant dismissal.” (FPP, Chapter 9.02).

Pursuant to FPP 9.06, you may state objection to my choice of investigator. If I do not hear from you by February 9, 2017, I will assume you do not object to Professor Wolleat serving as the investigator in this case, and she will begin her investigation of the allegations.

I trust that you will fully cooperate in this investigation in order to assure that all the facts relevant to these allegations are obtained. You may be assured that your conduct will not be prejudged and that you will have a full and fair opportunity to respond to all the allegations. To the extent possible, the investigation will be conducted confidentially.

I must instruct you not to engage in any retaliatory acts or conduct, or any acts or conduct that could possibly be construed as retaliatory, toward any of the individuals in the complaints or involved in the investigation. I must also instruct you not to destroy or alter any property, records or documents in your possession, hard copy or electronic, that might be related to the allegations. I expect your full cooperation in this regard.

I am available to meet with you to give you an opportunity to speak to this matter. Please call my office at (262-1304) if you wish to set up an appointment. If you do want to meet, I recommend that you call as soon as possible so that the meeting can take place in a timely manner. Please also note that you may hear from Professor Wolleat prior to our meeting. I also want to be sure that you know that you have the

right to be advised and represented by legal counsel or another representative, at your own expense, throughout the investigation and any subsequent official proceedings that might ensue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah C. Mangelsdorf". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sarah" being more prominent.

Sarah C. Mangelsdorf
Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Enclosures

bxc: Professor Emerita Patricia Wolleat
Dean Ian Robertson, College of Engineering
Brian Vaughan, Senior University Legal Counsel, OLA

II-332 DEFINING LANGUAGE DESCRIBING HOSTILE AND/ OR INTIMIDATING BEHAVIOR

PART I: Language Describing Hostile and/or Intimidating Behavior

Unwelcome behavior pervasive or severe enough that a reasonable person would find it hostile and/or intimidating and that does not further the University's academic or operational interests is unacceptable to the extent that it makes the conditions for work inhospitable and impairs another person's ability to carry out his/her responsibilities to the university. A person or a group can perpetrate this behavior. The person need not be more senior than or a supervisor to the target. Unacceptable behavior may include, but is not limited to:

- Abusive expression (including spoken, written, recorded, visual, digital, or nonverbal, etc.) directed at another person in the workplace, such as derogatory remarks or epithets that are outside the range of commonly accepted expressions of disagreement, disapproval, or critique in an academic culture and professional setting that respects free expression;
- Unwarranted physical contact or intimidating gestures; Conspicuous exclusion or isolation having the effect of harming another person's reputation in the workplace and hindering another person's work;
- Sabotage of another person's work or impeding another person's capacity for academic expression, be it oral, written, or other;
- Abuse of authority, such as using threats or retaliation in the exercise of authority, supervision, or guidance, or impeding another person from exercising shared governance rights, etc.

Repeated acts or a pattern of hostile and/or intimidating behaviors are of particular concern. A single act typically will not be sufficient to warrant discipline or dismissal, but an especially severe or egregious act may warrant either.

These standards are to be construed within the context of the University's historical and enduring commitment to academic freedom, freedom of expression, and the conception of the University as a place that must encourage and foster the free exchange of ideas, beliefs, and opinions, however unpopular. In no case shall a sanction be imposed in response to a complaint solely about the contents of a faculty member's beliefs, views, or opinions taken in the abstract. The policy is not intended to constitute a general civility code addressing ordinary stresses of the workplace, such as occasionally insensitive language or behavior. Nor is it intended to constrain commonly accepted workplace management practices. Nor is it intended to constrain the freedom of faculty to speak out about troubling matters, criticize the administration or university policies, take part in political protest, or to promote and participate in labor unions. Rather, it is intended to address patterns of hostility or intimidation that impede persons from carrying out

their duties to the University, ensuring that all, regardless of rank or status, may pursue their work and speak as they see fit.

PART II: Procedures for Implementation of Part I

A person who has been the target of hostile and/or intimidating behavior may use the informal process for redress or proceed directly to the formal process.

A. The Informal Process

A person who believes he/she has been subjected to unacceptable hostile and/or intimidating behavior may wish to discuss the matter with the faculty involved either directly or through the intervention of an intermediary at the department, school/college, division, or campus level such as Vice Provost for Faculty and Staff, Ombuds, Employee Assistance Office, or union representative.

When a person believes that these rules have been violated and seeks to deal with the problem informally, he/she should be prepared to identify precisely the pattern or acts of conduct believed to constitute the violation. Precision is often aided by expressing the complaint in writing. If the matter is not promptly resolved, and if the person complained against so requests, the complainant shall provide such a written statement.

Oral and written communications occurring during the informal process may not be used as evidence in any subsequent formal proceeding.

If a complaint about unwelcome behavior is being handled informally, and there is a dispute about whether the alleged behavior constitutes a violation of these rules, the person or body handling the matter shall seek advice on this question from the Office of Human Resources (OHR) and inform those concerned of the advice received.

B. The Formal Process

1. Filing a Written Complaint

An individual may file a written complaint with the department or head of the equivalent unit in the case of non-departmental matters. If there is a conflict with the department chair/unit head, the individual may file with the dean. If upon investigation of the complaint, evidentiary support for discipline or dismissal is established, the department chair/unit head (or Dean) may initiate the disciplinary or dismissal process by filing a written

complaint with the Provost. The written complaint filed with the Provost must also be shared with the faculty member or members against whom the disciplinary or dismissal process is initiated. If the department chair/unit head (or Dean) does not initiate the disciplinary or dismissal process within 30 days, the complainant may file a complaint directly with the Provost.

Discipline can be imposed on faculty members for violation of Faculty Policies and Procedures (FPP) 9.02. or 9.03. in compliance with the requirements of the formal processes delineated in Chapter 9 of FPP.

2. Filing a Grievance

If filing a written complaint does not lead to a resolution, an employee can file a workplace grievance pursuant to applicable policies and procedures for the complainant's employee category. Faculty members can file a grievance with the University Committee pursuant to FPP 8.15.

[UW-Madison Faculty Document 2511 - 3 November 2014]

C

FACULTY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

As approved by the Faculty Senate on 15 May 1978 with subsequent amendments as of 17 May 2016

CHAPTER 9: DISCIPLINE AND DISMISSAL OF FACULTY FOR CAUSE

9.01. PREAMBLE.

The university has a tradition of commitment to professional honesty and integrity, as described in FPP Chapter 8, and also recognizes the need for fair and adequate investigation of alleged violations of rules and policies relating to faculty conduct. The unified rules and procedures contained herein shall apply in faculty disciplinary and dismissal proceedings, within the framework established in sections UWS 4 and UWS 6 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. Faculty members charged with actions which could lead to discipline or dismissal (see 9.02. and 9.03. below) are entitled throughout the proceedings to due process both by tradition and by law. The principles of due process as understood traditionally by the faculty and delineated herein (FPP 9.06., 9.08., as well as in UWS 4) include, but are not limited to: knowledge in writing of the full complaint and its source(s), access to all documentation, the right to be present at all hearings and the right to confront and cross examine, the right to be represented, the right to refrain from testimony without prejudice, appropriate appeal processes, closed hearings if desired, written findings of fact, and verbatim records of all hearings. While this chapter provides the formal structure for proceeding in disciplinary and dismissal cases, many cases will be resolved by agreement among the parties involved or by formal mediation. In cases involving alleged scholarly misconduct, the rules and procedures are those set forth in Faculty Document 867a, which is presented in the faculty legislation appended to Faculty Policies and Procedures.

9.02. CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE.

No faculty member shall be subject to discipline except for just cause, based upon a determination that the faculty member has violated a university rule or policy or has engaged in conduct which adversely affects the faculty member's performance of his/her responsibilities to the university but which is not serious enough to warrant dismissal. As used in this chapter, discipline means any sanction except dismissal imposed by the administration against a faculty member for misconduct, including but not limited to an official reprimand, reduction in salary or reduction of a departmentally recommended increase in salary, or reduction in rank.

9.03. CAUSE FOR DISMISSAL. (See UWS 4.01.)

No faculty member shall be subject to dismissal except for just cause, based upon a determination that the faculty member's conduct directly and substantially affects adversely, to a degree greater than that reserved for disciplinary action, the ability to carry out satisfactorily his/her responsibilities to the university. Examples of conduct that may warrant dismissal include, but are not limited to, fraud or intentional misrepresentation of facts for personal benefit, gross abuse of authority or influence (e.g., discriminatory or retaliatory actions, particularly where a pattern is evident), or willful and protracted violations of university rules or policies. Layoff and termination for reasons of financial emergency are not dismissals for cause, and such actions are taken pursuant to Chapter 10 of these rules.

9.04. COMPLAINTS ABOUT FACULTY MEMBERS.

Complaints against faculty members alleging facts which, if true, might constitute adequate cause for discipline under UWS 6 or dismissal under UWS 4 shall be in writing and shall be filed with the vice chancellor for academic affairs and provost (provost).

9.05. ACTION BY PROVOST ON COMPLAINTS.

- A. On receiving a complaint concerning a faculty member, the provost shall determine whether the complaint deals with scholarly misconduct and/or other misconduct.
- B. Complaints alleging scholarly misconduct shall be dealt with according to Faculty Document 867a and FPP 9.14. A formal allegation of misconduct in scholarly research will be referred to the chair of the department (or functional equivalent) or to the corresponding academic dean or, in the case of conflict of interest on the part of the chair or academic dean, to the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education.
- C. If the complaint alleges misconduct other than scholarly misconduct, the provost shall determine whether a prima facie case exists for the imposition of discipline or for dismissal. The provost shall also consider the timeliness of the complaint, particularly in light of related state and federal limitations statutes. As used in this section, a prima facie case for discipline exists whenever the information submitted in support of the complaint would warrant disciplinary action, if considered on its face to be true and not subject to refutation or exculpatory explanation. A prima facie case for dismissal exists whenever this standard is met, but with the additional requirement that the information submitted in support of the complaint be of such substantial character that the magnitude of the alleged conduct warrants contemplation of dismissal if determined to be true. If a prima facie case does not exist or if the complaint is not considered timely, the complaint shall be dismissed.
- D. Whenever the provost receives a complaint against a faculty member which he/she deems substantial and which, if true, might lead to dismissal under UWS 4, the provost shall proceed under UWS 4 and the provisions of this chapter of FPP.

9.06. INVESTIGATION AND FURTHER ACTION.

- A. If the provost determines that a prima facie case exists for imposition of discipline or dismissal and the case is timely, he/she shall institute an investigation by appointing an investigator or investigators of his/her choosing. The provost shall also offer to discuss the matter with the faculty member concerned, giving the faculty member an opportunity to speak to the matter, and shall provide the faculty member with a written statement of the matter(s) to be investigated. The faculty member shall also receive a copy of the original signed complaint, subject to the possible need to redact information pertaining to third parties that will not be considered part of the investigation. The faculty member concerned shall have the right to be advised and represented by counsel or other representative at his/her expense throughout the investigation and thereafter.

- B. The faculty member can state objections to the provost's selection of investigator(s). The investigator(s) shall investigate the complaint as soon as practicable and provide an oral and/or written report to the provost. Following the investigation the provost shall consult with recent past chairs of the University Committee and the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities who shall advise the provost as to the actions that should be taken as enumerated in C. below.
- C. Actions that the provost may take are:
1. Dismiss the case; or
 2. Refer the complaint to the department(s) or the equivalent functional unit(s) in which the faculty member concerned holds membership if the investigation indicates that the case involves a matter which should be resolved at the departmental level and in which disciplinary action by the provost is not warranted; or
 3. Prepare to invoke an appropriate disciplinary action. In doing so, the provost will present the faculty member with a written summary of all evidence obtained both for and against each charge brought forward for disciplinary action or dismissal. The provost shall then invite the faculty member to participate in voluntary and confidential settlement negotiations which could involve, with agreement of both parties, formal mediation.

If formal mediation is invoked, the parties shall agree on the appointment of a mediator or mediators. Formal mediation must be completed within 30 days of the appointment of the mediator(s), unless both parties agree to an extension of no more than 30 days. At any time, either party may withdraw from the mediation process.
 4. If settlement is not achieved by negotiation or mediation, invoke appropriate discipline or dismissal. When the provost invokes either discipline or dismissal, he/she shall provide the faculty member with a copy of any investigatory report produced and a copy of any written recommendation as provided above. The provost shall also inform the faculty member of his/her right to appeal to the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities (CFRR).

9.07. COMMITTEE ON FACULTY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

- A. When a faculty member appeals a disciplinary action to the committee, the committee shall:
1. Conduct fact-finding hearings if requested by the faculty member or by the provost or if deemed necessary by the committee;
 2. Make recommendations to the chancellor concerning the validity of the appeal.
- B. When a faculty member appeals dismissal, the committee shall under UWS 4.03 serve as the standing committee to hear and act on the case, except for cases involving allegations of misconduct in scholarly research in which the Hearing Committee on Misconduct in Scholarly Research shall be the standing committee, under Faculty Document 867a.

9.08. CFRR HEARINGS.

When CFRR is holding a fact-finding hearing in a discipline case or is acting as a hearing body in a dismissal case, it shall operate as provided in UWS 4.05 and 4.06. Additionally, the faculty member shall have a right to:

- A. service of notice of hearing with specific charges in writing at least twenty days prior to the hearing;
- B. notification of the name(s) of the complainant(s);
- C. be heard by all bodies passing judgment or making recommendations;
- D. refrain from testifying without such omission being used as formal evidence of guilt; and
- E. a stenographic record of all hearings and transcripts thereof at no cost to him/her.

9.09. FINDINGS BY CFRR.

- A. A finding of just cause for the imposition of discipline or just cause for dismissal must be based on clear and convincing evidence in the hearing record.
- B. A finding by the committee of just cause for discipline or just cause for dismissal requires a majority vote with not more than two dissenting votes. Otherwise, the committee shall report that just cause for discipline or just cause for dismissal has not been established. The vote shall be reported in every case.

9.10. SUSPENSION.

The faculty committee to be consulted by the chancellor in considering suspension under UWS 4.09 is the University Committee.

9.11. TRANSMITTAL OF CFRR FINDINGS IN DISCIPLINE CASES.

- A. CFRR shall transmit its findings of fact and recommendations in discipline cases in writing to the chancellor, with copies to the provost, to the faculty member involved, and to the complainant within ten days of the conclusion of its proceedings.
- B. Within ten days of the transmittal of the committee's findings and recommendations to the chancellor, the faculty member concerned or the original complainant may file written objections with the chancellor.
- C. The chancellor shall, as soon as practicable after the expiration of this ten-day period, render his/her decision and transmit such decision to the committee, the provost, the faculty member concerned, the original complainant, and the University Committee.

9.12. CFRR TRANSMITTAL OF FINDINGS IN DISMISSAL CASES.

CFRR shall transmit its findings of fact and recommendations in dismissal cases in accordance with UWS 4.07.

9.13. NO FURTHER JEOPARDY.

Following recommendations of CFRR and a decision by the chancellor, or following action by the provost if the committee is not involved, the faculty member concerned shall not be subject again under these rules to the same charges arising from the original complaint.

9.14. PROCEDURES WHEN MISCONDUCT IN SCHOLARLY RESEARCH IS ALLEGED.

Whenever the provost acting pursuant to Faculty Document 867a (2/4/91) has decided to bring charges that would warrant discipline or dismissal of a faculty member on the basis of misconduct in scholarly research, sections 9.01. through 9.05.B., 9.10., and 9.13. of this chapter, as well as other sections specifically noted below, shall govern faculty dismissal and disciplinary actions as follows:

- A. The report of the Inquiry Committee provided for in Faculty Document 867a (2/4/91), Part II.B.5-7, shall constitute the investigation required by 9.06.A. and the complaint referred to in 9.01. and 9.04. After reviewing the report of Inquiry Committee and the response, if any, of the faculty member, if the provost believes that dismissal may be warranted, the provost shall proceed in accordance with UWS 4, or, if the provost believes that lesser discipline may be warranted, the provost shall proceed in accordance with 9.06.C.3. or 9.06.C.4., and UWS 6.01. If the provost decides to dismiss the case, he/she shall proceed in accordance with 9.06.C.1. Hearings subsequent to the provost's actions shall be conducted by the Hearing Committee on Misconduct in Scholarly Research under Faculty Document 867a, Part IIIA and may be appealed to CFRR, as provided below and in Faculty Document 867a, Part IIIB.
- B. The Hearing Committee on Misconduct in Scholarly Research provided for in Part III.A.1 of Faculty Document 867a shall consist of three to five members, a majority of whom shall be UW-Madison faculty members. The chair, who shall be a law-trained UW-Madison faculty member, and one additional UW-Madison faculty member shall be appointed for two-year terms. Other members shall be experts in areas germane to the scholarly misconduct allegations in question, and any member who does not come from the UW-Madison faculty shall be a tenured faculty member at an institution of higher education in the United States. All members shall be selected by the provost after consultation with the University Committee.
- C. The Hearing Committee shall proceed in accordance with the provisions of UWS 4.04-4.06 and Faculty Document 867a, Part IIIA. and E. In order to make a finding of misconduct in scholarly research, the committee must be satisfied that there is clear and convincing evidence of such misconduct.
- D. Within 10 days after receipt of the Hearing Committee's report, the faculty member may appeal to CFRR by giving written notice of the appeal to the chair of CFRR.
 1. CFRR shall review the record made before the Hearing Committee, but shall not receive any new evidence. CFRR may ask members of the Hearing Committee to explain matters within their expertise, and the faculty member is entitled to be present when any such explanation is given and to ask pertinent questions. Within ten days after giving notice of appeal, the faculty member may submit written arguments to CFRR. CFRR will hear oral argument if the faculty member or the Hearing Committee requests it.

2. The action of the Hearing Committee shall be affirmed unless CFRR determines (a) that the Hearing Committee's factual findings are clearly erroneous, or (b) that the committee erred in applying the law and that this error influenced the committee's decision, or (c) that the recommended sanction is inappropriate. In determining whether a factual finding is clearly erroneous, the question to be answered by CFRR is not whether it would have reached the same conclusion as the Hearing Committee but, rather, whether reasonable people could have considered the findings to have been supported by clear and convincing evidence. Similarly, the criterion for reviewing the sanction shall be whether reasonable people could consider it appropriate under the circumstances of the case. If CFRR finds error as defined above, it will recommend to the chancellor actions to remedy the error. If CFRR finds an inappropriate sanction was recommended, it will recommend a different sanction.
 3. If the Hearing Committee decision is appealed to CFRR, CFRR shall formulate a written decision and transmit it to the chancellor and the faculty member within ten days after the conclusion of its proceedings. Within ten days thereafter, the faculty member may file objections with the chancellor.
- E. If no appeal is taken to CFRR from the Hearing Committee decision, the faculty member may file objections with the chancellor within ten days after receipt of the Hearing Committee's report.
- F. Procedures thereafter shall be according to UWS 4.07-4.10 or UWS 6.01.

History: 9.05 approved by Fac doc 2615 on 2016-05-17



D

College of Engineering
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

To: Sarah Mangelsdorf, Provost

From: Ian Robertson,
Dean, College of Engineering 

Subject: Allegations of misconduct against Prof. A. Sayeed

Date: November 3, 2016

During a phone call with Mr. [redacted] following the death of his son [redacted] who was a graduate student in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering [redacted] expressed concerns about the working environment in the research group of Prof. A. Sayeed [redacted] then sent by email several documents and records of communications about the working environment in the group. I deemed the concerns to warrant investigation and asked Mr. Jason Jankoski, assistant dean for human resources, to look into the matter in accordance with Faculty Policy and Procedures Ch.9 and following guidance received from the Office of Legal Affairs as well as the Office of Human Resources. Based on his report of student and faculty responses to specific questions, and the fact that we are still trying to resolve another conduct issue involving Prof. Sayeed, I deemed that the current issue warranted forwarding to you for your consideration and further investigation if deemed appropriate.

If you deem that further investigation is warranted I would like to encourage you to meet with Prof. Sayeed to gain insight to his background and upbringing. Professor Sayeed has mentioned that he is seeking outside help regarding his behavioral issues and has been advised of the help he can obtain from employee assistance.

I have enclosed the summary provided to me by Mr. Jankoski as well as the correspondence received from Mr.

Encl. Summary from J. Jankoski
Supplementary material
(except an audio file from

-pg. 36

E

Jason Jankoski

From: engr-dean engr.wisc.edu
Sent: Wednesday, October 12, 2016 1:07 PM
To: Jason Jankoski
Subject:
Attachments:

Last one.

Sent: Wednesday, October 12, 2016 10:45 AM
To: engr-dean engr.wisc.edu <engr-dean@engr.wisc.edu>

Dean Robertson,

Thank-you for your call last night. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] What happened to [REDACTED] and the events that led up to it shouldn't happen to anyone.

[REDACTED] isn't here to speak for himself. You can deduce a lot from data that's out there, but let me provide you some things that come as close to [REDACTED] speaking as is now possible.

[REDACTED] He had finally set on the path of finalizing paperwork for his oral prelim and had received approval. My understanding was that all that remained was to schedule and hold it. It was strange to me when [REDACTED] told me that it wasn't unusual to have this a short while before your thesis defense, but it was a detail that was continually delayed as he was yet again, year after year, charged with bringing another group of students up to speed with lab operations only to have most/all of them leave before they were able to make a substantial contribution.

In a similar vein, he had finally registered with the career services at Wisconsin to hit the fall interview schedule. He pulled together a resume. My contribution was to suggest that he format it to 2 pages that could be printed on a single sheet of paper. The result is attached. This is the resume of someone Prof. Sayeed continually berated for being "lazy" or "a lazy sack of shit" when he launched into one of his tirades. Those are direct quotes from [REDACTED] to me. As I told you, I don't see it and the data is hard pressed to support those statements and I constantly reminded [REDACTED] of this reality. Since he arrived in Madison, he typically took only a week vacation over the Christmas holidays every year. The only other days off tended to [REDACTED] and that was generally a single Friday. His last late night call to me was from the lab where he spent most of his evenings and weekends. He was extremely dedicated to his craft. This is not the work ethic of a lazy person.

I'm also forwarding some exported archive files from my phone which contain text messages that [REDACTED] myself, and others exchanged in pdf format sent over the past two years in two separate messages due to the size of the attachments. These are the raw threads in real time. There's a lot of personal stuff included since I haven't edited the threads at all, but nothing that I'm uncomfortable letting anyone see [REDACTED]. I haven't excluded any information save for skipping files created which didn't happen to contain information relevant to the situation in the lab since some threads were large and were split into multiple files. I've highlighted passages relevant to events that transpired in the lab in yellow over the past couple of years, but a lot of detail is actually missing since the really difficult times were dealt with via live telephone conversations which are lost to time. [REDACTED]

Pg. 37

[REDACTED] I'm hard pressed to see [REDACTED] as anything but one of the best students to ever walk into Engineering Hall. Ever.

You'll notice from his resume that he spent a lot of time at [REDACTED]. After his first summer there, his mentor invited him back for a winter session which formally doesn't really exist, plus second summer/winter sessions. I also think his resume is a little wrong here, I thought he spent the summer of [REDACTED] here as well, but I could be misremembering this detail since he could have simply been getting ready to move to Madison. A lot of what he learned there was put into practice in developing the prototype hardware in Prof. Sayeed's lab. He acquired his first exposure to FPGA technology while at [REDACTED] which is key to most of the hardware work the group has done. This technology is becoming more widespread now, but [REDACTED] was working with it on real problems well before going to Wisconsin. Again, this is not the resume or work history of someone who is lazy. When given the opportunity to learn, he embraced it.

I also attached the notes that I took after our late Wednesday night call from [REDACTED] last week. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
rest. As you can see, I sent it at 1:20 AM my local time shortly after the call ended. As I mentioned to you last night, when [REDACTED] called, he was calling from the lab. He wasn't lazy. I keep mentioning this since, according to [REDACTED] Prof. Sayeed continually criticized him and whoever in the group was remaining in this light. I sent this to Rob, so you may have already seen it.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] but it is a situation that the school, the department, and Prof. Sayeed own to varying levels and all involved need to understand what's been taken from us. This is not the situation that we unfortunately occasionally see with beginning undergraduate or graduate students who are facing their first experience with genuine pressure that they may be ill equipped to handle alone. This is a situation brought about through a lengthy history of abuse that has played out over years. The abuse may not be explicit to those outside the group but the primary visible result, a continuing loss of first and second year graduate students from Prof. Sayeed's group over the past few years with a single senior student remaining to bear the brunt of the workload and dysfunction, should have been evident to everyone in Madison. Everyone needs to step back and come to terms with the real mission of the school, educating students for the world at large beyond the University.

F

I had a phone conversation with [REDACTED] 10/11/16 at 11:25 am to offer the family condolences on behalf of Chancellor Blank. The conversation lasted about 38 minutes, most of the time [REDACTED] talked about his son's experience in the lab he was in. Here are the notes from that conversation.

[REDACTED] stated the University should be asking "why did this happen" [REDACTED] discussed that his son had just started his 7th year at UW and had [REDACTED] which is a lot for a graduate student. [REDACTED] is in the science field as well and has been faculty before at a university, so he "knows" how science runs and the stress of a PHD program.

[REDACTED] says if it was an isolated incident or that [REDACTED] was the only one who couldn't handle the environment, he could understand his [REDACTED] but this isn't isolated and that many other students had a similar experience.

The situation in the lab was toxic and [REDACTED] shared with his father via text, sending emails, and phone calls about the treatment of professor Sayeed towards him in the lab. [REDACTED] told his father all of the abuse happened face to face and that via email professor Sayeed was very cordial. Professor Sayeed referred in person to [REDACTED] that "He was a lazy sack of shit" which [REDACTED] says is not true when you see how much time he spent in the lab and how many publications he has. [REDACTED] did that the environment in the lab that professor Sayeed created drove [REDACTED] to the breaking point and he broke.

A year ago [REDACTED] had reached out to Rob Novak to talk about the issues he was having with professor Sayeed and they discussed if there was some other lab [REDACTED] could work in but a new placement didn't work out. This past Thursday (Oct. 6th) [REDACTED] sent an email to Rob Novak asking if they can talk outside of the lab about the toxic environment and that [REDACTED] needed the meeting to happen soon. A meeting was scheduled for Friday, Oct. 7th at 2 pm but [REDACTED] didn't make that meeting [REDACTED] [REDACTED] says that the only person in the department that has been positive has been Rob Novak [REDACTED] has sent Rob some screen shots of texts from [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] also mention: [REDACTED] who left after getting a master's degree and texted [REDACTED] that he was watching a video for Intel employees on harassment in the workplace. [REDACTED] said everything they say not to do in the video had happened in the lab [REDACTED] (as a copy of this text).

According to [REDACTED] the department should have looked at the flux of people in professor Sayeed's lab and ask what is going on. People in that department should have been concerned with the amount of students leaving early. [REDACTED] as the only student that lasted more than two years and he was expected to train new students, which there was constant turn-over. Students leave either because they cannot take the lab environment (never fired, always quit) or they do a master's degree instead of a PHD because they cannot spend any more time in that environment. [REDACTED] mentions [REDACTED] who is a visiting scholar from [REDACTED] who had told [REDACTED] he was going to be here the whole year but recently said he was leaving in December due to the environment.

[REDACTED] did that this is hurting Wisconsin and they need to understand that and "step up". [REDACTED] believes this will leave a "black mark" on the department [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] seemed very close with his son and they talked often about science and his experience. He mentioned more than once that he has emails and texts from [REDACTED] about his experience [REDACTED] appreciated the condolences and was very pleasant to talk with.

Jason Jankoski

From: Ian Robertson
Sent: Tuesday, November 01, 2016 8:50 AM
To: Jason Jankoski
Subject:
Attachments: LabEnvironment.docx; [REDACTED].pdf; Gmail - Current Paper.pdf; Gmail - Notes..pdf; Gmail - Talk tomorrow.pdf; Gmail - Time to meet tomorrow.pdf; Gmail - Time to talk tomorrow.pdf; Gmail - We need to talk.pdf; Gmail - Written down thoughts.pdf; [REDACTED].pdf; WB_MIMO_OFDM.pdf

From:
Sent: Monday, October 31, 2016 9:02 PM
To: . Dean of Students <dean@studentlife.wisc.edu>
Cc: Ian Robertson <irobertson@wisc.edu>; Office of the Chancellor <chancellor@wisc.edu>
Subject:

Vice Provost Berquam,

I do appreciate your letter expressing condolences to us regarding the death of our son

[REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] However, we are questioning, and what we are questioning is whether UW has any processes in place to guard against the situation in which [REDACTED] found himself immersed.

[REDACTED] we do know through multiple text messages over the course of 2 years, his complete cache of over 50,000 emails, extended telephone calls including a two hour session on Oct 5-6, and audio recordings documenting events in the lab that I found on his laptop and phone, that he was in a work environment that can only be characterized as toxic and abusive while at UW-Madison. By [REDACTED] own analysis, the abuse really started when the prototyping work that he was involved with started in earnest a few years into his program. We do know he felt burned out trying to write a manuscript for a Friday Oct 7 submission deadline. We know Prof. Sayeed was contacting him on Thursday Oct 6 in an attempt to meet that submission deadline despite stating that there was no way it would be done by Oct 7. There's a difference between hard charging and abusive and Prof. Sayeed has crossed that line numerous times

[REDACTED] characterized the lab environment as toxic in some of the material that I've attached here and in the audio recordings mentioned above. I provided Dean Robertson one of the less abusive samples of those recordings. In those recordings, you can hear [REDACTED] note to Prof. Sayeed that Prof. Sayeed is very smart, but that doesn't treat people like human beings. In some of these conversations, [REDACTED] and others are present as well. In some of the recordings, Prof. Sayeed basically admits to his own issues and that they've followed him since his own graduate student days.

As I previously wrote to Dean Robertson, among the open tabs on [REDACTED] internet browser at the time of his death were:

1. Wikipedia - gaslighting
2. Google search behavior
3. Google search "NSF grant abusive"
4. UW webpage on HR policies
5. UW HR policies on Workplace Violence
6. Chapter 13.02, Employee Health and Safety, Workplace Violence Policy, UW pdf
7. UW HR Policy on Hazardous Employment

Candidly, this should concern UW [redacted] as not only a graduate student, he was an employee of the University paid with funds provided by an NSF grant. I assume that is why he was searching "NSF grant abusive" as well as the UW HR policies.

I've also attached a few emails from/to [redacted] from the beginning of Oct. 2016 (Gmail - Current Paper.pdf, Gmail - Notes..pdf, Gmail - Time to meet tomorrow.pdf,) as well as one from Aug 1, 2015 (Gmail - We need to talk.pdf) and three from Oct 20-21, 2015 (Gmail - Talk tomorrow.pdf, Gmail - Time to talk tomorrow.pdf, Gmail - Written down thoughts.pdf), some of which Dean Robertson hasn't seen yet and I only became aware of following his death.

The issues are not recent ones, but span an extended period of time during which [redacted] and the entire lab were subjected to abuse by Prof. Sayeed. These are ones that popped out without looking very deeply. I've included all the file attachments indicated in the emails as separate attachments. It is clear that Prof. Sayeed has major issues managing an experimentally based R&D team. [redacted]

[redacted] Prof. Sayeed appears to do the opposite. That should also be clear from the attrition of students that this group has experienced over the past 4-5 years and this is visible to anyone looking from the outside.

Keep in mind that [redacted] was entering his 7th year of graduate school. He had already accomplished and published significantly more than a graduated PhD student. The next most senior person in the lab had a year or less under their belt and this was a pattern that [redacted] lived through for a number of years. Nobody, except [redacted], had lasted more than 2 years. Despite that, on the various recordings that I've listened to, Prof. Sayeed had, at varying times, lashed out at [redacted] and his lab mates using phrases such as "if all of them want to leave, that's fine too (apparently speaking to his wife on a cell phone as though the students weren't even present)", "you have no idea what's you're doing", "you guys have betrayed my trust", "you are not even doing anything", "you walked out on me like a little no integrity moron", "I'm a bully, yes, and you are the liars", "you guys are acting like racist investigators", "get your head out of your ass", "incompetent", "liar", "not dedicated", "sloppy", "lazy", and I could go on and on. Those are direct quotes from the summer of 2016.

Most of this was directly specifically a [redacted]. There are multiple instances in which [redacted] specifically asked Prof. Sayeed to stop his bullying and use of personal insults and you can hear the stress in his voice. Prof. Sayeed appeared to recognize that this behavior was counterproductive and, as he himself termed it, "pathetic", yet it continued and in other places he mentioned that "and to me it was an epiphany" and "I run on an emotional circuit on steroids" in basically excusing his abusive behavior.

I have a hard time reconciling the stream of invective in that abuse to the resume [redacted] prepared a few weeks earlier. A "little no integrity moron"? "Incompetent"? I don't think so. The fact of the matter is that everything Prof. Sayeed has accomplished over the past few years in prototyping relied very heavily on [redacted] joined the group in [redacted]. His first work in the group appeared in [redacted]. Since 2012, the entire group has produced 31 publication entries according to Prof. Sayeed's own website. [redacted]'s name is on [redacted] of those publications. He is the sole student coauthor on [redacted] of those and the senior student coauthor on the remainder. If he wasn't there, this work wouldn't have been done. Period. As to why he stayed? Let's deal with the world as it really exists. He had a number of years invested when the abuse started to ramp in intensity. If [redacted] exited that lab or switched advisors with the amount of time that he had invested (5 years when he spoke with Prof. Nowak in Oct 2015, 6 full years this October), that would have raised red flags to an outsider and closed numerous career options to him. As it was, it is clear that Prof. Sayeed did not have [redacted] interests at the forefront. Had that been the case, [redacted] would have graduated some time ago. He hadn't graduated since he was continually filling the gaps Prof. Sayeed created by driving students away.

We're not confused about the situation [redacted] endured. There is plenty of objective documentation from [redacted] to inform us about that situation.

As you can see from one of the attachments (Re [redacted] .pdf), one of his former professors from [redacted] followed his work as a researcher in the field. He clearly appreciated what [redacted] accomplished. Another [redacted] professor wrote us of meeting [redacted] the summer of 2015 in London at a conference that he and [redacted] were both attending and catching up on what both were doing. The Electrical Engineering faculty at [redacted] are helping us recall the good times with short memories such as those as have some of [redacted] fellow students. As for the support from UW-Madison? It's

pg 41

been minimal.

[REDACTED] I'm also hoping and expecting that UW finds some ways to honor [REDACTED] legacy. He was dedicated to his craft, extremely persistent, very productive, and he mentored his fellow students while experiencing an environment that nobody should have to endure. [REDACTED] deserves that UW-Madison no longer ignore Prof. Sayeed's behavior. At the very least, Prof. Sayeed should never be the advisor of another graduate student. He's not temperamentally fit for the job.

[REDACTED]

Honoring [REDACTED] legacy is the least UW-Madison can do.

If you'd like to discuss this further, I can be reached at [REDACTED]

Regards,

Summary of Sayeed Research Lab Investigatory Meetings:

Date Conducted: October 21, 2016 to October 28, 2016

Investigatory Meeting Conducted By: Jason Jankoski, Asst. Dean & Tricia Droes, HR Mgr.

Students Interviewed Individually: Requested interviews with a selection of past and present students of the lab group. We successfully made contact with 11 individuals who had been appointed in the lab. We also spoke to a couple of faculty colleagues in the department. Names of those interviewed have been recorded but will not be distributed.

Purpose: Dean's Office received concerns from a student's parents regarding verbal abuse, hostile work environment, unreasonable expectations, and other actions that made the student feel uncomfortable and the lab a "toxic" environment. We then reached out to 19 current and former students to provide an opportunity to voluntarily share their experiences in the Sayeed lab. Goal to collect first-hand accounts from students.

Possible Outcome: Information used to develop recommendations for next steps, if there is validity to the concerns brought forth. Potential for movement to the Provost Office for further investigation.

Information presented: It has come to the Dean's Office attention that there are significant concerns regarding Professor Sayeed and his actions in the Wireless Communication & Sensing lab. Your name was provided to me as a current/former member of the lab. The College of Engineering recently received feedback from one of our graduate students, expressing concerns about their experience in Professor Sayeed's lab. We are launching an investigation to determine if this was an isolated incident or a part of a broader experience. Professor Booske and Professor Sayeed are both aware that I am asking to meet with you. I am hopeful you will be willing take a few moments of your time to share your experience. We will take notes, but our report is intended to summarize statements that appear consistent with a majority of the students interviewed.

Format: Ask a series of pre-prepared questions. Students did not need to answer any question(s) that made them feel uncomfortable. The focus was on getting their perspective of what is occurring in Professor Sayeed's lab.

QUESTIONS & RESPONSES:

1) Are you a M.S. or Ph.D. student? How many years have you been in Professor Chin Sayeed's lab?

We interviewed 7 students that were in the M.S. program and 2 students who were in the PhD program and switched to an M.S. We also interviewed 1 current PhD student and 1 recent PhD graduate-neither of these students had Professor Sayeed as a final mentor. A number of students stayed for a year or less in the lab and then moved to another lab or did not seek another lab position.

2) When is your projected graduation date?

The majority of the students we spoke with were M.S. students and all appeared to graduate or on target to graduate in a 2 to 3 year period from entering the program.

3) Have you had an overall positive experience in Professor Sayeed's lab?

The consensus from the students we spoke with was that Professor Sayeed conducted state of the art research in his lab, but his communication skills with students and colleagues created a "toxic"

atmosphere. Most students did not believe they were treated with respect or dignity and highlighted their time in the lab as the worst part of their experience at the UW.

The majority of students interviewed stated that Professor Sayeed was very critical of research tasks and yelled frequently when results did not appear to be met. He hired students with unique skills and then became upset when he could not understand the issues that arose during projects. Professor Sayeed continuously criticized work and demeaned students that had ideas or solutions that were not aligned with his thoughts. Instead of encouraging graduate students, he often publically criticized their work. The form of the criticism was often through screaming and yelling in front of other students in the lab. His tirades included swearing, offensive gestures, and throwing items. In addition, students interviewed indicated that Professor Sayeed called them slaves, monkeys, and chimpanzees. He also implied physical threats towards students.

Students dreaded the Monday lab meeting with Professor Sayeed. The meeting almost always included tirades, swearing, and public humiliation of students. Students expressed fear and apprehension going to this meeting because of his yelling, swearing and his anger. This behavior resulted in some students seeking professional help for the stresses they endured in Professor Sayeed's lab. Other students quit their RA or PA positions.

Students indicated that turnover in the lab was a constant. Multiple interviewees indicated that 4 out every 5 students who were interested in working in the lab or accepted appointments typically lasted 1-month or less. The students in the lab often discouraged others from joining the lab. It was a difficult atmosphere that was stressful for everyone involved.

4) Has Professor Sayeed ever:

Made you feel uncomfortable based on verbal exchange? Yes (9) No (2)

Used inappropriate language in your meetings/discussions? Yes (9) No (2) Example using the F-word and other swearing. Calling students stupid.

Insulted your intelligence or suggested that you are not capable of successful graduate study (privately/publically)? Yes (9) No (2) Indicating they were stupid, lazy, and idiots. Student's indicated that Professor Sayeed was unreasonable and demeaning with all of his graduate students. He called them Monkeys, Chimpanzees, and dumber than his 2 year-old.

Threatened to prevent you from graduating? A couple of students indicated that they feared that he would not sign appropriate paperwork for graduation. These instances were less frequent in responses as most of the students we spoke with did not remain in the lab throughout their time in Engineering due to the difficult culture.

Threatened to remove your funding or remove you from the graduate program? All responses were "No" to this question.

Threatened to prevent you from changing advisors or schools? All responses were "No" to this question. Many students did switch out of his lab or move to other universities. He merely stated of students that left, that "they couldn't hack it" or they were "lazy".

Threatened to provide negative references? All responses were "No" to this question.

Threatened to “destroy your career” if you decide to leave the lab or make a career change? All responses were “No” to this question.

5) If yes to any of number 4, were there any witnesses to any negative exchanges with Professor Sayeed?

There were witnesses to Monday lab meetings where students were targeted and made to feel “stupid”. The students indicated they witnessed Professor Sayeed lose his temper with other students in the lab frequently. Students appeared to try to support each other to “survive” in the lab. One student indicate that there were good times in the lab 10% of the time and the remaining 90% was horrible.

Only two students indicated that there were minimal or no negative activities occurring in the lab. Their duration in the lab were both very limited.

6) Has Professor Sayeed ever asked you to do something that made you feel uncomfortable?

All students answered “No” to this question. One of the faculty member’s we spoke to shared that interactions with students and yelling at weekly lab meetings made them feel uncomfortable.

7) Has Professor Sayeed required you to do tasks that you feel are beyond reasonable expectations and different than tasks required by your lab peers?

The main item shared was the requirement to work 60 to 70 hours in the week to get projects and demos completed. Professor Sayeed routinely criticized students who did not put enough time in the lab due to personal or academic commitments.

Professor Sayeed routinely indicated that achievements in the classroom were unimportant compared to the work in his lab. He advised students to focus more on his lab work even in the understood detriment of their class work. Some of the students in his lab working 60 hours a week were on 33% or other part-time Project Assistant and Research Assistant appointments.

8) Any additional information that you would like to provide that you think would be helpful?

Students shared numerous stories highlighting Professor Sayeed’s temper and yelling at them. When more senior students in the lab approach Professor Sayeed to change his behavior there was limited short term success. The majority of students would not recommend Professor Sayeed’s lab or him as an advisor. They stated the mental strain that was endured was beyond anything they had experienced previously or since.

There was also the perception from some students that Professor Sayeed cared more about his research than there academics or personal well-being. A number of past students decided to transfer based on the toxic atmosphere in the lab. Another student confirmed they left the program because they were suffering mental health issues from the stress in the lab.

9) Is there anything further that the Department or College can offer you to help you succeed?

Overwhelming response was to improve atmosphere in the lab. They did not wish to have other students experience the negative atmosphere they had experienced. Current students did indicate that in the past few weeks they had seen a change for the positive in Professor Sayeed’s interactions in the lab.

10) Would you like College assistance in changing advisor and/or lab assignment?

Anticipate a couple of students may explore taking the college/department's offer.

KEY SUMMARY POINTS OF INVESTIGATION:

- Students who had Professor Sayeed in the classroom described him as a different person in that setting than in the lab.
- The majority of students described Professor Sayeed having much nicer behavior towards them in the first semester in the lab, while they observed more negative interactions with other experienced lab workers.
- Once committed to the lab, the behavior evolved and these students were subject to yelling and negative interactions with Professor Sayeed.
- Only one student interviewed did not indicate the desire at some point to consider leaving the lab.
- A few students indicated moving from the PhD program to a M.S. solely due to the toxic environment in the lab and the need to move on with their careers.
- Pattern of faculty member ignoring requests and only responding to items of perceived importance to him.
- Pattern of minimal respect for student's time and ideas. Constant interruptions and calling students "stupid".
- Behavior of faculty member perceived by most of the students as "egotistical" and not looking out for their academic interests.
- Academic interests and coursework secondary to lab results.
- Many of the patterns described mirror those of bullying.
- Overlying concern that faculty member had students learn on their own, but when incorrect conclusion may have been reached the focus was on negative reinforcement rather than instruction.
- All-students cooperated answering all questions.

Recommended Outcomes:

- Recommend further investigation by the Provost under Faculty Policies & Procedures Chapter 9, specifically for abuse of authority and influence.
- Recommend anger management assistance for Professor Sayeed.
- Letter of expectation
- Require that Professor Sayeed conduct himself professionally within student meetings omitting his desire to call his students stupid, using derogative language, or other inappropriate words with his students in any capacity.
- Assist students to transfer to other faculty advisors if that is their desire.
- On-going monitoring of the lab to ensure a change in atmosphere and behavior by Professor Sayeed.

I



Written down thoughts

Tue, Oct 20, 2015 at 8:27 PM

attached

 **LabEnvironment.docx**
171K

pg. 47

The working environment in the lab has become increasingly toxic and dysfunctional. This has resulted in the current situation where the lab is in the process of completely imploding. The root cause of this dysfunction are the anger management issues and extremely abusive behavior exhibited by professor Sayeed when interacting with the students in his lab. Although professor Sayeed has exhibited such behavior in the past, since June 2013 when prototyping work on the CAP-MIMO system began it has massively increased in both intensity and frequency. The students in the lab have had discussions with professor Sayeed about the issues caused by his abusive behavior on several occasions in the past 7 months. However, this has not led to any noticeable improvement in the situation and if anything professor Sayeed's behavior has gotten worse in the past few months. This had led to a breakdown in the lab in the following areas:

Communication: Professor Sayeed often says he is disappointed in the level of communication between himself and group members, however a student attempting to communicate with him is inviting a session of screaming and verbal abuse. This creates an environment where communication between the students and professor Sayeed is actively discouraged. Furthermore, when communication does occur professor Sayeed's abusive behavior results in it leading to very little progress. For instance, if during a discussion a student makes a mistake professor Sayeed will yell at the student before making any effort to help correct the mistake.

Collaboration: The toxic environment of the lab has led to a siege mentality among the students where all our energy is dedicated to trying to avoid future episodes of abuse. In addition to hampering the progress of our work, it creates an environment where everybody is completely fixated on resolving whatever issue Professor Sayeed has last yelled at them about rather than working together to move forward the larger mission of the lab.

Progress: The work in the lab has devolved to the point where all efforts is being made to deal with the latest problem that professor Sayeed has gotten angry and abusive about. This constant putting out of fires has led to an environment where progress only happens in fits and spurts because most of our time is dedicated to chasing down the latest problem professor Sayeed is angry and yelling about. This also leads to an environment where no progress is made on longer term projects, like writing papers. Since I am the only student who has been a member of the group for more than 1.5 years, I almost always have to help out with putting out the latest fire. This has been particularly detrimental to completing my PhD, since it feels like I am constantly working on putting out the latest fire to avoid more abuse from professor Sayeed rather working towards finishing my PhD.

Manpower: Professor Sayeed's anger and abusive behavior has led to difficulty in recruiting new students to work in the lab. Since the beginning of the prototyping project, there have never been more than 4 students in the lab for any appreciable amount of time. However, during this time frame (about 2 years) a total of 6 students have come and gone. Of those 6 students, only one stayed in the lab for more than a year and the latest student to leave only lasted for 1.5 months. This has led to manpower problems on two fronts. First, the constant bleeding of personnel has prevented us from building up the manpower necessary to complete

the lab's work. Secondly, the turnover in students has led to a situation where the students who do not leave must spend a significant amount of time training the new students. In particular, since I have been the only student who has been in the lab for more than 1.5 years during this time period, a large portion of this work has fallen on my shoulders. This results in slower progress on the lab's work, which in turn leads to more anger and abuse from professor Sayeed resulting in yet another exodus of students.

These breakdowns and the near constant abusive behavior from professor Sayeed have reached the point where if there is not a drastic change soon he will not have a research group within a year.

MS, 2 years in AS lab [REDACTED]

Exp-not good. Did learn and receive great experience. Culture is bad-stress emotionally toiling. Thought about quitting-most students in lab did quit. It wasn't worth the financial support or work experience to be in the lab.

Examples-#1 AS-severe anger management issues. Would lose temper and blow up over small things-would scream, yell, curse. Weekly meetings-almost every week he would yell at them. He really did scream-lab next door could hear him. Would come to lab to check on progress-would scream and curse, use personal insults. Would compare them to two-year-old son. Really difficult environment to work in-would motivate with fear. Would demean those who left-insist they aren't tough enough-would say they shat their pants. Language and behavior wasn't constructive-being abusive with no purpose.

In meetings, he would pick on one student-he would be working on parts of the prototype work. Would focus anger on him during meetings in front of the others. [REDACTED] 2013-2014. Would threaten to fire [REDACTED] in the meetings if he didn't work harder. In May 2016, [REDACTED], undergrad student. Term project-lit survey on research in communications. The project [REDACTED] was doing was on a leader in the field-AS saw as personal rival. When [REDACTED] was presenting project in class-AS was constantly interrupting him with questions. He was probably talking more than [REDACTED] and saying how the professors research was poor/bad. And said the research was stupid and told [REDACTED] he was stupid for believing it.

Turnover-got higher the longer [REDACTED] was there. While [REDACTED] was there-multiple students came and gone. At one point, two started but they left within two months. That was really difficult for [REDACTED] he had to train the new people. [REDACTED] was the only student in the lab who was truly productive at the level of a phd student. Everything got shoved onto his plate-he was the only one who could get it all done which didn't leave him time to work on his phd.

Intelligence-yes, insulted him. Compare intellect to two-year-old son. "have you lost your mind?" would question if other people could get the stuff done. In weekly group meetings, he would say stuff that would be better to be addressed during one on one meetings and not in a group.

Sort of threatened to prevent him from graduating. [REDACTED] was very up front about not committing to do a phd. AS wanted him to do a phd-he was pushing him to stay extra. Pressured him to work for summer 2016. He wanted to just finish up to get out-his fate was in AS hands with his warrant. Advisor has to sign off on it. He asked him to sign the warrant in April. [REDACTED] had a conference paper that he published already. AS said no-he would sign it when it was due but didn't provide feedback to work on in the meantime. [REDACTED] felt he was trying to extract stuff out of him first before signing. [REDACTED] said he could stay for part of the summer since he was afraid AS would turn it into a big ordeal. At same time, they had a prototype for WARF that was to be demoed in May-was worried that, if the prototype didn't turn out, AS may not sign the warrant. AS signed the warrant after the demo-it went well. AS did ask him to put off his graduation until August so he could stay on work until June 3rd but he had a job waiting that he accepted so he volunteered to work for three weeks without pay.

Negative references? No.

Expectations-had high expectations with the hours that they worked. Would get upset with students if they didn't come in early enough. One student was coming in at 12, was meeting the hours requirement but AS laid into him for not coming in early enough. [redacted] was crunch time but he wasn't able to work many hours one week. AS screamed at him in front of everyone-also had a job that AS didn't know about AS thought he was making it up and made him give him the contact information for his other position. AS was being very possessive of [redacted].

Balance between work/school-very unbalances. [redacted] was in room with him and AS. [redacted] mentioned he needed time to study. AS said studying for exams is a waste of time because, when looking for jobs, nobody cared about his grad school GPA. He did later apologize to [redacted] definitely prioritize research over academics.

In a group meeting-this past march-he was frustrated with [redacted] because he wasn't getting enough down. [redacted] was taken AS class-AS threatened to give him a poor grade if he spent too much time in class and not enough in the lab-immediately back tracked to say no he wouldn't do it but that didn't seem sincere.

[redacted] muslim student-was in a fast for Ramadan. AS said [redacted] was fasting until sundown but why aren't you fasting for the whole day? Seemed like he was questioning [redacted] faith. Broad trend of being very PC-especially with language. Amount of vulgarity used was very excessive. He would call them monkey's a lot.

AS threatened [redacted] with physical actions-don't get sassy because I'm bigger than you. [redacted] he made a point at the time he left to lodge a complaint with the department.

[redacted] was dating a girl for first three semesters there. She was at [redacted] he would visit on weekends. AS said on a number of occasions that he cared more about her than the research. After he accepting a position elsewhere, would say that [redacted] didn't care about the job anymore-that he was coasting. [redacted] was putting in between 40-60 hours on research and doing the bare minimum in classes.

K

Written Statement from Student

I prefer using email and the following contents are my experiences and feelings about working with Prof. Sayeed.

I started working with Prof. Sayeed from [REDACTED] In the first semester [REDACTED] I enrolled the course Independent Study with Prof. Sayeed, and then he supported me as a RA from [REDACTED]

When I was doing the independent study in [REDACTED] Prof. Sayeed did not show much impatience for my research and he helped me with the stuff I did not understand and I think we had a good cooperation in that semester.

However, Prof. Sayeed changed in the following year (when I was supported as a RA). We had a individual meeting every week to discuss my research progress. In the meetings, he always yelled at me when he unsatisfied with my work and sometimes call me with insulting words like 'Monkey' and 'like babies and do not use the brain to think'. Occasionally, he even shouted the F word to me. I felt nervous in the meeting every time and could not express my work clearly as the result and it made him even more angry. It became a vicious circle and I felt stressed and even could not sleep well at night. So I decided to quit after the one year RA contract.

Sometimes, Prof. Sayeed talked to me about his bad temper, but he couldn't control it every time we discussed the research.

I am not sure what is the 'concern' you have received from the student. If he/she had similar experiences as I described, I believe it is not an isolate incident.

I hope my experiences can help your investigations and I guarantee every word in this email is the truth and my real feeling when I worked with Prof. Sayeed.

Thank you very much.

Written Statement from Student

Thanks for waiting for my response.

I will honestly write what I had felt and experienced with Professor Akbar Sayeed.

I officially had worked with Akbar Sayeed from [REDACTED] I started independent study under his advice from [REDACTED] and then I had continued to be a research-assistant later. I did not have many options as other professors were not recruiting research students at that time although a lot of other graduate students had spoken about difficult relationships with Dr Sayeed.

I respect his research work, but his teaching skills and communication skills with students and colleague professors do not seem to be appropriate at all. I believe Professor is not just an independent researcher. Professor should teach and encourage students to be a independent researcher. I think Professor Akbar should change his approach to his students in this respect.

He was very critical for every research task. Not only his expectation for research was pretty high but also he wanted every research task should be matched with his research direction in tiny detail. He had been continuously criticizing my Matlab programming for the reason that variable names or coding styles are not in line with his thought, although it would bring same results and efficient code is not our research topic at all. Thus, instead of encouraging RA's research tasks, he was always criticizing tiny details of tasks. Importantly, his criticizing was not academic at all. He usually screamed and yelled in front of all other students with swearing words and offensive gestures. Also, he didn't hesitate to swear in front of other colleague professors. I honestly felt to be insulted every time he swore in front of others. I also asked him to stop swearing, but he said student should endure such expression. Every Monday the lab usually had a meeting with Professor Akbar Sayeed, and honestly I was always afraid this meeting because of his yelling, swearing and his anger. The situation just got worse and worse with Professor Akbar Sayeed, and I also [REDACTED] He used to tell me that he didn't want to waste his funding for me and he wants me to go back to my home country. I finally did not see any good thing about continuing my PhD study for my health. I had to make a difficult decision to quit the RA position and leave the school only with my master's degree, although getting a PhD has been my dream of my life.

He also forced students to work longer hours than designated hours. I got 50% or 33% RAship, but he always emphasized that I should work more than 70 hours per week. He didn't even come to the school often he everyday called at a lab phone and checked the students' attendance one by one. Even I also got a phone call from Professor Akbar Sayeed one Saturday when I was at grocery shopping with my wife. He shouted and yelled at me, talking about my absence at the lab, although I heard through the phone that his wife was trying to make him calm down. I understand that most graduate student sacrifice their time for research, and I think it is recommended. However, it should not be something to be yelled at because I was not violating any policy. Honestly, I was still sitting on my desk at the lab because of fears rather than my interests in research. Also, I was so confused at his behavior, because he sometimes skipped research meetings randomly because of his sudden camping trips. At the same time, he yelled or screamed at me for my temporary absence at the lab.

Also, he even criticized my personal life outside of lab work. I usually had a short conversation with my wife during my lunch time, since we were in a long distance relationship. As I remembered, he usually showed up at a school around the lunch time. As soon as he saw me chatting on a phone with my wife on campus, he started to yell, although I was still in a conversation with my wife. Before I left school, I asked some advice to Professor Gubner. Professor Gubner asked me about my situation, and he firstly

PA-53

emphasized with my feelings and [REDACTED] I now think that Professor Gubner's approach to students was quite different from Professor Sayeed.

Honestly, I had felt Professor Sayeed doesn't have any respect to graduate students. He clearly mentioned it is his joke, but all students during the talks knew that it was not a joke. He spoke that graduate students are slaves. He said they just need to endure any pain since such pain would only last for 4 or 5 years. I don't think this is only me who felt humiliation from Professor Sayeed, and I believe many other students also felt the same. I remember other lab mates [REDACTED] all had agreed that Professor Sayeed needs to improve communication skills. When [REDACTED] tried to change a adviser, we agreed to share experience if department needed any investigation. I think you can also contact these two people.

I was proud of myself when I passed a qualification exam on my first attempt. I felt that I was getting closer to PhD, and that has been my life goal even though I had to leave everything in my home country to come to UW Madison for my goal. However Professor Akbar's behavior made me give up PhD. It was a most painful decision in my life. I know I still lose a lot of things from not finishing up my PhD years and just graduating only with a master's degree. It is still my dream and I always think about getting a chance to go back to a grad school someday if I can meet respectable advisors.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me again.

Thanks

M

person

10/26/16

Phd program->after working with Prof Sayeed (A.S.), ended with a MS in [REDACTED]

- Worked in lab for 7 months
 - Started in [REDACTED] was a TA but worked unpaid in the lab (15-20 hrs per week) for five months before he became an RA

Experience in lab:

- Not good. Environment was one of the most stressful he had ever been in
- Quit lab after seven months due to mental breakdown
 - Would work 6 days straight (15 hours each day) to finish project

Has A.S. ever used inappropriate language in your meetings/discussions?

- A.S. yelled at students-called them stupid, dumbasses, incompetent
- [REDACTED] as the shining star of the lab
- A lot of times A.S. would verbalize his desire to hit a student
 - Wished aloud for punching bag due to his frustration

Has A.S. insulted your intelligence or suggest that you are not capable of successful graduate study?

- A.S. compared them to animals-common theme
- Would say they have degrees, why can't they do this (meaning the research/project)

Has A.S. threatened to prevent you from graduating?

- He didn't threaten him but A.S. was never officially his advisor.

Has A.S. required you to do tasks that you feel are beyond reasonable expectations and different than tasks required by your lab peers?

- On average, [REDACTED] worked 40-60 hours per week in the lab even though his PA appointment was only at 33.3%
- Another student brought up the excessive hours and A.S. said he'd cancel the PA right away
- It was not uncommon to have to work double the FTE
 - Some students worked all night and weekends
 - [REDACTED] cut back his hours when he decided to quit

Additional information:

- [REDACTED] met frequently with the grad student coordinators
 - It was known that the A.S. lab was difficult
 - They would talk to A.S. about it and it would get better for a few weeks, but it would always revert to the way it was

pg 55

- struggled with classes-A.S. was his instructor. A.S. told him that " no one is gonna give a shit about your grades once you graduate"
- One on one, A.S. could be your best friend. In a group setting he was very angry
- watched two guys come and go right away
 - Turnover was expected
- treaded presenting at meetings
 - A.S. would yell about formatting a few slides in.

MS student

10/21/16

In person

Experience in lab:

- Satisfactory->moderate
- Prof Sayeed (A.S.) is extreme-would lose temper fast
 - Example: need to demo their work due to deadline. A few things didn't go as planned. Everyone was doing their best on top of attending classes. A.S. expected the students to work more-told them grades don't matter; work does.

Has A.S. ever made you uncomfortable?

- He would yell at individuals during meetings.
- I was advised by former students not to join group because of A.S. actions and a lot of mental pressure

Has A.S. ever used inappropriate language in your meetings/discussions?

- Yes-A.S. said he'd try to calm down
- Example: 15 days ago- I was working on course work until 3AM-> went to lab next day late due to oversleeping. A.S. got angry and yelled at him in front of group.

Has A.S. insulted your intelligence or suggest that you are not capable of successful graduate study?

- He would indirectly insult them-such as saying he doesn't want mediocre work in front of entire group. It was demoralizing

If yes to any of the above, were there witnesses?

- Yes, entire group was witness.

Has A.S. required you to do tasks that you feel are beyond reasonable expectations and different than tasks required by your lab peers?

- A.S. expects them to work harder-doesn't understand that they have other commitments
- Tasks are assigned/expectations expressed that are hard to meet

Additional information:

- I told us that there are no physical issues here. In [redacted] education is rough->A.S. methods don't affect him as much. Would prefer one on one discussions with A.S rather than be maligned in front of group. Project is very interesting to him. I have witnessed A.S yelling at students who will walk out and vow not to return. During fall term-started with six students-five have left.
- Sometimes it is difficult to understand him but he is a good person.

- A.S. spoke to each student individually about death. He gave them resources to help and his personal phone number
- Sometimes it's hard to anticipate what A.S. state of mind will be
 - Has gotten scared of him
 - A.S. has thrown things in the lab

S. needs to be more patient and keep calm. A.S. needs help to understand how the employer/employee relationship should be. Also, if he has concerns about an individual, he should discuss it with him in private, not in front of everyone.

0

in person

10/27/16

PhD student – rec'd [REDACTED]

- Worked with [REDACTED] on MS- [REDACTED] recommender [REDACTED] to Prof Sayeed (A.S.)
- Worked with A.S. for 8-10 months

Experience in lab:

- Bad-he is one of the smartest faculty in the department but social interaction is not right
- The way he teaches students is of great concern
 - Would yell and swear at students
- A.S. would tell him to be more thorough with his work

Has A.S. ever made you uncomfortable?

- In Group meetings-every student who had to present would be under stress. People were scared of talking to him
- In [REDACTED] office-A.S. had a discussion that was very aggressive
 - A.S. did apologize to [REDACTED] later
- He did have great conversations with A.S. when one on one
 - 10% of time A.S. would be pleasant

Has A.S. ever used inappropriate language in your meetings/discussions?

- Lot of inappropriate language:
 - Three students in meeting ([REDACTED], [REDACTED], one other), A.S. and [REDACTED]
 - Discussion got heated
 - A.S. banging hands on table and disparaged [REDACTED]
 - Called [REDACTED] an f***er twice

Additional information:

- [REDACTED] tried talking to Prof Vernon-Vernon told him he was too sensitive but then tried to console him
 - Told him it would be wise to go to different group
 - Advised him to maintain composure
- Complained to John Booske and told him he wanted to leave
 - John told him they wanted to keep this under the rug

pg. 59

in person

10/25/16

MS, one semester, [REDACTED]

Experience in lab:

- Quite difficult, a lot of work pressure [REDACTED] was expecting something different
- Prof Sayeed (A.S.) equated it to running a small company
 - Students had to come with ideas-A.S. would get angry if they didn't produce
 - A.S. treated them like employees
- Left lab because his appointment ended. Environment was not encouraging, stressful

Has A.S. ever used inappropriate language in your meetings/discussions?

- A.S. used inappropriate language about people and towards people [REDACTED] learned a lot of swear words)
- A.S. spoke about a person who left- said he "shit his pants" and left
 - This happened during [REDACTED] st week and was in front of other students
- A.S. would talk about people behind their back to other students

Has A.S. insulted your intelligence or suggest that you are not capable of successful graduate study?

- A.S. would speak in a way to make you feel like nothing.
 - Would say "This is not the work of a grad student, you must think smart" then would try to do it himself but he didn't understand [REDACTED] work

Has A.S. required you to do tasks that you feel are beyond reasonable expectations and different than tasks required by your lab peers?

- [REDACTED] appointment was only 33% yet he had to work 20 hours per week. He would push deadlines

Additional information:

- [REDACTED] did want to quite based on A.S. behavior, didn't feel like he was achieving anything
- Quit even though he wouldn't have funding but was able to get an appointment with [REDACTED] which was a great move and feels respected by [REDACTED]

Q

-in Person

10/21/16

Currently working on prelims-Prof Sayeed (A.S.) is [REDACTED]

PhD student-has worked with A.S. for [REDACTED] but is in [REDACTED] lab

Experience in lab:

- A.S. is very smart, good at conveying information, gets frustrated easily
- When frustrated-had small out bursts where he would verbally express frustration
- Would keep voice low-would say things are not good, should do better

Has A.S. ever made you uncomfortable?

- Yes-he felt he had to defend behavior/actions
- Atmosphere is not conducive to learning/growing

Has A.S. ever used inappropriate language in your meetings/discussions?

Yes- in the middle of a presentation by [REDACTED] A.S. kept interrupting to ask questions without giving [REDACTED] a chance to get to that part of the presentation. A.S. got frustrated with [REDACTED] then proceeded to look up and say: God give me the strength to deal with this shit.

Has A.S. insulted your intelligence or suggest that you are not capable of successful graduate study?

- A.S. tried to encourage [REDACTED] to stay so he never experienced it directly
- A.S. would tell [REDACTED] doesn't seem like he wants to be there

If yes to any of the above, were there witnesses?

- Most exchanges were in front of [REDACTED]
- Most of the blatant negative interactions were directed towards [REDACTED]
- He witnessed A.S. say to [REDACTED] what are you guys pissing on your brains? You're better than this.

Has A.S. ever asked you to do something that made you feel uncomfortable?

- [REDACTED] didn't feel like he was learning and micro aggressions put him on edge

Has A.S. required you to do tasks that you feel are beyond reasonable expectations and different than tasks required by your lab peers?

- A.S. really pushed people but it was never unreasonable.

Additional information:

- [REDACTED] left due to anxiety created by the lab. [REDACTED] talked to him and told him, if you feel on edge now, get out and we won't hold it against you

Pg. 61



@gmail.com>

Update

7 messages

Tue, Oct 20, 2015 at 12:14 AM

Hey Guys,

I'm going to be leaving the research group in the immediate future. I'm not really cut out to handle the stress that working with Professor Sayeed entails, and for my own mental/emotional health, I'm going to seek work elsewhere.

I just wanted you guys to know that I have really enjoyed working with both of you and for that reason I'm disappointed that I'm going to be resigning my position with Professor Sayeed. Thank you for doing your best to make me feel welcome and to help me get caught up as well as possible. Your help was invaluable.

I wish you well on your research.

Sincerely,

Tue, Oct 20, 2015 at 12:19 AM

Don't worry about it. I am actually planning to have a discussion with Professor Sayeed when he returns to basically tell him that his behavior has gotten to the point to where if there is not a drastic change very soon his group will implode. If it is at all possible, I would like to meet with you to talk about this in person tomorrow or Wednesday.

Thanks,

On Mon, Oct 19, 2015 at 11:14 PM,

Hey Guys,

I'm going to be leaving the research group in the immediate future. I'm not really cut out to handle the stress that working with Professor Sayeed entails, and for my own mental/emotional health,

Pg. 62

in person

10/21/16

Masters Student-has worked in Prof Sayeed (A.S.) lab for six months, plans to graduate in [REDACTED]

Experience in lab:

- A.S. is pretty talented
- Not good time to work with him. He likes screaming/shouting

Has A.S. ever made you uncomfortable?

- Always shouting
 - Mostly at group meetings-A.S puts out a lot of questions
 - If he's not satisfied with answers, will scream and use dirty words, also call them chimpanzees

Has A.S ever used inappropriate language in your meetings/discussions?

- Ex: 3 weeks ago, A.S. asked [REDACTED] and another student to move stuff
 - He called them lazy
 - Called [REDACTED] a liar because [REDACTED] wants to leave the lab
 - Uses bad tone/loud, looks aggressive

Has A.S. insulted your intelligence or suggest that you are not capable of successful graduate study?

- Never insulted [REDACTED] intelligence but he has other students

Has A.S ever asked you to do something that made you feel uncomfortable?

- no

Has A.S. required you to do tasks that you feel are beyond reasonable expectations and different than tasks required by your lab peers?

- no

Additional information:

- He is better than he was-basically within the last three weeks
- Back in September, in a group meeting, he would shout, punched the table, throw things
 - A visiting scholar [REDACTED] left this meeting-A.S. apologized to him.
- [REDACTED] plans to quit after his current appointment period is up
- A.S. is not a good instructor, does not know how to keep harmony in lab and doesn't respect students
- Has been nicer than before "is it because of the death of the student?"

T

ver phone

10/26/16

MS, worked [REDACTED] in a six month internship

Experience:

- Great learning experience. Got to work on the demo for WARF which was a "real" project being executed within tight timelines
- Never saw Prof Sayeed lose temper
- Prof Sayeed never used inappropriate language in front of him
- He never felt uncomfortable
- Tasks were challenging but he enjoyed them

U
11/15/16

- [redacted] in person
- Arrived Last [redacted] plans to spend [redacted] in Prof Sayeed (A.S.) Lab

Experience in lab:

- Professor is very good with experiments and research area
- Has emotion towards career and research
- Temper is not very good-too strict
- A little shocked
 - [redacted] has worked with Professors in [redacted] so he has experience
 - He feels Professors should be more gentle/kind
 - Should be able to tolerate more
- A.S. cannot control temper
- There is too much work, not enough people
 - Including [redacted] only three people in lab when he arrived (other two were [redacted] and [redacted])
 - A.S. expected too much out of [redacted]
 - They were too tired
 - [redacted] supervises ~50 people in [redacted] and discussed this with A.S.

Has A.S. ever used inappropriate language in your meetings/discussions?

- A.S. research is in high demand but students can't get involved quickly
 - A.S. gets angry easily and says "F" word
 - Students struggle with his daily demands
- Recently his temper has been better but it depends upon daily staff

Has A.S. ever asked you to do something that made you feel uncomfortable?

- Staff meetings are difficult
 - [redacted] is the pressure even though A.S. doesn't pay him
- A.S. is too much an Engineer
 - Too focused on principal
 - Difficult to communicate with him on technical area
 - A.S. won't understand details
 - He doesn't have time to listen which perpetuates mistakes
 - Too many inexperienced people in Lab
- A.S. has said stuff to [redacted]
 - Not friendly to him but A.S. is a good guy
 - With [redacted] gone it has been hard [redacted] can feel A.S.'s sorrow
 - A.S. treated [redacted] like a son
 - [redacted] was afraid of words

Pg 65

Has A.S. required you to do tasks that you feel are beyond reasonable expectations and different than tasks required by your lab peers?

- A.S. did expect some students to work more hours but he was understanding of [redacted]'s schedule
- [redacted] thought processing wasn't good so he expected student to work more
- Once target was met, AS didn't care about the time in the lab

Additional information:

- Two months ago, [redacted] told AS he will be in trouble when [redacted] graduates since he doesn't have a doctoral student coming up.

V
10/20/12

- Emotional, Financial, Verbal
- Degrading grad students
- Routine dialogue
- Should "smack you"
 - ↳ [redacted] → Same abuse
 - ↳ Complaint to Dept. Chair (2011)
 - ↳ No change in behavior
- - ↳ Co-Mulder
- Akbar → not comfortable with behavior
 - acknowledge try to be better
 - Sexually explicit
- Degrade [redacted] in front of student
 - ↳ Not comfortable
- Used to be yelling at
 - ↳ normal behavior
 - ↳ verbal abuse
- Joint projects (co-pi)
 - ↳ Summer 2012 not take pay
 - ↳ right to ask?
 - ↳ Not work w/in future
- Co-PI
 - ↳ Reduce appt %
 - ↳ Took more amount
 - ↳ \$48.50 spend → transfer to another acct.
 - ↳ All \$ went Akbar students
- May 2013 → Akron Colleagues
 - ↳ Leave
 - ↳ Akbar - ...

pg. 67

→ No research credit

- Got upset
- Get the "F-out"
- Spends funding (Fall 2013)
- No cost extension to 2016
- Don't consent to 2017
- Terms of Grant
- Work w/ other fellow
- Constantly upset
- Physically ill (stress)
- P.I. kick out project
- Consequences
 - Wait year
 - Case last year
 - Back
 - \$850 million → no student support
 - help his students
 - not co-author most
 - ↳ Just 1 paper
- Answers for tenure case delay.
- Steer Akbar path
- Public acknowledgement
 - ↳ Faculty Mtg.
 - ↳ E-Mail

* I-PP-document

W

Meeting with [REDACTED] ECE student, Tuesday, 1/31/2017.

[REDACTED] is a returning adult student.

- Started working during the [REDACTED] with Prof. Sayeed (referred to as AS, henceforth) on an idea AS had to develop an instructional class project built around Raspberry PI units.
- [REDACTED] was drawn to contributing due to a frustrating experience in [REDACTED] (not taught by AS) where it was too much high level theory without an illustrative hands-on application example experience. Loved the idea of a faculty member trying to introduce a hands on project into a traditionally theory-only course [REDACTED] note: not sure what course AS was planning to use this in but it wasn't important for me to know).
- She started working on this as an independent study project last summer.
- Received zero guidance
- Noticed that none of the grad students were happy in their work. Felt unwelcome in the group environment. By which she meant, if she had a question, did not get any student to generously offer to help her or answer her questions. Felt that they were each drawn into their own little world and personal focus...speculated that it was an adaptive reaction to feeling "stressed out" working under AS, yet not wanting to quit because of wanting to finish their project and get the benefit of a degree, regardless of feeling stressed due to the mentor-student relationship. [REDACTED] note: this appeared to be the mental model she chose to construct to understand and explain why there seemed to be, to her, no generous responsivity from grad students to help her with her questions. None of the grad students ever volunteered that this was how they felt to her).
- AS yells. Bad. When he's frustrated with what he feels is progress that is too slow.
- He's loud. Gives "Hrump's". Says things to students like "What's the matter with you? (when they make a mistake or don't get something). "you are relying too much on your calculators or YouTube...Use your brain!"
- [REDACTED] felt that (an interpretation of her own construction) the students were generally too beset with anxiety to ask him questions in order to make progress on their individual projects and learning.
 - They were working to avoid mistakes (again, that is her way of explaining behaviors she felt she was seeing in the group as a whole, in the lab)
- Last time that she interacted with AS was about two weeks ago. She told AS that she quit the group late last week.
- She characterized seeing one of the "loud" or "feedback via negative criticism" events approximately once every two days or once per week incidents.
- Yelled approximately once/week.
- All the grad students in the lab plus [REDACTED] sat down with AS and talked to him just before winter break. This included multiple [REDACTED] students who told him they don't want to be yelled at, or to be called lazy. It seemed to her that the significance was the challenge it took for the [REDACTED] students, especially, to challenge a senior authority figure in this way, given their cultural conditioning against direct confrontation with such a figure. Yet they apparently experienced a sufficiently stressful experience that they found the motivation to do so, anyways.
- AS surprised [REDACTED] how open and receptive he seemed to receive the criticism. He did not defensively push back.

- Things got a little better. Temporarily. Then, seemed to revert. ■■■ note: this improvement and reversion to difficult behavior seems to be happening in the course of 2-3 weeks, from end of December to mid-January after which ■■■ quit. So whether this represents enough data to assert that there is a complete reversion back to old habits, or whether there was one or two isolated incidents of reversion but then recovery—after ■■■ left—we cannot know from her testimony. That would need to come from the grad students in the lab that were there at end of December and are still there now, in Feb).

W

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc:
Date: Monday March 13 2017 10:44:16PM

RE: Update on Investigation

Hi Prof Wolleat:

Since the start of this semester, personally I think professor Sayeed is trying to behave better. Although he's still using some dirty words sometime, but he would immediately apologize for that. And I have to say, professor Sayeed is easy to get angry even I just made a small mistake in the research project, which makes me feel really bad sometime, but at the mean time, he also gave me an encouragement when I made some progress. So, some times I'm just confused that what kind a person he is. I think the best comment on Professor Sayeed is that he is an emotional person. And to be honest, he's very good at his academic field, but he's too rude to be a well-known professor, and he would be a great professor as long as he can be a nice and polite person.

I think that all my feeling for this semester, at least for now, I feels not bad, and I'm really appreciate your concern.

Thanks

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 13, 2017 1:41 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Update on Investigation

[REDACTED]
A few weeks ago you confirmed that the statements you made in an Oct. 20, 2016, interview with Jason Jankoski, were accurate. In that statement you indicated that you had had concerns about Prof. Sayeed's behavior earlier, but that he seemed to have changed around the time that you made the statement. Because this statement was made several months ago, I would like to find out what it has been like for you this current semester [REDACTED] regarding Prof. Sayeed.

I would be interested in what your experience has been this current semester. I understand that there is a lot of work to do in filling in the gaps left by [REDACTED]. It would be fine for you to write a short statement in reply to this email.

Thank you so much for your participation. Pat Wolleat, Emerita Professor

pg: 71

Jason Jankoski

From: Jason Jankoski
Sent: Thursday, October 20, 2016 10:16 AM
To: Jason Jankoski
Cc: JOHN H BOOSKE
Subject: Experience at UW-Madison

X.1
bcc: to attached
list

Good Morning,

My name is Jason Jankoski, I am the Assistant Dean for Human Resources at College of Engineering. Your name was provided to me as a current/former member of the Wireless Communication & Sensing lab or having worked for Professor Sayeed in another capacity. The College of Engineering recently received feedback from one of our graduate students, expressing concerns about their experience in Professor Sayeed's lab. We are launching an investigation to determine if this was an isolated incident or a part of a broader experience. I would like to briefly speak with you to better understand your experience as part of Professor Sayeed's lab. Any information that you provide will be compiled into a broad summary and your specific comments will remain confidential.

Professor Booske, Chair of the Electrical & Computer Engineering department, and Professor Sayeed are both aware that I am asking to meet with you. I am hopeful you will be willing to take a few moments of your time to share your experience. I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Jason Jankoski
Assistant Dean for Human Resources
College of Engineering
University of Wisconsin-Madison
1415 Engineering Drive
Madison, WI 53706-1323
Phone (608) 890-0921
jjankoski@wisc.edu
www.engr.wisc.edu/

Pg 72

Xr2

From:
To:
Cc:
Date: Thursday February 16 2017 6:02:37PM

RE: email to ECE students

From:
To: "
Cc:
Sent: 16-Feb-2017 23:59:28 +0000
Subject: RE: email to ECE students

A few months ago you were asked to participate in a College of Engineering investigation of Professor Akbar Sayeed's conduct with students working in the Wireless Communication and Sensing Laboratory. You agreed to a (face-to-face or telephone) interview with Jason Jankowski, Associate Dean for Human Resources. An associate of Jason took notes on the interviews. The investigation has now moved to the campus level under Provost Sarah Mangelsdorf. I have been asked to conduct the campus-level investigation.

We would like to invite your participation yet again. If you agree, there are three possible routes you may take. One route is to confirm the accuracy of the notes of the Jankowski interview and to add additional information if you choose. You have received an attachment of a typewritten copy of the notes. The second route is to write your own original statement. Finally, you may choose to have a new interview with me. All of these would be satisfactory for us and you may choose how you wish to proceed after you read the notes.

However you choose to proceed, your confidentiality will be maintained insofar as it is permissible throughout the investigation process. De-identified group information will be reported to the Provost. Thereafter, if names are required to be disclosed, it will be done consistent with University policies and practices with appropriate protections in place and admonitions to the faculty member to refrain from retaliatory conduct.

We understand that your time is very valuable and hope to conduct this part of the investigation in the most expeditious way possible. Your observations regarding the Lab are extremely important to us. We hope that you can accommodate this request as soon as possible. Thank you.

Pat Wolleat, Professor Emerita, Department of Counseling Psychology

Pg. 73

4.1



Talk tomorrow

Wed, Oct 21, 2015 at 8:38 PM

To: Akbar Sayeed <akbar@engr.wisc.edu>

Akbar,

Just so you're not blindsided when you get back tomorrow, we need to have a serious discussion about the environment in the lab and the future of the group, preferably before the group meeting.

Pg. 74



We need to talk

Sat, Aug 1, 2015 at 5:25 AM

To: Akbar Sayeed <akbar@engr.wisc.edu>

Akbar,

A consistent thing you've said is "your words matter". Since yesterday I've been considering some words you said to the effect that you could (and implicitly would) beat me up if I showed you too much sass. Even though you followed them up with an "I'm kidding", your words still matter.

Even if you felt I was out of line, you could have let me know that without making a threat of violence. Furthermore, I am unwilling to work in an environment where such threats are seen as acceptable. So I think we need to talk about how to proceed from this on Monday.

Pg. 75

2.1



Time to talk tomorrow

Tue, Oct 20, 2015 at 6:24 PM

To: Robert Nowak <nowak@ece.wisc.edu>

Professor Nowak,

Would you have some time tomorrow to talk with me about some serious issues our group is having with professor Sayeed?

Thank you.

pg 76

2.2



Time to meet tomorrow

Thu, Oct 6, 2016 at 2:33 PM

To: Robert Nowak <nowak@ece.wisc.edu>

Professor Nowak,

Would you have some time to talk with me tomorrow. This is related to some of the issues about our lab and professor Sayeed that I discussed with you about a year ago. A lot of the same behavior and toxic dynamics are still ongoing and honestly I am reaching a burnout point and need to talk with someone outside the lab about what I can do as soon as possible.

If you are not available, could you please suggest someone else I might talk with.

Thank you,

Pg. 77

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc:
Date: Monday March 13 2017 10:44:16PM

i. l

RE: Update on Investigation

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Thank you so much for your participation. Pat Wolleat, Emerita Professor

pg. 78

Meeting with [REDACTED] ECE student, Tuesday, 1/31/2017.

[REDACTED] is a returning adult student.

- Started working during the [REDACTED] with Prof. Sayeed (referred to as AS, henceforth) on an idea AS had to develop an instructional class project built around Raspberry PI units.
- [REDACTED] was drawn to contributing due to a frustrating experience in [REDACTED] (not taught by AS) where it was too much high level theory without an illustrative hands-on application example experience. Loved the idea of a faculty member trying to introduce a hands on project into a traditionally theory-only course ([REDACTED] note: not sure what course AS was planning to use this in but it wasn't important for me to know).
- She started working on this as an independent study project last summer.
- Received zero guidance
- Noticed that none of the grad students were happy in their work. Felt unwelcome in the group environment. By which she meant, if she had a question, did not get any student to generously offer to help her or answer her questions. Felt that they were each drawn into their own little world and personal focus...speculated that it was an adaptive reaction to feeling "stressed out" working under AS, yet not wanting to quit because of wanting to finish their project and get the benefit of a degree, regardless of feeling stressed due to the mentor-student relationship. [REDACTED] note: this appeared to be the mental model she chose to construct to understand and explain why there seemed to be, to her, no generous responsivity from grad students to help her with her questions. None of the grad students ever volunteered that this was how they felt to her).
- AS yells. Bad. When he's frustrated with what he feels is progress that is too slow.
- He's loud. Gives "Humph's". Says things to students like "What's the matter with you? (when they make a mistake or don't get something). "you are relying too much on your calculators or YouTube...Use your brain!"
- [REDACTED] felt that (an interpretation of her own construction) the students were generally too beset with anxiety to ask him questions in order to make progress on their individual projects and learning.
 - They were working to avoid mistakes (again, that is her way of explaining behaviors she felt she was seeing in the group as a whole, in the lab)
- Last time that she interacted with AS was about two weeks ago. She told AS that she quit the group late last week.
- She characterized seeing one of the "loud" or "feedback via negative criticism" events approximately once every two days or once per week incidents.
- Yelled approximately once/week.
- All the grad students in the lab plus [REDACTED] sat down with AS and talked to him just before winter break. This included multiple [REDACTED] students who told him they don't want to be yelled at, or to be called lazy. It seemed to her that the significance was the challenge it took for the [REDACTED] students, especially, to challenge a senior authority figure in this way, given their cultural conditioning against direct confrontation with such a figure. Yet they apparently experienced a sufficiently stressful experience that they found the motivation to do so, anyways.
- AS surprised [REDACTED] in how open and receptive he seemed to receive the criticism. He did not defensively push back.

- Things got a little better. Temporarily. Then, seemed to revert. [REDACTED] note: this improvement and reversion to difficult behavior seems to be happening in the course of 2-3 weeks, from end of December to mid-January after which [REDACTED] quit. So whether this represents enough data to assert that there is a complete reversion back to old habits, or whether there was one or two isolated incidents of reversion but then recovery—after [REDACTED] left—we cannot know from her testimony. That would need to come from the grad students in the lab that were there at end of December and are still there now, in Feb).



10/26

Phd program → after working w/ AS ended w/ MS - [REDACTED]

- worked in lab 7 months ⇒ #

- started [REDACTED] was a TA worked unpaid in the lab (1520 hrs wk)
for five months before he became RA

Experience - Not good. Environment was one of the most stressful
ever in. Quit lab seven months in due to mental breakdown

Worked ~~for~~ 6 days straight 5 hrs days to finish project

- yelled at stupid, dumbasses, incompetent

- [REDACTED] Shining star of lab

- a lot of times he would verbalize his desire to hit a student

- wished aloud for punching bag due to frustration

- Compared ~~to~~ to animals - common theme - they have eng
degrees why can't they do this

- he didn't threaten AS was never official advisor

- on average - worked 40-60 hrs of work per week as a 33% PA

- another student brought up the excessive hours AS said
he'd cancel the PA right away.

- Not uncommon to have to work double the FTE

- Some workers here worked all night / weekends

- cut back his hours when he decided to quit

met frequently w/ Grad Student Coordinators

- it was known that AS lab was difficult

they would get together & talk to AS
- it would get better for a week but it
would revert back to the way it was

- Struggled w/ classes

- AS was instructor

- "no one is gonna give a shit abt your grades once you graduate"

- one on one - he was your best friend

- group setting he was very angry

- watched two guys come & go right away

- turnover was expected

- dreaded presenting at meetings

- he would yell abt formatting a few slides in



Oct 21

- MS since Feb

- grad: [REDACTED]

Exp. Satisfactory $\Rightarrow$ Moderate

- Extreme - would lose temper fast

ex - held to demo - had deadline. A few things didn't go as planned everyone was doing their best on top of class

- he expected the students to work more - grades don't matter work does. He would yell at individuals during meetings

- was advised by former students not to join group because of professor actions a lot of mental pressure

ex: Professor ~~has~~ said he'd ~~try~~ try to calm down

5 days ago - was working on course work until 3 AM - 7 went to lab next day late (overslept). AS got angry & yelled at him in front of group. He will swear - He would indirectly insult them such as he doesn't want mediocre ~~work~~ work $\Rightarrow$ in front of entire group. Demoralizing

4d no

7 - expects them to work harder - doesn't understand they have other commitments - tasks are assigned that ~~have~~ expectations are hard to meet

8. No physical issues here. India education is rougher $\Rightarrow$ AS methods don't affect him as much. Would prefer one on one discussion w/ AS rather than ~~be~~ be maligned in front of group. Project is very interesting to him. Has witnessed him yelling @ students who will wait out: vow to not return. During fall - started w/ six students - five have now left.

Sometimes difficult to understand him $\Rightarrow$ he is a good person

- AS spoke to the student individually abt [redacted] death
- gave them resources $\therefore$ his personal phone #
- informal discussions are good

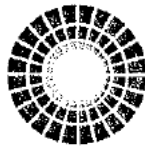
$\Rightarrow$ What will his state of mind be?

- has gotten scared of him
 - AS has thrown things in lab
- He needs to be more patient $\therefore$ keep calm
 - help him understand how the employer/employee relationship should be
- If he has concerns abt individual, discuss in private not in front of everyone.

AS- you should be more thorough w/ your work

John Booske

- Complained to him & said he wanted to leave
- JB - We want to keep this under the rug



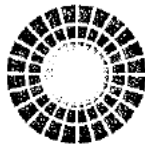
10/27

Phd student at least - [redacted] - [redacted]

- worked w [redacted] on MS - [redacted] recommended him to AS
- worked with AS for 8-10 months

Exp. bad - he is one of the smartest AA in dept. Social interaction is not right

- the way he teaches students is of great concern
- he would yell & swear at students
- not conducive / productive environment
- Group meetings - every student who had to present would be under stress. People were scared of talking to him
- in Dr [redacted] office - he had discussion that was aggressive
- he did apologize to [redacted] later
- has had great convos w him when one on one
- 10% of time he was pleasant
- lot of inappropriate language:
- three students in meeting:
 - one other AS [redacted]
 - discussion got heated
 - AS banging hands on table & disparaged [redacted]
 - called [redacted] f---er twice
- Prof Wooden^(?) => [redacted] was told he was too sensitive
- then he tried consoling him - it would be wise to go to his group
- Advised him to maintain composure



AS is on his [redacted]

- currently working on prelims

10/26/16

- PhD Student - have worked w/ him for half semester

- in [redacted] lab

- In lab - AS very smart, good at conveying information, got frustrated easily

- when frustrated - had small outbursts when he would verbally express

- would keep voice low - would say not good, do better

- uncomfortable? yes - felt he had to defend behavior/actions. in atmosphere not conducive to learning/growing

* ex: middle of presentation by [redacted]

kept interrupting task?

not giving [redacted] a chance to get to that part of presentation

AS got frustrated w/ [redacted] - looked up and said "God give me the strength to deal w/ this shit"

- [redacted]

4c: AS tried to encourage him to stay so he never experienced it directly

- would tell [redacted] it doesn't seem like he wants to be there

most exchanges were in front of

- most of blatant negative interactions were directed towards [redacted]

- he saw AS say to [redacted] "what are you guys pissing on your brains? you're better than this"

- didn't feel like he was learning, microaggressions put him on edge

7. AS really pushed people but it was never unreasonable

3. he left due to anxiety $\Rightarrow$ created by lab. [redacted] talked to him:

told him if you feel on edge now, get out - we won't hold it against you



NATIONAL ENGINEERING FORUM

10/26

MS, worked [REDACTED] - 6 month internship

- Exp - great learning experience - Demo for WAREF. "Real" project being executed. Tight timelines
- never lost temper.
- Used inappropriate language - No
- never uncomfortable
- tasks were challenging but enjoyed them



10/25

- MS, one semester plus summer [REDACTED]

Exp. Quite difficult, work pressure, he was expecting something else

- equated it to running a small company

- had to come up w/ ideas - A.S. would get angry if they didn't produce

- treated them like employees / not students

- left lab $\Rightarrow$ project ended. Environment was not encouraging, stressful

- used inappropriate language abt people $\rightarrow$ towards people (learned lots of ^{swear} words)

- AS spoke abt ^{person} people who left - he "shit in pants" left

- this was in his first week in front of other students

- would talk abt people behind their back to other students

- would speak in a way to make you feel like nothing "this is not work of grad student, you must think smart" then would try to do it himself but he didn't understand [REDACTED] work

4d, 14, no

7- approx 33% - ~~was~~ had to work 20+ hours. he would push deadlines

8- did want to quit based on AS behavior. didn't feel like he was achieving

anything. Quit even though he didn't have ~~any~~ funding. Got approx

W [REDACTED] - great move. feels respected w/ him



10/21/16

- Masters Student
- 6 months
- Grad date: [REDACTED]

Academic

- A.S. pretty talented
- at same time - not good time to work w/ him. he likes screaming / shouting
- always shouting
- mostly at group meetings - A.S. puts out lot of questions.
- if he's not satisfied w/ answers will scream & use dirty words ^{-> chimpanze}
- 3 wks ago - A.S. asked [REDACTED] another student to move stuff
- he called them lazy / called a liar because [REDACTED] wants to leave lab ^{lab -> A.S. brought in here}
- uses bad tone / loud looks aggressive
- never insulted [REDACTED] intelligence but other students yes
- never threatened funding or graduating

6. no

7. no

8. He's better than was. 3 wks ago - group meeting shouts, punches table, throws things. Visiting Scholar - [REDACTED] left. This meeting. Prof Sayeed apologized ^{Mid Sept}

Plans to quit after RA appointment

- Professor - not a good instructor. Does not know how to keep harmony in lab & doesn't respect students. Has been nicer than [REDACTED] -> is it death of student