

The University of British Columbia

6356 Agricultural Road  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
Canada V6T 1Z2

Department of Computer Science  
(604) 822-3065  
FAX: (604) 822-5485

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April 16, 1992

Dr. David W. Strangway  
President  
The University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 2B3

Dear Dr. Strangway,

I am writing to request an investigation by your Office into the handling of my application to convert my fixed-term Assistant Professor position to a tenure-track Assistant Professor position by the Head of the Computer Science Department, Dr. Maria Klawe in 1990.

In February 1990, I submitted an application to the Department to convert my position for the following academic year. At the end of the recruiting season in May 1990, I was informally told by a member of the Department, whose identity I have since forgotten, that the Department decided not to offer me a tenure-track position that year because my research area was not of a high priority. But I was also informally told that in addition to the regular open positions there might be retirement positions available for the next recruiting season.

At that time, I had some small squabble with my Department Head, Dr. Klawe. And a scheduled formal meeting with Dr. Klawe on my application was delayed to August (or early September) 1990 as a result. During our meeting, Dr. Klawe categorically stated that the only positions the Department had was one regular open position and possibly one other position pending the departure of a junior member of the department, that the recruiting emphasis for these positions would not be on my research area, and that there was no possibility of other positions. Based on this information from Dr. Klawe, I voluntarily withdrew my application in September 1990, even though I was still puzzled by the discrepancy between her official version and what I was informally told.

Subsequently, in the recruiting season of 1991, two candidates were hired by the Department, and there was one more position left open and carried over to 1992. This made me seriously doubt the truthfulness of Dr. Klawe's statements. I began to think that perhaps Dr. Klawe had handled my case in a dishonest way and presented me with false information to lead me to withdrawing my application. Therefore, I started to raise this issue within the Department in February

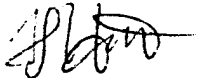
this year.

However, my efforts to pursue my grievance within the Department have been obstructed by Dr. Klawe, some other members of the Department and the Dean of Science, Dr. Barry McBride. In particular, various tactics have been employed to prevent my grievance from being heard in Department meetings. I eventually took my grievance to the Vice President Academic, Dr. Daniel Birch to request a formal investigation. The reply from Dr. Birch was very unsatisfactory. By only talking to Dr. Klawe and Dr. McBride and without conducting a thorough investigation, Dr. Birch declared that Dr. Klawe had handled my case "in an appropriate manner". His reply also failed to address in any way the evidence I provided.

In the mean time, my current position is coming to an end on June 30. My efforts in searching for a new academic position have been fruitless, and my skills are too specialized and too limited to land me any reasonable job in the non-academic sector. I am struggling to avoid thinking about the bleak prospect of living on UI benefits after my current job ends. And it has caused me a great deal of stress.

Hence, I request that the President's Office look into the matter to see if there was any violation of professional ethics or code of conduct on the part of the Head of Computer Science, Dr. Maria Klawe. If any wrongdoing is found, I request that concrete measures be taken to correct it, which should include the conversion of my position to a tenure-track one. In the case that the President is unwilling to conduct a thorough investigation and take appropriate measures, I will have to consider taking my grievance to the Office of the Minister of Advanced Education of British Columbia. Thank you very much.

Yours Sincerely,



Feng Gao

Assistant Professor