

By Erin Heller, a PhD student in the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation and 2018 Diversity Scholar.

(1) Faculty bullies student

- **Side One (Student X):** Student X is a new Master's student in the department. His/her/their Faculty (Faculty X) is a tenured faculty member. When Student X interviews with Faculty X, Faculty X seems open and friendly and discusses how important it is for his/her/their students to maintain a work-life balance. Student X is impressed with this outlook and appreciates the fact that someone understands the importance of life outside of graduate school, and thus, joins the lab. Within the first month of starting in the lab, Student X begins suspecting that the work-life balance discussion is all a façade. Specifically, one week Student X completes his/her/their required research work (as defined in his/her/their assistantship contract) and mentions to Faculty X that he/she/they is/are going to visit family that weekend. Later that evening, Faculty X emails Student X and states that he/she/they is/are not paying Student X to visit family on the weekend and that more research is expected to be conducted over the weekend. Not only does Faculty X ignore the requirements set by Student X's assistantship, Faculty X also copies all members of the lab, to make an example out of Student X. Student X feels humiliated that he/she/they has been publically reprimanded and upset that the expectations that were previously discussed were now null and void.
 - **What are your thoughts about Student X's experience?**
 - **If you were Student X, how would you feel? What outcomes would you want to see happen?**
 - **Why do you think Faculty X acted in this way?**
 - **What actions do you think could be taken to address Student X's concerns?**
 - **If you were on the email list and saw this message, what actions would you take, if any?**
 - **Who do you think the student could talk to in order to get perspective on Faculty X's actions?**
 - **What do you think would be some possible outcomes if Student X talked to other students in the lab about their experiences with Faculty X?**

- **Side Two (Faculty X):** Faculty X accepts a new Master's student (Student X) into the lab. Student X comes highly recommended with an impressive track record demonstrating hard-work, dedication, and commitment to research. Shortly after starting in the program, Student X tells Faculty X that he/she/they is/are going to travel that coming weekend to visit family Faculty X feels that Student X has not been in the lab long enough to travel and wants Student X to capitalize on weekend time by conducting more research. Faculty X knows that putting in extra hours is part of "the job" and that is the way people succeed in the field, so Faculty X decides to email Student X and the other lab members about the research expectations. Faculty X feels that he/she/they is/are helping the students by pushing them to their potential.
 - **What are your thoughts about this situation after hearing Faculty X's side?**

- **If you were Faculty X, how would you feel if you were approached with this student's concern?**
 - **Have your opinions on how the situation should be handled changed since hearing side 2? If so, how?**
 - **What do you think could be done in the short term to resolve the immediate tension and what would have to change long term in order to create a working relationships between Student X and Faculty X?**
-
- **Case Study 1: Final Thoughts**
 - **How does this case resonate with your experiences at Virginia Tech?**
 - **What level of support would allow you to move forward in a positive direction?**