

BULLY OR BOSS?

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SYNOPSIS

Teresa Sullivan had just started her position as President at the University of Virginia (UVA). One of her highest priorities was to decide what to do with Ted Genoways. She had a number of emails in her inbox complaining that he was a difficult manager, one even alleging that he was a workplace bully. There was also a request from a local reporter wanting to interview her about Genoways and his performance at UVA. Since he was a direct report, Sullivan knew Ted Genoways was the editor-in-chief of the Virginia Quarterly Review (VQR), an in-house journal. VQR had won a number of prestigious awards during his relatively short tenure as editor. However, the economic downturn in 2008 and other organizational factors had put pressure on him and threatened the very existence of VQR. In order for VQR to survive and remain at its current level of excellence, Genoways had found it necessary to “motivate” his employees to work hard and be especially attentive to details in operating the journal. He had also made changes in the publication and staff that some people did not like. Sullivan wondered to herself - Was Genoways, as one employee complained, really a workplace bully? Or was he just a very driven, results oriented manager?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this case, students should be able to:

1. Discuss factors in the workplace that enabled Genoways to develop a power base.
2. Identify conditions creating pressures on Genoways at VQR.
3. Explain why workplace violence and harassment laws generally do not cover bullying.
4. Explain whether or not they believe Genoways was a workplace bully.

APPLICATION

This is a decision case and is intended for use in Organizational Behavior, Human Resources, Ethics, Social Responsibility, or other classes discussing workplace bullying. It may also be used to discuss a variety of management topics including management styles, motivation, and control.

KEY WORDS

Workplace bully, leadership, motivation, management, control, organizational behavior, ethics

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