

MEMORANDUM

To: [REDACTED] Global Director of Human Resources
From: Darlene Gray, Executive Assistant
Date: December 4, 2025
Subject: Summary and Clarification of December 2, 2025, Meeting

1. Opening Remarks and Purpose of This Document

Thank you **for** meeting with me on December 2, 2025. As discussed, I am providing this written summary to ensure accuracy and clarity regarding our conversation. This document reflects my perspective, the concerns I raised, and the clarifications I provided, and it is intended to support transparency, alignment, and improved communication going forward.

Opening Comments

I opened the meeting by sharing that I feel deeply misunderstood at Platinum Equity. In both my personal character and professional practice, I am warm, optimistic, and collaborative. My nature is to be helpful and friendly—to everyone from colleagues on our maintenance and grounds team all the way to senior executives. I have consistently demonstrated willingness to assist, to volunteer, and to approach my work with professionalism and positivity.

2. Background of My Role and Initial Expectations

I joined Platinum Equity on August 27, 2024, through Career Group with the understanding that I would be supporting the CFO. My interview process included conversations with [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

On my first day, however, there was no employee manual, no structured onboarding, and no written communication regarding job expectations, administrative procedures, or internal processes. I had to proactively seek information to learn how to fulfill my responsibilities, including how to submit expense reports, where to locate company materials, and who the appropriate points of contact were.

Following the dismissal of [REDACTED] who served as Yvette Lapayude's second-chair executive assistant, I was asked to temporarily support [REDACTED]. Due to the firm's hiring freeze, I assumed all responsibilities previously handled by the second-chair EA role. This effectively doubled my workload, and I became responsible for:

- My own primary executives
- [REDACTED] four M&A executives and full administrative tasks that belonged to another full-time position.

There were no check-ins regarding workload impact, no structural guidance, no training, and no direction provided during this transition—yet expectations continued to expand.

3. Removal of the Four M&A Executives From My Support Roster

You explained that the decision to remove the M&A executives—[REDACTED] from my support roster was based on information provided by [REDACTED], including that Jon specifically asked to be removed and that “the rest of the team” also requested to be taken off my roster. You stated you did not share this during the October 30 meeting to avoid tension between me and the M&A executives.

During our conversation, it revealed that:

- You did not speak directly to any of the four executives before making this decision.
- The decision relied solely on [REDACTED] statements, provided at an emotionally charged moment.
- No objective verification was sought about my performance or support over the past year.
- You offered to speak with them now, after the fact. However, the change has already been made, and this creates precisely the dynamic you sought to avoid: it now appears to colleagues that I was removed from supporting them without replacement, explanation, or context. This risks unfairly damaging my professional reputation.
- This decision is particularly concerning given my well-established positive relationships with executives such as Sally, P.J., Jaime, and especially [REDACTED], who has consistently expressed confidence in my performance.

4. The Tracy Brown Incident and Micro aggressive Interactions

I described the April 2025 incident involving [REDACTED], where she approached my desk in an open workspace and asked if I needed to be “retrained” on conference room bookings, despite personally witnessing me correctly confirm a booking. The tone was condescending, and the statement was untrue.

I also described a November 2025 incident involving [REDACTED], who similarly asked if I “knew what a project code was”—a basic requirement for expense reporting. Having worked at Platinum for a year and processed numerous reports successfully, it is not reasonable for her to imply that I would not know this. The similarities in tone were obvious to me as I noted that [REDACTED] are close office friends.

5. Communication Gaps, Microaggressions, and My Attempts at Repair

After the October 27 incident with [REDACTED], I attempted to initiate reconciliation by greeting her warmly the next morning. She ignored me. I repeated this effort the following day with the same result. Despite HR indicating mediation was not necessary, I made genuine attempts to restore the working relationship independently. Her conflict avoidant trait has hindered our ability to reset as amiable colleagues. As of December 2, [REDACTED] and I have not spoken.

6. At-Will Employment

In our meeting, you referred to my at-will employment status while explaining your decision to restructure support assignments and remove executives from my roster. I countered by noting that at-will employment does not justify assigning me the full workload of two full-time EA roles without communication, training, or compensation review.

It appeared that at-will status was referenced again when justifying the removal of [REDACTED] from my roster based on “delayed responsiveness” to the Office of the Chairman. I reiterated that this expectation was never communicated to me and that I was never provided an opportunity to course correct. Decisions based on unspoken expectations place employees in a fundamentally unfair position.

7. Denial of Email Access and the October 30 Investigation

During the October 30 meeting, you presented findings derived from IT regarding:

- My email activity on October 24
- My phone pinging from a Philadelphia tower
- My 3.5 hours of overtime on October 25

These findings were provided as part of an overtime investigation.

However, in our December 2 meeting, you stated that you “do not have access to my emails.” I understand that different departments have different privileges, but the information presented on October 30 appears to involve IT review of my email activity and phone location. I am noting this discrepancy for clarity, as it is important for me to understand what information is being reviewed when assessing performance or timekeeping.

8. Responsiveness Expectations and Missing Communication

The October 30 meeting was the first time I learned that responsiveness to the Office of the Chairman was to be prioritized above all else. Prior to that meeting, this expectation had never been communicated.

Had I been given even a simple directive such as:

“Darlene, let’s make sure we are prioritizing contacts from the Office of the Chairman above other emails. We want to be as quick to respond as possible,”

I would have immediately adjusted my workflow.

I was not afforded that basic grace. Instead, this unspoken expectation was referenced retroactively to justify removing [REDACTED] from my support roster.

9. Workload, Two Full-Time Roles, and Delayed Responsiveness

I reiterated that any delays in responsiveness occurred while I was fulfilling two full-time roles. Before assuming the additional responsibilities, I had been fully responsive and aligned with expectations. Comparing my performance under double workload with my performance under normal workload is not a fair assessment of my abilities.

10. October 30 Meeting & Emotional Impact

I described the emotional impact of receiving the October 30 meeting invitation, which mirrored the format used during the separation of [REDACTED]—a process I directly assisted with. Based on your own prior statements about the emotional effect of seeing your name on a calendar invitation, I believed you understood how such a message would reasonably affect me.

I packed my desk anticipating termination, and after the meeting I sat in my car in tears. I did not feel that these emotional realities were acknowledged with empathy in our December 2 discussion.

10. Notary Work and Lack of Compensation

I explained that after Kellie Martin was restructured away from notary duties, [REDACTED] approached me based on Ty's recommendation, and I took on notary responsibilities willingly. I raised compensation questions with my placement agency and later with [REDACTED] but received no guidance. Despite multiple certified notaries in the firm, I performed the bulk of notarizations for nearly a year.

11. Medical and Personal Impact

I stated that cumulative treatment, lack of clear communication, and inconsistent support have had emotional and medical effects on me. I do not believe these impacts have been considered in decisions affecting my role.

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13. Closing and Request for Clarity

I reiterated that I seek clarity, consistency, and fairness. I expressed that I have personal and family responsibilities that make me dedicated to protecting my role, which is why I have proactively sought feedback throughout the year—including initiating a 6-month performance discussion with [REDACTED] and reaching out to [REDACTED] earlier this year.

I appreciate your willingness to schedule a follow-up meeting and will prepare additional clarifying questions as needed.

Thank you for taking the time to review this summary. I look forward to achieving mutual understanding and alignment moving forward.