**Memorandum**

**To**: Denise Rivera, Founder of Rivera Informatics

**From**: Amanda Halverson, Kayden Humphries, Rio Larson

**Date**: July 16, 2025

**Subject**: Concerns and Recommendations Re: Huemul Mining Proposal Revisions

**Overview**

Huemul Mining, a multibillion-dollar Chilean mining corporation, issued an RFP for developing an intranet linking its headquarters to other facilities. Rivera Informatics attended the Huemul briefing and noticed the possibility of gender discrimination within their culture. Despite this, Rivera Informatics still decided to offer a bid due to the contract’s potentially high profit margin. Rivera Informatics’ technical writers composed a proposal, and revisions were suggested to attempt to align with Huemul’s perceived gender standards. We, the writers, have decided that the use of these revisions would go against professional conduct in unethical and illegal ways. This memo explains why each revision should not be implemented.

**Revision #1 - Understating Project Timeline**

Proposing a five-month estimate for a project that will realistically take six months, intending to justify inevitable delays later is both an ethical issue and a business risk. Understating timelines misrepresents the project, damages client trust, harms Rivera Informatics' reputation, and can lead to client dissatisfaction. This tactic, often called "low-balling" or "buy-in," is widely considered unethical. The Project Management Institute (PMI) explicitly cites "Falsifying estimates (e.g. time) to secure a project" (Robb, 1996) as an example of an ethical concern that arises during the initiation and feasibility phase of a project. Prioritizing a short-term competitive edge over honest communication undermines professional integrity and sets a poor precedent for future interactions.

**Revision #2 - Omitting Security Disclaimer**

Removing the phrase “any system can be compromised” from the proposal is also unethical, misleading the client into believing a system can be fully secure. This conflicts with Section 1.2 of the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for the ACM, which states, “A computing professional has an additional obligation to report any signs of system risks that might result in harm” (Association for Computing Machinery, 2018). If Rivera Informatics withholds this information and a security breach occurs, there is a high likelihood that a lawsuit will be filed accusing Rivera Informatics of implying that absolute security was guaranteed. Therefore, including this phrase is not only ethical, but it protects this company and its clients from legal consequences.

**Revision #3 - Concealing Employee Gender**

Removing the president’s name from Rivera Informatics boilerplate is a violation of the ethics of transparency, affecting the company’s integrity, and perpetuating discrimination. Rivera Informatics has met with Huemul in person, so Huemul knows Rivera Informatics is led by a woman. This loss of integrity would affect the Huemul contract and future projects. As stated in a Forbes article, “transparency and openness in communication strategies fortify the bond between the public and organizations” (Forbes Councils, 2024).

Using employee initials to mask their gender implies that female team members must hide their identities to be taken seriously, reinforcing gender bias. It also undermines employee dignity and professional recognition, damaging trust with the company, and does nothing to help eliminate gender discrimination in the workplace. In contrast, “highlighting successful women leaders and their diverse leadership styles can challenge stereotypes and inspire others” (Maricel Dicion, 2024).

**Revision #4 - Hiring Decisions Based on Gender**

The suggestion to replace Linda Weinstein with a male principal investigator to align with client preferences is unethical and illegal. Grace Stelzner wrote an article and cited Jana L. Craft (Craft, 2012) when she stated, “unethical decisions in the workplace can cause discrimination, bias, leadership problems and an overall toxic workplace culture” (Stelzner, 2022). Hiring a man instead of an equally qualified woman to win a project is an unethical decision and encourages a negative culture within Rivera Informatics. Legally, “Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 makes it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against someone because of: Race; Color; Religion; Sex; or National origin.” (The United States Department of Justice, 2023).

**Conclusion**

In summary, we strongly recommend that Rivera Informatics discard all the suggested revisions to the Huemul Mining proposal. Submitting the proposal as originally drafted with accurate timelines, transparent security disclosures, and a full representation of Rivera Informatics’ talented and diverse team, as well as continuing ethical hiring practices, will protect the company’s integrity and client trust, ensuring Rivera Informatics' long-term success.

**References**

Association for Computing Machinery. (2018, June 22). *ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct*. Association for Computing Machinery. https://www.acm.org/code-of-ethics

‌Craft, J. L. (2012). A review of the empirical ethical decision-making literature: 2004–2011. Journal of Business Ethics, 117(2), 221–259. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1518-9>

Forbes Councils. (2024, September 12). *Ethical Duties of Communication Execs in the Age of Misinformation*. Forbes.com; Forbes Councils. <https://councils.forbes.com/blog/ethical-duties-of-communication-execs-in-the-age-of-misinformation>

Maricel Dicion. (2024, August 12). *The Hidden Impact of Gender Norms on Leadership*. Women of Influence. <https://www.womenofinfluence.ca/2024/08/12/the-hidden-impact-of-gender-norms-on-leadership/>

Robb, D. J. (1996). Ethics in project management: Issues, practice, and motive. PM Network, 10(12), 13–16. <https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/ethics-pm-issues-practice-motive-4777>

‌‌Stelzner, G. (2022). Ethics and Discrimination in the Hiring Process: An Overview of Gender and Race. *Minnesota Undergraduate Research & Academic Journal*, *5*(4). <https://pubs.lib.umn.edu/index.php/muraj/article/view/4537/3092>

The United States Department of Justice. (2023, August 6). *Laws We Enforce*. Www.justice.gov. <https://www.justice.gov/crt/laws-we-enforce>

Name: **Ethics Memo Rubric**

**Overview20(10.00%)**

Levels of Achievement:

Proficient0 (0.00%) - 20 (10.00%)

Feedback:

✅ What works: You provide a clear and thorough summary of the context, concerns, and purpose of your memo. The introduction immediately grounds the reader in the scenario and explains the stakes of each proposed revision. ⚠️ What needs work: Nothing major—this section is strong. 💡 Suggestions for improvement: Continue anchoring your memos in context like this—it builds immediate credibility and clarity.

**Argument39(19.50%)**

Levels of Achievement:

Proficient0 (0.00%) - 40 (20.00%)

Feedback:

✅ What works: You break the memo into sections by each revision, which adds clarity. Each ethical objection is supported with thoughtful reasoning and specific examples. You address not just what’s wrong, but why it matters legally and professionally. ⚠️ What needs work: Some parts begin to read more like a checklist or research report than a cohesive persuasive argument. The transitions between sections could be a bit smoother. 💡 Suggestions for improvement: Add short transition sentences to connect sections more fluidly. Think about how one concern leads logically to the next.

**Sources19(9.50%)**

Levels of Achievement:

Proficient0 (0.00%) - 20 (10.00%)

Feedback:

✅ What works: Your references are well-selected, diverse, and exceed the assignment’s minimum requirement. You include credible sources like the ACM, DOJ, PMI, and Forbes, and your source integration is strong and purposeful. The overall formatting follows APA style and remains consistent throughout. ⚠️ What needs work: A few minor APA inconsistencies—like slight formatting issues (e.g., italics or line breaks)—show up in the references section, but these are small details. 💡 Suggestions for improvement: Proofread your references for formatting polish (e.g., italicizing journal titles and removing repeated hyperlinks), but no major citation changes are needed. You’re clearly using APA correctly—just tighten it up for maximum professionalism.

**Conclusion20(10.00%)**

Levels of Achievement:

Proficient0 (0.00%) - 20 (10.00%)

Feedback:

✅ What works: Your conclusion is confident and well-stated. It clearly recaps your recommendations and emphasizes ethical professionalism. ⚠️ What needs work: N/A 💡 Suggestions for improvement: Keep up this strong, professional closing style.

**Readability39(19.50%)**

Levels of Achievement:

Proficient0 (0.00%) - 40 (20.00%)

Feedback:

✅ What works: Each section is clearly labeled and easy to navigate. The memo reads logically from start to finish. ⚠️ What needs work: Some paragraphs are dense and visually crowded. The memo could benefit from more spacing and skimmability. 💡 Suggestions for improvement: Break up longer paragraphs, add line spacing between sections, and consider using lists or bullets to emphasize key ideas.

**Style & Tone36(18.00%)**

Levels of Achievement:

Proficient0 (0.00%) - 40 (20.00%)

Feedback:

✅ What works: Your tone is professional, respectful, and well-suited for internal communication. You manage to disagree with Denise without sounding accusatory. ⚠️ What needs work: At times, the sentence structure becomes overly formal or formulaic, which impacts flow. 💡 Suggestions for improvement: Use more natural phrasing and active voice. Vary sentence length to avoid monotony and help the memo feel more conversational.

**Mechanics19(9.50%)**

Levels of Achievement:

Proficient0 (0.00%) - 20 (10.00%)

Feedback:

✅ What works: Grammar and spelling are solid throughout. ⚠️ What needs work: Inconsistent citation formatting for URLs in the references. 💡 Suggestions for improvement: Proofread the Works Cited page carefully and remove any inconsistencies.

**Raw Total: 192.00 (of 200)**

**Feedback to Learner**

Your memo is thoughtful, well-researched, and clearly organized. You’ve done an excellent job breaking down each of Denise’s proposed revisions and responding with well-supported ethical, legal, and professional reasoning. Your use of sources is robust and strengthens the memo overall. This submission reflects strong collaboration and a real understanding of the assignment’s goals. To push it to the next level, focus on improving consistency in formatting and citation style, and refine the document’s flow with smoother transitions and more dynamic sentence variety. With just a little more polish, this would be an exemplary professional document. Excellent work!

Name:**Ethics Memo Rubric**