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# Nepotism, Conflict of interest: Debian GSoC/Outreachy/OSI board

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  - From: Mollamby <[mollamby@protonmail.com](mailto:mollamby@protonmail.com)>
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- 

People have been arriving to DebConf trying to pick apart the recent concerns. The version of events commented officially and the Regrets email published by Sam Hartman is very disparaging to some people while other people seem to evade any responsibility.

Here are some facts that have emerged through debian-private and discussions at DebConf that some of us feel very uncomfortable about. We are posting anonymously because Sam Hartman's report is too biased and we don't want to be subject to the next Anti Harassment humiliations for questioning the DPL.

There is a growing perception that Debian and other associated groups have become too incestuous. For everybody else, it means we don't know who we can trust.

Fact 1: Mollamby  
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A clandestine relationship that existed between the Debian Project Leader (DPL), Chris Lamb and his subordinate, Molly de Blanc, the head of the Outreach team who is also a member of the controversial Anti-Harassment team. Mollamby.

Clandestine relationships are not automatically wrong. It is the surrounding facts that make this both scandalous and worthy of the same scrutiny and media coverage forcefully imposed on other Debian Developers. Mollamby.

Fact 2: a GSoC conflict of interest  
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A student applying to GSoC informed about his relationship with another member of the community. The other community member is named in a delegation by former DPL Chris Lamb. Neither the student nor the other community member are under suspicion: Both declared the relationship up front.

There were over 100 student applications to GSoC 2018 and only 20% were selected. It has not been stated whether the student in this case was one of those selected.

Fact 3: mentors acted responsibly  
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A member of the Outreach team, not a party to the conflict of interest, reminded other team members about the conflict of interest in the April 2018 selection meeting.

Fact 4: no policy  
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Debian has no conflict of interest policy.

There was nothing for the GSoC admins or mentors to refer to.

Fact 5: vested interests

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Debian's list of delegations, equivalent to managers or office-holders in other organizations, doesn't reveal employment details or any other clues about vested interests and conflicts of interest.

Fact 6: Molly de Blanc signed off on it  
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In reply to Fact 3, Molly de Blanc acknowledged and signed off on the conflict of interest. Her comment has been shared widely on a blog:

<mollydb> nice responsible decision making  
<mollydb> thanks for being so conscientious

Fact 7: Google complained  
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July 2018, Google's head of GSoC, Stephanie Taylor, made a written complaint about conflicts of interest in Debian.

Fact 8: Mollamby investigated themselves  
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Mollamby investigated the complaint. This was clearly inappropriate. How could Molly de Blanc investigate a complaint against something she signed off on? How could Chris Lamb, as Debian Project Leader, investigate a complaint against a team where his love interest was a prime suspect?

It would have been possible for them to recuse themselves without declaring the fact there was a relationship. They could simply state that because Google was disputing conflicts of interest, they need help from somebody neutral and not involved in day-to-day Debian, like a past DPL.

Even in the absence of a relationship, Molly de Blanc never should have been part of the investigation anyway.

Mollamby investigating themselves. Mollamby.

Fact 9: opportunistic scapegoating  
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Mollamby used another team member as a scapegoat. The same team member who reminded everybody about the conflict of interest during the selections.

Fact 10: inters/students suffer  
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Before conducting any investigation, Google sent aggressive and highly demotivating communications to some students. It appears Mollamby rushed Google into this shoot-first-ask-questions-later response.

Fact 11: Google rushed into decision then backflip  
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After making enquiries with the entire admin team Google had to backflip and completely retract their action against students. Mollamby had rushed Google into an awkward situation that had to be rolled back. Mollamby.

Fact 12: interns complained about Molly de Blanc  
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August 2018, an astute intern made a complaint about Molly de Blanc not doing any real work, it has already been shared in various places, including debian-project.

Other community members had made similar observations but none had ever dared to say it.

Fact 13: previous mentor summit procedure  
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In previous GSoC rounds before 2018, the two places to attend the mentor summit were always awarded randomly to any two mentors, with a preference for mentors who never visited the summit before.

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Fact 14: privileges for the admins  
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For 2018, Molly de Blanc suggested that one of those two places should be reserved for an admin.

Fact 15: Molly de Blanc got the free trip  
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Molly de Blanc, as admin, attended the GSoC mentor summit in October 2018 and only one other mentor received a place.

Fact 16: Molly de Blanc as AH insider  
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Molly de Blanc formally joins the Anti-Harassment team. The name of the team is misleading. Its real purpose appears to involve preventing people asking inconvenient questions to the project leaders: in other words, de Blanc participating in a vigilante group to prevent people holding her boyfriend, the Debian Project Leader, to account. de Blanc was privy to any complaints against her boyfriend and also privy to potential complaints or discussions about his political rivals.

Fact 17: DAMs rushed into decisions, just like Google  
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The Debian Account Managers are rushed into removing two Debian Developers from the Debian keyring. It is the same pattern as the way Google was rushed into punishing students. Mollamby.

Fact 18: another intern complains  
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A mentor received a complaint from an intern about somebody in the Anti-harassment team. The mentor was unable to do anything due to fear and mistrust of the leadership.

The complaint hasn't been leaked yet, hold on to your seats.

Fact 19: DPL's girlfriend pronounced Developer  
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Molly de Blanc, girlfriend of the Debian Project Leader, is controversially promoted to become a Debian Developer. She has not created any packages and she had been subject to various complaints during 2018.

Fact 20: scapegoat abused  
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At almost the same time, the Developer who highlighted the conflict of interest is removed from the Debian keyring, threatened and insulted in various ways, starting from September 2018, long before anything overflowed into the public domain.

Fact 21: Google pay offs  
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Debian receives large payments of cash from Google on dates overlapping with punishments.

Fact 22: Payments from Google obfuscated  
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Details about the largest payment are hidden or obfuscated in official communications.

Fact 23: censorship  
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It is alleged that an email to the debian-project mailing list asking about the Google payments and pressure has been censored.

Fact 24: DPL gives delegation to girlfriend  
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In his last act as Debian Project Leader, Chris Lamb writes a delegation formally appointing his girlfriend (or ex-girlfriend

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at this point), now a Debian Developer, to the Outreach team.

Fact 25: Open Source Initiative (OSI) board kept in the dark  
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Mollamby serve together on the OSI board. They never informed other board members or the organizations they are affiliated with (FSF and Debian respectively) about their conflict of interest. Molly de Blanc has become OSI board president in 2019.

Fact 26: DPL budget control  
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Chris Lamb, as Debian Project Leader, had discretion to approve his own travel expenses using Debian funds.

Fact 27: subsidised long-distance relationship costs  
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Molly de Blanc resides in the US while Chris Lamb resides in the UK. This was a long distance relationship. They would meet each other at events where their travel was paid by free software organizations.

Fact 28: spreading defamation  
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Mollamby have both circulated defamatory and politically motivated allegations against other members of the community.

Molly de Blanc's FOSDEM 2019 talk explicitly boasts about a whispering network, this appears to be a call-to-gossip.

Fact 29: misleading denial by DPL  
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When Chris Lamb was publicly asked about the defamatory allegations he circulated, it appears that he has lied by denying it in an email to debian-project the week before Christmas.

Evidence that Lamb really did send the offensive email was subsequently posted on a blog.

This very public and dishonest denial makes a serious dent in Lamb's integrity. As he was the DPL, dishonesty like this dents Debian's reputation too.

Fact 30: Molly de Blanc breaks up with FSF and Lamby  
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Molly de Blanc's FSF employment terminates at about the same time that Mollamby break up.

She writes a blog about the breakup.

Fact 31: revolving doors  
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Despite the circumstances, Molly de Blanc immediately begins working for another former Debian Project Leader, now at GNOME.

Fact 32: fake sorries  
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An email sent to debian-project on 8 July 2019, "Regrets Handling Conduct Concerns Earlier this Year", from the new DPL, Sam Hartman, appears to try and put blame back on the developers who spoke up.

It feels like a pretend sorry or conditional sorry email.

This persistent blaming and conditional sorries from leaders reeks of high arrogance, it is harmful to the victims and it is perpetuating the problems.

Most ordinary people can recognize the difference between a pretend sorry and a sincere sorry even if they don't know the people or the facts.

It is obviously, deceptively and repetitively trying to deflect responsibility to other parties and distract from the elephant in the room, Mollamby, so it is hardly an apology at all, it feels more

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like a political statement.

Fact 33: new DPL acknowledged conflicts of interest existed, hides names  
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The same email referred to in Fact 32 confirms there were conflicts of interest in the second abusive keyring change too. Both abusive keyring changes were therefore compromised by Mollamby and other hidden relationships.

But the names of the culprits are hidden. They have immunity.

Fact 34: malicious intent and DPL's vendetta  
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At the same time that a developer was removed from the keyring, Chris Lamb immediately sent messages out to other organizations to harm the developer's reputation. Many independent people see this as an aggravated and politically motivated breach of a private decision by Debian Account Managers. Lamb's indulgence in doing this appears to be a major reason the issues exploded into public discussion and drag other Developers into the mess.

This is all a textbook example of nepotism.

Mollamby

Sent with ProtonMail Secure Email.

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