

December 16, 2011

National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22230

Attention: Dr. H. Edward Seidel, Assistant Director DMPS
Dr. Sastry Pantula, Division Director, DMS
Dr. Fred Roberts, MPS Advisory Committee

Dear Ed Seidel, Sastry Pantula, and Fred Roberts:

The leadership of the American Mathematical Society (AMS) discussed the issue of the proposed change of name of the Division of Mathematical Sciences in late September and early October by phone and by email. There was unanimous opposition to the proposed name change.

On October 11, the AMS sent a letter electronically from AMS President Eric Friedlander to all (non-student) members asking for comments about the proposal to change the name of the Division of Mathematical Sciences to a name which explicitly mentions Statistics. In summary, as of December 15:

--13 responses supported the name change
--329 responses opposed the name change

Attached is a file with the redacted email responses from AMS members, some of which fail to take a clear position and are thus not included in the above count. Reading these responses gives one a vivid picture of the deep-felt opposition many members of the mathematical community have to this proposed name change.

Our opposition to changing the name of DMS to a name which explicitly mentions Statistics is based on various considerations. These include:

- 1) The current name "Division of Mathematical Sciences" is inclusive, and is intended to emphasize the current breadth of the division as well as augment funding for all of the mathematical sciences.

- 2) Specifically mentioning Statistics in the name of the Division would be divisive and would encourage the distancing of Statistics from the other mathematical sciences.
- 3) Statistics constitutes a small (although significant) proportion of the portfolio of DMS, in terms of number of programs, number of grant applications, number of grants funded.
- 4) By common measurements (papers published, Ph.D.'s produced, faculty numbers), Statistics constitutes a small proportion of the research community in the mathematical sciences.
- 5) The change of name could signify a change of funding focus for the Division, undertaken without broad-range input from the mathematical sciences community.
- 6) Arguments proposed to include "Statistics" explicitly in the name of the Division would appear to apply equally to other aspects of the mathematical sciences such as Computational Sciences.
- 7) Singling out Statistics in the name of the Division would be unhelpful in advancing the scientific imperative of fostering synergy and cooperation among mathematical scientists who seek innovative solutions to fundamental problems.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric M. Friedlander". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Eric M. Friedlander

EMF:sjr

Attachment