



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Setting the Record Straight

To the Editor,

We wish to set the record straight on our article, “Seven Characteristics of Successful Calculus Programs,” which appeared in the January, 2015 issue of the *Notices*. Although only our names appeared as authors of this article, it was in fact, the product of a team effort and was based on a conference report, “Lessons Learned from Case Studies of Successful Calculus Programs at Five Doctoral Degree Granting Institutions,” authored by Chris Rasmussen, Jess Ellis (now Jess Ellis Hagman), and Dov Zazkis and presented in 2014 at the 17th Annual Conference on Research in Undergraduate Mathematics Education in Denver, CO, a paper that, unfortunately, was not included in the references to the *Notices* article.

We especially regret the exclusion of Jess Ellis Hagman as one of the authors of the *Notices* article and the fact that it has taken so long to correct this error. Jess played an essential role in the data collection, analysis, and writing that led to the identification of the seven features of successful calculus programs, but was not included in the writing of the article that appeared in the *Notices*. We encourage readers to read and reference the refereed proceedings, which contains more detail on the seven characteristics. It can be found at <https://maa.org/ptc> under Publications and Reports for *Characteristics of Successful Programs in College Calculus*.

Sincerely,
David Bressoud and Chris Rasmussen

(Received October 16, 2018)

The Back Page

I enjoy the *Notices* feature “The Back Page.” But I have noticed that sometimes “The Back Page” does not appear on the back page (of the hardcopy *Notices*) but on some seemingly random page in the middle. Is there a compelling reason for this? If not, then I suggest always printing “The Back Page” on the back page.

—*Tim Chow*

(Received October 6, 2018)

*We invite readers to submit letters to the editor at notices-letters@ams.org.

Regarding the new eligibility criteria for Simons Collaboration Grants

Let me start by expressing my gratitude to Jim and Marilyn Simons for forming the Simons Foundation, which continues to fund numerous research projects in mathematics and the sciences. The Foundation has a real impact, particularly in the present times when so many in the public discourse either ignore or just plain deny the importance of science.

One of the excellent programs introduced by the Simons Foundation are Collaboration Grants for Mathematicians. While small in comparison to NSF grants, these grants provide substantial and impactful travel support for mathematicians. Collaboration Grants are vitally important for supporting professional activities of mathematicians who otherwise may not have any funding to attend conferences or workshops and who receive minimal support from their home departments.

Since the Simons Foundation is evidently committed to supporting mathematics, it came as a great surprise when the Foundation decided that mathematicians who work in a mathematics department without a PhD degree granting program are no longer eligible to apply for a Collaboration Grant, as of 2018. This restriction prevents the mathematicians who potentially need support the most, from even applying for a grant.

Throughout my entire professional life, now over 20 years, I have been working in a situation that could be described as “*this year the job market is particularly bad.*” We all know that this has forced many excellent graduates and post-docs to accept positions wherever they could find them, including non-PhD granting departments. By anecdotal evidence, this has affected women even more than men, and has affected professional couples with a two-body problem especially strongly. Many mathematicians who work at non-PhD granting departments maintain strong research programs. This is recognized by the AMS which has recently introduced the AMS Mary P. Dolciani Prize for Excellence in Research “to recognize a mathematician from a department that does not grant a PhD who has an active research program in mathematics and a distinguished record of scholarship, the primary criterion for the prize is an active research program as evidenced by a strong record of peer-reviewed publications.” Both the NSF and AWM invite applications for their awards without restrictions on the home institution of applicants. The only criterion for a research award is the quality of candidate’s research. Those who produce excellent research, even if they work in a

less-well-known institution, or while maintaining a higher teaching load, should not be put at a further disadvantage by loss of eligibility for external support for their research.

I recognize that the Simons Foundation is under no obligation to explain any rules that it wishes to implement, and I am grateful for all the impactful support that it provides to the mathematical community. I just respectfully ask that the Simons Foundation reconsider its recent change of eligibility policy for Collaboration Grants, and not automatically exclude researchers who are active and productive despite working at a non-PhD granting department.

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Referees, “Middle Class” Authors, and Ethics

To referee a math paper is a tough job and, on top of this, it is not paid! As pointed out by Jeremy Avigad in an essay published in the *Notices of the AMS* (vol. 65 (6) (2018), pg. 681–690) proofs are become longer and to check them “is far less enjoyable than exploring new concepts and ideas”. Thus, if asked to referee a 20-pages manuscript, the easiest answer is “the subject seems not to be in the mainstream of the journal...” or something similar.

This is one of the reasons why it is difficult to get published for “middle class” mathematicians and “middle class” means those who are neither super stars nor research beginners. In fact, if you are a super star, journals want to publish what you write because it brings prestige (or impact) for them. If you are a recent PhD and your supervisor belongs to the editorial board, then the journal will accept what you wrote and they want you to publish because, for supervisors, the success of their students brings also to them prestige and honor.

Add to all this, a lack of ethics in those involved! To substantiate my complaint about lack of ethics, I recall my own experience. In one of my papers, there was an invalid proof of a theorem, although the statement of the theorem was right. Neither I nor the referees noticed that! Only much later did I notice it, when dealing with the same topic: I wrote a two pages corrigendum and sent it to the same journal. The editor-in-chief refused to publish the corrigendum saying that “the journal was a high-quality journal and my 2-pages report did not reach the required level to deserve publication.” I wrote back calling his attention to the fact that it was a corrigendum and his last answer was that corrigenda should be sent to the authors of the paper... that is... forget the readers of the journal!

—J. M. S. Simões-Pereira
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ICERM 2019 Summer Workshops

Arithmetic of Low-dimensional Abelian Varieties

June 3-7, 2019 (funded by the Simons Foundation)

This workshop will explore a number of themes in the arithmetic of abelian varieties of low dimension, with a focus on computational aspects.

Encrypted Search / June 10-14, 2019

This workshop will focus on the design and cryptanalysis of practical algorithms and systems that can search on end-to-end encrypted data.

Research Experiences for Undergraduate Faculty (REUF) / June 17-21, 2019

The goals of this workshop are to promote undergraduate research and to forge research collaborations among the participating faculty.

Mathematical Optimization of Systems Impacted by Rare, High-impact Random Events / June 24-28, 2019

This workshop will explore optimization and simulation approaches to designing, planning, and operating systems affected by high-impact rare events.

Perspectives on Dehn Surgery / July 15-19, 2019

This summer school will have courses that unveil Dehn surgery and its suite of techniques to the next generation of researchers in the area.

Women in Data Science and Mathematics Research Collaboration Workshop (WiSDM)

July 29 – August 2, 2019

This research collaboration workshop is targeted toward women working in data science and mathematics.

Applied Mathematical Modeling with Topological Techniques / August 5-9, 2019

This workshop will bring together applied mathematical modeling and applied topology communities, aiming to give modelers exposure to topological techniques still not commonly used in their community.



Institute for Computational and Experimental Research in Mathematics

Proposals being accepted:

Semester Program
Topical/Hot Topics Workshops
Small Group Research Program
Summer Undergrad Program

Applications being accepted:

Semester Program or Workshop
Postdoctoral Fellowship

Sponsorships being accepted:

Academic or Corporate

ICERM is a National Science Foundation Mathematics Institute at Brown University in Providence, RI.



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