LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letter to the Editor

This is to make the mathematical community aware of the circumstances of Prof. Harold Donnelly at Purdue University. In my view, Donnelly's treatment by his department head and his administration are outrageous. I understand that a large group of Purdue math professors objects to Donnelly's treatment and has been trying to engage with the department head and the dean to achieve an acceptable outcome, so far to no avail.

I urge readers to learn the facts and judge for themselves. The relevant facts are summarized in the following excerpt from an email I sent to the Dean of Science at Purdue, dated 10/26/22, with a copy to Donnelly's department head.

- After bad experiences teaching a service course (math 262) culminating in a disastrous experience during the pandemic, Donnelly was forbidden going forward to teach any course except math 262.
- Moreover, he was forbidden to teach math 262 until, among other deliverables, he produced written lectures for the whole course, "ready for delivery with no ad libbing".
- [The math department head] threatened to reduce Donnelly's salary to zero and to recommend to the College that his tenure be revoked for "gross negligence".
- In connection with a hearing to consider a grievance filed by Donnelly, [the department head] asserted in writing that she had never threatened to reduce Donnelly's salary to zero.
- Donnelly's salary is now set at zero.

In support of the above assertions, I attach a narrative and appendices, which I asked Leonard Lipshitz to produce. If there are salient facts of which I'm unaware, justifying the actions taken against Donnelly, I would appreciate learning them from you.

The full text of my email to the dean, together with the narrative and appendices referred to above may be found at the website `https://web.math.princeton.edu/~cf/donnelly.html`.

In a follow-up email to Donnelly's department head and dean, dated 11/13/22, I told them of my intention to publicize Donnelly's situation in the *Notices of the AMS*, and I asked them to point out to me any inaccuracies or misrepresentations in the above email or the accompanying narrative and appendices. As of this writing they have alleged no inaccuracies or misrepresentations.

All opinions expressed here are my own. I'm not speaking for Princeton University or its Math Department.

Sincerely,
Charles Fefferman
December 18, 2022

Response

Dear Professor Flapan,

Thank you for offering to publish a concurrent reply to the letter you received.

While the College of Science disagrees with Professor Fefferman's characterization of events set forth in his letter, we take seriously all concerns of our community members and we value the contributions of our faculty to excellence in research and teaching.

Purdue is confident in the leadership of the Department of Mathematics, who give faculty careful and due consideration to the often-challenging and complex issues they face, while ensuring our students receive the finest instruction from engaged and expert faculty.

Without commenting on an individual case, we can assure that each faculty member in the College of Science receives regular feedback from departmental leadership about their work performance. Full professors are evaluated every three years, and leaders strive to provide clear, objective, and workable guidelines and resources for performance improvement when a faculty member's review indicates they are not meeting expectations.

Additionally, employment decisions related to teaching expectations, performance concerns, and salary are all subject to a robust Faculty Grievance Procedure, whereby faculty can have specific employment-related issues heard

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

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and evaluated by a committee of faculty peers, with further review by the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Provost.

The College of Science regrets that Professor Fefferman chose to release incomplete confidential personnel files related to a faculty member with a long and valued career. Purdue respects the privacy of our faculty members and will not comment on any specific personnel actions.

Sincerely,
Lucy Flesch, Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs
College of Science, Purdue University

Letter to the Editor

We, the undersigned math faculty, staff, and graduate students at the University of Washington, endorse the proposal by David Rohrlich in the September 2022 issue of the *Notices* that the AMS not hold meetings in states to which pregnant women cannot travel without risking their health and possibly their life.

Signed: Jayadev Athreya, Sara Billey, Martin Bishop, Madeline Brown, Thomas Carr, Matthew Conroy, Natasha Crepeau, Dan Guyer, Paige Helms, Neal Koblitz, Kevin Liu, Charlie Magland, Clare Minnerath, Michael Munz, Haoming Ning, Nelson Niu, Lauren Nowak, Farbod Shokrieh, Stefan Steinerberger, Jennifer Taggart, Yirong Yang, Jonathan Zhu

Letter to the Editor

Every year for the past 70 years, Nobel laureates have come together in Lindau, Germany to meet young researchers from all over the world. What significance does this hold for mathematicians? Unfortunately none, since there has never been a Nobel Prize in mathematics. In 2013, however—inspired by the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings—the Klaus Tschira Foundation, the International Mathematical Union, the Norwegian Academy of Sciences and Letters, and the Association for Computing Machinery decided to create an event specifically to host the recipients of the most prestigious prizes in mathematics and computer science: the Heidelberg Laureate Forum.

Since 2013, laureates from the most distinguished prizes in mathematics and computer science—the Abel Prize, the Fields Medal, the IMU Abacus Medal (formerly Nevanlinna Prize), the ACM Prize for Computing, and the ACM A.M. Turing Award—have come to Heidelberg every year to meet and interact with 200 young researchers from all over the world. For one week, the main building at Heidelberg University becomes a nexus for interdisciplinary exchange between mathematicians and computer scientists, with not only a slew of lectures, poster sessions, and discussions, but also ample room for networking and a cross-generational exchange of ideas in an informal setting.

We would like to encourage all members of the AMS to apply for the opportunity to participate in this unique event or encourage their students, graduate students, and postdocs to apply. The 10th Heidelberg Laureate Forum will take place in Heidelberg, Germany from September 24 until September 29. Applications are currently open and can be submitted until February 11, 2023. You can go to `https://www.heidelberg-laureate-forum.org` to learn more.

Sincerely,
Sergei Tabachnikov
Professor, Penn State University
IMU representative, Scientific Committee Heidelberg Laureate Forum Foundation

Anna Wienhard
Director, Max Planck Institute for Mathematics in the Sciences
Scientific Chair, Heidelberg Laureate Forum Foundation

Use of Preview Editor with PDF Files

I wish to share a recent experience involving the Preview editor on a MacBook Pro using the Annotate Tools: Highlight Text, Strike Through Text, and Text. Coincidentally my coauthors and I received galley proofs in pdf format for a textbook and for a journal article within an overlapping time frame. The textbook file is approximately 500 pages and the journal article 25 pages. After many hours of markup on the textbook file, using the Save command throughout, several of the markings had vanished from the pdf file. This included markups by coauthors as well as my own. It is not a machine dependent issue.

Consulting Google revealed that it is a known problem for the Preview editor. Fortunately, there are links to recover the lost markups. The link `https://github.com/julihoh/pdf_annotation_fix#readme` was effective in recovering the data from the large textbook file. After this experience with the textbook file, the recovery link was applied to the journal article edits. It also recovered missing markings that would not have been known without conducting a check.

Given the pervasive use of pdf files within the mathematics community, it seems prudent to issue this alert. It would have been very helpful to us to have been aware in advance.

Sincerely,
Edward C. Waymire
Oregon State University