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Professor John Engler  
President  
Michigan State University

Dear Professor Engler,

I am writing this letter to urge you to stop proceedings for the dismissal of Professor of Mathematics Selman Akbulut. The mathematical community worldwide is extremely disturbed by the news that Professor Akbulut is about to be fired.

Professor Akbulut is an internationally renowned mathematician, certainly one of the very best Michigan State University has. Regardless the merit of the accusations against him, his dismissal would greatly damage the international reputation of the Michigan State University and its Mathematics Department.

Professor Selman Akbulut is one of the leading low-dimensional topologists in the world. I will not attempt in this letter to describe his main achievements. Let me just say that besides topology, he made fundamental contributions to real algebraic geometry and symplectic and contact topology.

Professor Akbulut continues to be very active and is producing high quality results with the rate which could make envious many much younger mathematicians. Only in the last 3 years he wrote 14 papers where he proved a number of first rate results, some of which could be called groundbreaking. Overall he wrote over 100 research articles and 3 monographs.

Besides being an excellent mathematician, Professor Akbulut is also a great teacher, lecturer and organizer of Mathematics. Among his students there are several first rate mathematicians. Akbulut's expository papers serve as an invaluable source of information, which is hard or even impossible to find anywhere else. Professor Akbulut is a founder and the main organizer of the traditional Gökova International Topological Conference in Turkey. This conference which not only greatly contributed to the development of Mathematics in Turkey, but became an important event on the international mathematical scene.

I am convinced that firing of Professor Akbulut would be a grave mistake, which will greatly damage the reputation of the MSU Department of Mathematics for years to come. I urge you not to do that.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ya. Eliashberg", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Yakov Eliashberg,

Herald L and Caroline L. Ritch

Professor of Mathematics

Member of the National Academy of Sciences

Laureat of Veblen, Hopf and Crafoord prizes