

To Whom It May Concern:

We as editorial board members at Communications in Algebra are sending this notification of our resignation from the board. This letter is being written to explain our position. We note at the outset that a number of the signatories are willing to finish their currently assigned queue if requested by Taylor and Francis.

As associate editors, it is our duty to protect the mathematical integrity of Communications in Algebra in all arenas in which our expertise applies, and it is in this aspect where our concern lies. The "top-down" management that Taylor and Francis seems to be implementing is running roughshod over the standard practices of the refereeing process in mathematics. To unilaterally implement a system that demands multiple full reviews for papers in mathematics is extremely dangerous to the health and the quality of this journal. The system of peer review in mathematics is different from the standard peer-review process in the sciences; in mathematics the referee is expected to do a much more in-depth and thorough review of a paper than one encounters in most of the sciences. This often involves not only an assessment of the impact and significance of the results but also a line-by-line painstaking check for correctness of the results. This process is often quite time-consuming and makes referees a valuable commodity. Doubling the number of expected reviews will quickly either deplete the pool of willing reviewers or vastly dilute the quality of their reviews, and both of these are unacceptable outcomes. It is our understanding that one solution proposed in this vein was to "drastically increase" the size of the editorial board, but this does not address the problem at all, and also would have the side effect of making Communications in Algebra look like one of the many predatory journals invading the current market.

These are extremely important issues that should have been discussed with the editorial board, but it appears that Taylor and Francis has no interest in the board's perspective in this regard. Of course, we realize that Taylor and Francis is a business and is responsible for the financial success (or failure) of the journals in its charge, but the irony here is that as bad as this is from our "mathematical" perspective, it is potentially an even bigger business mistake. Moving forward, the multiple review system will likely dissuade many authors from considering Communications in Algebra as an outlet. Only the highest-tier journals regularly implement more than one full review (and even at these journals, we do not believe that multiple reviews are mandated as policy). Frankly speaking, Communications in Algebra improved in prominence and stature under Scott Chapman's tenure, but Communications in Algebra is still not the Annals of Mathematics. Why would any author wait for a year or more for two reviews to come in when there are many other options (Journal of Algebra, Journal of Pure and Applied Algebra, etc.) which are higher profile with less waiting time? The multiple review process has the potential to create a huge backlog of "under review" papers and greatly diminish the quality of submissions. It is likely the case that in a short while, Communications in Algebra will have significantly fewer quality submissions and could become a publishing mill for low-grade papers to meet its quota. In the long run, this is not good for the journal's reputation or for the business interests of Taylor and Francis.

Again, this is something about which the board should have at the very least been consulted instead of learning this by way of the cloak-and-dagger removal of a respected and visionary managing editor who worked well with the board and made demonstrable advances for the journal's prestige. We are gravely concerned about the future of Communications in Algebra. Taylor and Francis has not only removed Scott Chapman but also has not even reached out to the editorial board and is not taking any visible steps to replace Scott (which would not be an easy task even if Scott were only a mediocre editor). This, coupled with the Taylor and Francis' puzzling antipathy to input on best practices in mathematics research publishing and review, as well as its apparent abandonment of the Taft Award that they committed to last year, belies an aggressive disdain for the future quality of Communications in Algebra. We certainly hope you will adopt a more positive and productive relationship with your next board.

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