

**Re: Complaint about bullying by a lecturer in the School of Math**

Schmidt, Maxie D <mschmidt34@gatech.edu>

Thu 4/21/2022 6:46 PM

To: Griffin, Chris <chris.griffin@gatech.edu>

■ 1 attachments (56 KB)

LetterToMichelleObama-VictimsRights-2021.pdf;

Chris,

I am asking you to append this note to your files. If you investigate this, please do so after I graduate. I tentatively plan to graduate in August following the Summer 2022 term at GT.

My advisor, Michael Lacey, interim chair of the School of Math, threatened me with the opportunity to not graduate from GT at all this Spring if I retaliate (i.e., report his and other men close to him here's behavior). In particular, he said that "retaliation is forbidden" in his condition that I will graduate in August. He told me, with only vague insinuations, that I will not have support starting in the Fall despite a written offer letter I received with my admission into the math Ph.D. program in 2017 guaranteeing it for at least two more years. The only tangible reason as to why was stated by him as my inability to be a reliable TA (based on email conduct), which are the only TAs they unconditionally support. He stated that my concern at Klara Grodzinsky's MS degree only status is insulting to her and her qualifications. This is dispicable.

For reference, ML made an intentional sexual advance towards me in his office while doors were closed in January of 2020. He did this shortly after I forwarded him a positive message originally sent to my hero, Christine Blasey Ford at her Stanford law email address, and a few good friends and confidants. This message contained details of how I believe my experience being sexually assaulted in Seattle and in Florida many years ago changed the laws in the progressive, early adopting state of Washington. His peer and close cohort, Professor EC, made a less subtle advance towards me suggesting that I give him oral sex if I want him to be an advisor in math. I recall that a former romantic interest, and sketchy black hat hacker type to boot, was lurking out in the hall. I do not know if this is why he chose to make that advance towards me that day (among all other choices in the matter).

The attached PDF contains the WA state legislature's new (at the time) statement of the time period in which a victim of rape or sexual assault has to report their victimization to law enforcement with the expectation of a criminal investigation to follow. It was previously one year, per Seattle PD policy, a statistic that I was unaware of after that happened to me. It is now effectively infinite. #MeToo

Again, please do not overtly handle this until after I graduate from GT after this summer. I feel intimidated and fear retribution for reporting what I just wrote down for you. No one else has a copy of this message.

Maxie

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**From:** Schmidt, Maxie D

**Sent:** Wednesday, April 20, 2022 4:55 PM

**To:** Griffin, Chris <chris.griffin@gatech.edu>

**Cc:** Lacey, Michael <lacey@math.gatech.edu>; Yu, Xingxing <yu@math.gatech.edu>

**Subject:** Complaint about bullying by a lecturer in the School of Math

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to report instances of bullying towards me by Ms. Klara Grodzinsky over the last year. I will fill in the details as to why I feel that the Title IX office needs to step in. I have contemplated filing this report for the last week. The experience I had about her behavior reporting me to the dean of students for a clearly facetiously misconstrued allegation where she claimed that I had accused her of "animal abuse" with undue hostility is the last straw. I feel that I have a **negative** experience with this area where **zero tolerance** should be the norm. I will henceforth assume that your office can handle instances of this type of abusive and intimidating bully type behavior by this woman towards me as a graduate student subordinate with all due seriousness and an appropriate level of concern.

The following points are relevant to my complaint:

- As a freshman engineering major at the University of Illinois (UIUC) in 2005, I met a male lecturer in Computer Science (CS) that made quite an impression on me about the way women are treated in predominantly male dominated fields. After I left UIUC with a MS in CS in 2014, I started to speak up and engage in graphic discourse about the experiences I have had with him. Some of my social media postings about this include references tagged with #MeToo. Ms. Grodzinsky is aware that this man has physically assaulted me outside of the lecture hall where he taught my required classes that year. She would have learned of details like this while discussing the last Title IX complaint I submitted in the Fall of 2021 at the suggestion of my advisor, Michael Lacey.
- Ms. Grodzinsky is a longtime lecturer in the School of Math here at GT where she has been an experienced non-tenured faculty with her graduate MS in Mathematics for a reported ~20+ years. I believe that the source of her openly hostile attitude towards me as a GTA is that I have openly complained about the male CS lecturer's having only a MCS certification while teaching those introductory freshman classes at UIUC for only a decade. I have openly stated my view that instructors (e.g., lecturers) at a large university that do not yet have a doctorate should be in the process of earning one. A YouTube video with relevant context is available here: <https://youtu.be/ecmFMbDEbhE>
- At the advocacy of a close mentor and confidant I keep in touch with who was also a lecturer in CS at UIUC in 2005, I have removed most of my postings about being victimized on social media type sites online. Very close to when Ms. Grodzinsky filed her most recent misleading report to the dean of students, I had added quotes to a review about the source of the YouTube video above (since removed). These quotes include the following:

*"You will experience testosterone in this department. Just (like) give it back to them!" -- CH, 2004*

*"Fuck 'em or fail 'em, right? To which he responds in typical sorted order: 'Yes'." -- Anonymous*

I find it very hard to believe that this is unrelated. I can follow up with precise details as

to why later.

- In the Spring of 2020, the School of Math required a sudden mandatory virtual training session on Title IX policies and procedures for all graduate students in the department. At the end of this training, we had a Q/A period. One male student whose identity I do not know asked an unusual question as to whether it is against the GT university honor code to file a Title IX complaint at another university while enrolled as a student here, e.g., whether it is "wrong" to report instances of sexual harassment and behavior of this nature elsewhere while bound to local GT context to file grievances. The coordinator clarified that it is not, in fact, wrong or unethical to do that. I followed up that day with the training organizer, Chris Jankowski, who did not remember the discussion. I have continued to wonder where and how that topic could have been raised. I know, myself, in my heart and brain, that that was a reaction to complaints I had filed at UIUC a short couple of months before the mandatory training at GT. I do not know if this is directly related to the hostility and bullying I am reporting today. On the other hand, I am including this experience again for context. Someone, most likely a faculty member with the power to make the training mandatory, certainly seems to have a problem with my external complaints and my expressing my views on this topic in public and to others.

Do the above details make sense? Please feel free to follow up with me over email and/or Teams.

Thank you for your time,

Maxie Schmidt