

**Letter On Selman Akbulut**

April 18, 2018

I begin by paraphrasing a quote from the recent book by the former FBI director James Comey: "We are experiencing a dangerous time in our 'department' with an environment where basic facts are disputed, fundamental truth is questioned, lying is normalized." The individual in mathematics to which this 'quote' applies is Selman Akbulut. Nothing of what he says can be believed. He has spun a web of fantasy so extensive that even he believes it. Anyone who disagree with him is either a fool or a liar and a racist. He believes that he is a victim not a bully. He believes his communications are polite and respectful not full of contempt and insults.

Akbulut has learned that to get what he wants: bully and intimidate. If he wants the graduate program to accept some students: harass the graduate director and committee. If he doesn't want to teach a course: accuse the chair and others of discrimination and falsifying the facts. If he doesn't agree with a decision, the decision is ignorant and biased. And always maintain that it is he who has been wronged. This has been effective because many, maybe most, in the department would rather give in than face an endless onslaught of insults. It has worked in the University because of an administration that didn't want to bother about such individuals. As a result of Akbulut's intimidation a large group of faculty decline to participate in activities, like evaluation, that may led to confrontation. This creates an even larger burden for the faculty willing to withstand Akbulut's onslaughts.

If this is allowed to stand without serious consequences then the University will have created incentives to lie, bully, intimidate. The University knows the outcome when behavior in the institution is permitted to become uncivilized and brutal.



Jon Wolfson  
Professor of Mathematics  
Michigan State University