

**Subject:** Urgent Appeal to Retain the PhD Program in Computational Mathematics and MA in Mathematics  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 12:13:26 PM Eastern Standard Time  
**From:** Ratnasingham Shivaji  
**To:** Chancellor's Office, Debbie Storrs, Franklin Gilliam  
**CC:** Stephen Tate, Greg Bell (He/Him/His), John Kiss, MATHSTATS Faculty and Staff, Tami Draves (She/Her/Hers), Selima Sultana, Ratnasingham Shivaji  
**Attachments:** image001.png

Subject: Urgent Appeal to Retain the PhD Program in Computational Mathematics and MA in Mathematics

Dear Chancellor Gilliam and Provost Storrs,

I trust this message finds you well. I am writing to you a sincere plea to consider retaining our PhD Program in Computational Mathematics and the MA in Mathematics.

Allow me to reiterate the invaluable contribution of our programs as outlined in our department's response to the recommendation to cut graduate programs in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

Established in 2008, our distinguished PhD program in Computational Mathematics is a unique offering in the state of North Carolina. Over the years, we have proudly conferred 28 Ph.D. degrees, with an additional 8 students on track to achieve this milestone by the summer of 2024. The success of our graduates is exemplified by their diverse placements, securing postdoctoral positions at esteemed institutions such as the University of Miami, Duke University, Tulane University, and Utah State University. Additionally, our alumni have excelled in roles within industry and federal agencies, including the NSA. Notably, four of our PhD alumni

have received the esteemed Project NExT Fellowship awards from the Mathematical Association of America.

Central to our program is a commitment to nurturing both exceptional researchers and exemplary teachers, a strategy that has been pivotal in positioning our graduates for success in academia. It is a success story for graduate education in STEM at UNCG, and as a doctoral-level STEM program, it benefits from higher funding in the revised state budget model.

The M.A. in Mathematics serves as a crucial bridge between our strong undergraduate programs and the Ph.D. program, allowing our best undergraduates to pursue an accelerated bachelor's and master's degree. This program plays a vital role in building fundamental skills for beginning graduate students and has zero additional cost on top of the two existing programs. Given its integral role and lack of justification for discontinuation, we focus our plea on the Ph.D. program and mathematics graduate studies in general.

While our PhD program may be smaller compared to those at larger institutions, it has earned a reputation for excellence and boasts an outstanding placement record. Numerous distinguished mathematicians, including fellows of prestigious societies such as the American Mathematical Society, Association for Women in Mathematics, Society of Industrial and Applied Mathematics, Royal Society (FRS), Learned Society of the Czech Republic, and a member of the National Academy of Science, have strongly endorsed our program. The appendix to our response document contains the above referenced documents and many more supporting letters affirming the program's excellence.

Our commitment to excellence is further evident in the numerous

teaching awards and prestigious research grants our faculty have received, as highlighted in our response document. As a testament to our dedication, I am honored to share that I have been selected as the recipient of the 2024 CSGS (Conference of Southern Graduate Schools) Outstanding Mentor Award (kindly see email below from the President of the CSGS), an accolade that reflects the collective effort of my colleagues and the strength of our program. I believe this award has brought significant recognition to our program and to UNCG. The thought of not having a PhD program when attending the 2024 CSGS Annual Meeting in March 2024 to receive this award is disheartening, and I sincerely hope this will not be the case.

Lastly, the issue of student success in our service-level courses has been cited as the reason for the recommendation to discontinue our PhD and MA programs in Mathematics. It is difficult for me to understand the connection. I strongly believe it is counterproductive. As the former department head from 2011-19, I can attest to our unwavering commitment to hiring faculty who understand the symbiotic relationship between teaching and research in mathematics. The department prioritizes student success in service-level classes, as fully detailed in our response. Again, dismantling the doctoral program would be counterproductive to this ongoing focus.

I appreciate your time and consideration of this matter. Our programs have not only contributed significantly to UNCG but have also brought recognition through awards and achievements. I sincerely hope we can work together to ensure the continued success and impact of our undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as continue our efforts to make an impact on student success in our service level mathematics and statistics courses.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Ratnasingham Shivaji

Fellow of the American Mathematical Society

H. Barton Excellence Professor, W.L. Giles Distinguished Professor  
Emeritus of Mathematics (Mississippi State University)

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**From:** Mary J Farmer-Kaiser <[mary.farmer-kaiser@louisiana.edu](mailto:mary.farmer-kaiser@louisiana.edu)>

**Date:** Wednesday, January 24, 2024 at 18:27

**To:** Ratnasingham Shivaji <[r\\_shivaj@uncg.edu](mailto:r_shivaj@uncg.edu)>

**Cc:** Aimee Surprenant <[asurprenant@vt.edu](mailto:asurprenant@vt.edu)>, 'Peter Harries'  
<[pjharrie@ncsu.edu](mailto:pjharrie@ncsu.edu)>, Greg Bell (He/Him/His) <[gcbell@uncg.edu](mailto:gcbell@uncg.edu)>

**Subject:** Congratulations! CSGS Outstanding Mentor Award

Dear Professor Shivaji,

As President of the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools, I have the pleasure of sharing the news that you are the recipient of the **2024 CSGS Outstanding Mentor Award**. Led by Dr. Aimée Surprenant, the **[CSGS Faculty Awards Committee](#)** was most impressed by your success in mentoring graduate students and thus has selected you as the recipient for this award from a highly competitive group of

nominations.

This recognition comes with a monetary award of \$1,000 along with a commemorative plaque that will be presented at the [2024 CSGS Annual Meeting](#). Our annual meeting will be held March 13-15 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown **Greenville, South Carolina**, and the awards luncheon will take place on **Friday, March 15 beginning at 11:15 EDT**. In addition to this monetary prize and plaque, your meeting registration and hotel accommodations are complimentary and CSGS will reimburse your flight or ground travel. Yes, we'd very much like to have the opportunity to congratulate you in person!

Please send a brief bio and photo for inclusion in the virtual conference program. Please also let me know as soon as possible if you are able to attend the awards luncheon so that we can secure your hotel reservation.

Congratulations! Thank you for your commitment to our graduate students and to graduate education.

All my best,  
Mary

**Mary Farmer-Kaiser, PhD**

President of the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools

Dean of the Graduate School and Professor of History

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