Fifth Colorado Mathematical Olympiad
April 22, 1988

Historical Notes 5

As you recall from Historical Notes 3, Dean Tracey and my Chair, Rangaswami, ordered me to close down the Olympiad, and threatened with consequences to my employment if I did not. In 1987 Rangaswami, using the draft by another perpetrator in my tenure process, Professor Gene Abrams, produced “Proposal to the CCHE (The Colorado Commission on Higher Education) for the Promotion and Encouragement of Excellence.” Rangaswami asked for funding of the “Center of Resources for Excellence in and Advancement of Mathematics (CREAM).” He wrote:

The Olympiad, which has been held each April since 1984, attracts hundreds of junior high and high school students to the campus. They spend four hours answering a series of five questions, each of which requires mathematical insight and creativity to answer correctly (Appendix 4).¹ In this way, two impressions are left on the students: both that mathematics is really more than just tedious memorization, and (perhaps more importantly) that knowledge and intelligence are virtues to be rewarded and applauded. In addition students become familiar with the UCCS campus, and thus will hopefully become more inclined to make use of campus resources (e.g. using the Microcomputer Lab, eventually enrolling as a student, etc.).

¹ The Appendix contained all the Olympiad problems to date (which in itself constituted unauthorized use of copyrighted material).
And this was the same chair who, together with the dean, demanded that I close down the Olympiad! This proposal was kept in secret from me, and it was due only to negligence of the conspirators that I noticed it lying near the copy machine in the math department office. You must be wondering, why was it a secret? Because, the canning chair and Professor Gene Abrams wanted to get the money from the State of Colorado to take the Olympiad away from me: to hire a paid Director reporting to the chair, who among other duties would be in charge of the Olympiad. The proposal reads:

The director will be responsible for coordinating the UCCS [sic] Mathematical Olympiad.

My inquiry Chair Rangaswami defiantly rebuked with “This is not your Olympiad!” He was more conciliatory in May 1987 when Dean of Education Dennis Mithaug asked him to remove any mention of the Olympiad from the proposal. Rangaswami promised, but violated his word to Mithaug, and did not answer my May 29, 1987 inquiry into the state of this attempted theft of the Olympiad. On October 21, 1987, I took the matter to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Joan Klingel:

Last May (!) Dr. Rangaswami promised me and Dr. Mithaug to either change his CCHE “CREAM” proposal in the parts where it deals with the Colorado Springs Mathematical Olympiad (CSMO) and present it to me for approval, or to drop any mention of CSMO from the proposal. It is October 21, 1987 (!), and he still has not done so. Moreover, I received no response to my May 29, 1987 memo (attached).

Hereby I am giving you a chance to resolve the matter internally to my satisfaction. If it is not done soon, I will have no alternatives, but to advise CCHE on the record of Math. Department and the College of EAS [Engineering and Applied Science] in trying to shot down CSMO, and their total lack of support for CSMO.

The Vice Chancellor’s reply came the very next day. She “explained” Rangaswami’s violations by CCHE’s cancellation of the fund, but assured me that