

**Email exchange with Dr. Donna Riley, Head, School of Engineering Education,
Purdue University**

From: <edwardsm@vt.edu>

Date: Mon, Dec 4, 2017 at 12:46 AM

Subject: Allegations of Structural Bullying and Analogies to Sexual Harassment

To: riley@purdue.edu

Cc: Amy Pruden <apruden@vt.edu>, LeeWalters <lwalters313@gmail.com>, kmosteller@mcc.edu, Siddhartha Roy <sidroy@vt.edu>, William Rhoads <wrhoads@vt.edu>, keri webber <klwebb88@comcast.net>, greatauntjan@gmail.com

Dr. Donna Riley

Head: School of Engineering Education

Purdue University

West Lafayette, IN 47907-2045

12/4/2017

Dear Dr. Riley,

We were compiling social media commentary about the Flint water crisis, and came across tweets you made about 1 month ago—given the context, it would appear your comments are about us. Please correct us if we are wrong.

It is true that our team including experts (Flintwaterstudy.org) and Flint residents, were compelled to undermine false statements made by certain Flint water activists to protect the public welfare. Our rationale for doing so, was presented publicly and transparently, on the website Flintwaterstudy.org. Given the reality of what occurred, we feel your allegations of “structural bullying” and analogies to sexual harassment (#metoo) are highly inappropriate.

If you wish to discuss this with us, to better understand the situation(s) to which you are referring, we would be happy to do so. Alternatively, if you can make a case supporting these allegations in relation to our Flint work, we would very much like to understand it. Mr. Miguel Del Toral has also agreed to serve as a resource to you ([773\) 521-0410](tel:7735210410), as he was a first-hand witness to events referenced in your comments, and he could provide additional background about the difficult decisions we made.


Sincerely yours,

Marc Edwards, Amy Pruden, Sid Roy and William Rhoads (Virginia Tech-Flintwaterstudy)

LeeAnne Walters, Jan Berryman, Keri Webber, Kaylie Mosteller (Flint Residents and Citizen Science Collaborators)


Your comments.

<https://twitter.com/riled1/status/924371156576145409>




Donna Riley
@riled1





Follow

#shot2017 Flint water activists undermined by experts held up as heroes. Activists everywhere recognize this structural bullying: **#metoo** 


1:23 PM - 28 Oct 2017

6 Retweets 15 Likes



  6  15 

<https://twitter.com/riled1/status/924370142712205313>




Donna Riley
@riled1





Follow

#shot2017 DC residents discovered lead in water crisis, forced govt response. But grassroots struggle reduced to "rescue" by hero engineer.

1:19 PM - 28 Oct 2017

3 Retweets 4 Likes



  3  4 

<https://twitter.com/riled1/status/924370142712205313>



Donna Riley
@riled1

Follow

#shot2017 **@DrishtiEthics** calls for historical counter narratives to flawed, self serving, damaging narratives that disempower communities.

2:31 PM - 28 Oct 2017

1 Retweet 5 Likes



  1  5 

From: **Riley, Donna M** <riley@purdue.edu>

Date: Mon, Dec 4, 2017 at 10:21 AM

Subject: RE: Allegations of Structural Bullying and Analogies to Sexual Harassment

To: "edwardsm@vt.edu" <edwardsm@vt.edu>, klwebb88 <klwebb88@comcast.net>

Cc: Amy Pruden <apruden@vt.edu>, LeeWalters <lwalters313@gmail.com>,

"kmosteller@mcc.edu" <kmosteller@mcc.edu>, Siddhartha Roy <sidroy@vt.edu>, William

Rhoads <wrhoads@vt.edu>, "greatauntjan@gmail.com" <greatauntjan@gmail.com>,

"Slaton,Amy" <slatonae@drexel.edu>

Dear Marc,

I was live tweeting a special session of the SHOT 2017 conference. My use of the hashtag #shot2017 and my broader tweet stream from the meeting should make that clear. The session was the Presidential Roundtable on the topic of Democracy, Technology, and Participation, which was the conference theme. I have copied the session organizer and moderator, Professor Amy Slaton of Drexel University.

There is a massive amount of scholarly work in the History of Technology and Science and Technology Studies that focuses on structural imbalances of expert/non-expert authority in STEM – see authors like Epstein, Timmermans, Fortun, Guston, Frickel, Knowles, Merrifield, and Nieusma, among many others. The session was held in the context of this scholarship, and focused on the role of power and expertise in citizen science efforts, and also on the ways in which racism and other forms of injustice manifest in sociotechnical systems and artifacts. The lead in water crises in Flint and earlier in DC were referenced during this conversation, along with disaster response, international development engineering, and other current/relevant topics. As I recall, no one mentioned you or your particular study in the conversation. Rather we were focused on the kinds of structural inequality and institutional injustice that can occur in these settings.

In short, no “allegations” have been made, and no one is trying to “hang” anyone with anything. I would not include my tweets as part of the social media reaction to your work, as it is not that.

As someone who works broadly in the area of engineering and social justice, I can attest that everywhere I go, there are lots of people concerned about how power imbalances play out in citizen science and citizen engineering projects. I would presume you share those concerns as well.

All the best,

Donna

From: **Amy Pruden** <apruden@vt.edu>

Date: Tue, Dec 5, 2017 at 2:59 PM

Subject: Re: Allegations of Structural Bullying and Analogies to Sexual Harassment

To: "Riley, Donna M" <riley@purdue.edu>

Cc: "edwardsm@vt.edu" <edwardsm@vt.edu>, klwebb88 <klwebb88@comcast.net>, LeeWalters <lwalters313@gmail.com>, "kmosteller@mcc.edu" <kmosteller@mcc.edu>, Siddhartha Roy <sidroy@vt.edu>, William Rhoads <wrhoads@vt.edu>, "greatauntjan@gmail.com" <greatauntjan@gmail.com>, "Slaton,Amy" <slatonae@drexel.edu>

Dear Donna,

From your reply, I don't get the sense that you appreciate how hurtful your tweets were. I don't possibly see how these tweets are not about Marc and our team.

We are talking about a community that was being poisoned through their water and lied to by the authorities. In partnership with several citizens and community groups, our team helped turn the tide so that public health was protected. This partnership not only exposed the problem in Flint, but also all across the U.S. This was no easy task, by the way, and we are starting to understand why other engineering professors will not stick their necks out to help citizens when the need arises

Our first email provided names of 8 witnesses (and a Federal whistleblower) who lived the actual events in question on a day to day basis, who collectively made the difficult decisions, with reasoning presented publicly transparently, and in real time. It is one thing to stand back and nit-pick about specifics of our approach, or that we could do better in the future, but quite another to call us bullies. And I just cannot begin to fathom reasoning behind the #metoo hashtag.

I am afraid that from a rational, scientific standpoint- the tweets speak for themselves- they were written by you, about Flint, and about our team. Unless you can explain to us how they are possibly about someone else or some other team, we will have to include them in our study.

Sincerely,

Amy

From: **Riley, Donna M** <riley@purdue.edu>

Date: Tue, Dec 5, 2017 at 6:50 PM

Subject: RE: Allegations of Structural Bullying and Analogies to Sexual Harassment

To: Amy Pruden <apruden@vt.edu>

Cc: "edwardsm@vt.edu" <edwardsm@vt.edu>, klwebb88 <klwebb88@comcast.net>, LeeWalters <lwalters313@gmail.com>, "kmosteller@mcc.edu" <kmosteller@mcc.edu>, Siddhartha Roy <sidroy@vt.edu>, William Rhoads <wrhoads@vt.edu>, "greatauntjan@gmail.com" <greatauntjan@gmail.com>, "Slaton,Amy" <slatonae@drexel.edu>

All,

Let me just emphasize again that the roundtable at SHOT was a wide-ranging conversation about democracy, technology, and participation that referenced multiple current and historical events – Charlottesville and climate change, the Grenfell tower fire and Hurricane Katrina, confederate monuments and 9/11, the Triangle shirtwaist fire and Fukushima. There was also reference made to Flint and DC and the lead in water crisis. But not to you or your team (or any other team).

We were interested in what lessons can be derived from historical and sociological analysis of the challenges presented by such crises. Structural bullying is a sociological term that informed the conversation.

I think we are all eager to understand these issues from every possible perspective that might be helpful. I wish you well in your work. I am not able to discuss my twitter activity further with you.

Donna

From: **LeeWalters** <lwalters313@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Dec 5, 2017 at 10:46 PM

Subject: RE: Allegations of Structural Bullying and Analogies to Sexual Harassment

To: "Riley, Donna M" <riley@purdue.edu>

Cc: Amy Pruden <apruden@vt.edu>, Marc Edwards <edwardsm@vt.edu>, klwebb88 <klwebb88@comcast.net>, "kmosteller@mcc.edu" <kmosteller@mcc.edu>, Siddhartha Roy <sidroy@vt.edu>, William Rhoads <wrhoads@vt.edu>, "greatauntjan@gmail.com" <greatauntjan@gmail.com>, "Slaton,Amy" <slatonae@drexel.edu>

Donna,

IF you were interested in learning these lessons you would have consulted with people that have lived through it and are dealing with the aftermath.

It's very disturbing to me to see that you have no issues lying in your response like you lied on your Twitter. Do you think because you responded the way you did that it changes the truth?

Just like the brown, nasty water that we were told to drink by liars, your response leaves the worst taste in my mouth.

Thanks for empowering me today!

LeeAnne

Email exchange with Dr. [REDACTED], Editor in Chief, Engineering Studies Journal (until Dec 31st, 2017)

From: edwardsm@vt.edu [mailto:edwardsm@vt.edu]

Sent: Saturday, December 30, 2017 12:34 AM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Peer reviewed article?

Dear [REDACTED],

We are considering an open letter commentary about the attached article and its author. It appears you are the chief editor of this journal.

We have four questions about the article.

1. Is this article peer reviewed?
2. Did it really take 2.75 years to get through peer review, after it was rejected from another journal, and is the author an associate editor at the journal?
3. By what standard does your journal think it is appropriate, to “posterize,” two upstanding engineering faculty at Purdue?

Below is the ASEE distinguished lecture slide from which the article picture and text was derived, in case the interpretations presented in this paper are not obvious. Is this sort of thing considered scholarship, or humorous, in your field?



“He had a penis eight hundred miles long and two hundred and ten miles in diameter, but practically all of it was in the fourth dimension.”
– Kurt Vonnegut, *Breakfast of Champions*

I personally think these two faculty are deserving of a sincere written apology from your journal and a retraction of the photo at a minimum. I would further strongly recommend that you (and the author) consider retracting the whole article.

We intend to write an open critique, that includes this article and the above slide, in the next week or so, and I hope to have official answers from you in time to quote them.

The complete wired article that somehow justifies public shaming of these two faculty in your peer reviewed journal, is linked below for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marc Edwards

<https://www.wired.com/2004/09/slide-rule-still-rules/>

"Wired, known for its puerile sexist humor and boys' club working climate,

10..."

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, January 2, 2018 12:45 PM

To: edwardsm@vt.edu

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Peer reviewed article?

Dear Marc,

I received this unusual request from you as a reader of *Engineering Studies*. This reply is an informal, personal communication, for I am no longer editor of the journal. I am copying the current editor-in-chief, [REDACTED].

Your request mentions an unnamed "We" and includes elements that are unprofessional and, indeed, unethical. I find that quite surprising coming from you.

I strongly suspect that if your published commentary includes such elements, the journal will take appropriate action.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

From: edwardsm@vt.edu [mailto:edwardsm@vt.edu]

Sent: Tuesday, January 2, 2018 1:09 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Peer reviewed article?

Dear [REDACTED],

I would very much appreciate answers to the questions I posed. Yes, there is indeed a few of us, who are considering an open critique.

[REDACTED], what elements of my questions, are unprofessional and unethical? Given my respect for you, I would very much like to understand your perspective.

Marc

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, January 2, 2018 3:12 PM

To: edwardsm@vt.edu

Subject: Re: Peer reviewed article?

Marc,

I'd be happy to explain informally which elements of your questions are unprofessional and unethical – but not without prior consultation with, and approval from, the current editor-in-chief.

The tone of your message authorizes an interpretation that you might selectively quote me in some way to demonize the journal and the field of scholarship it represents. I was indeed the editor of record for this publication, but I no longer have authority to speak on behalf of the journal.

[REDACTED]

From: edwardsm@vt.edu [mailto:edwardsm@vt.edu]

Sent: Tuesday, January 2, 2018 3:19 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Peer reviewed article?

Excellent. Please consult and obtain approval, because I would very much like to understand, the precise nature of my unethical and unprofessional actions.

Marc

Email exchange with Dr. [REDACTED], Editor in Chief, Engineering Studies Journal (starting Jan 1st, 2018)

From: edwardsm@vt.edu [mailto:edwardsm@vt.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, January 2, 2018 1:09 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Peer reviewed article?

Dear [REDACTED],

I would very much appreciate answers to the questions I posed. Yes, there is indeed a few of us, who are considering an open critique.

[REDACTED], what elements of my questions, are unprofessional and unethical? Given my respect for you, I would very much like to understand your perspective.

Marc

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, January 3, 2018 10:44 AM
To: [REDACTED]; edwardsm@vt.edu
Subject: RE: Our email exchange and intent

Dear Marc,

As [REDACTED] has indicated, I'm the new editor of *Engineering Studies* but the transition was very recent (i.e., January 1). So I wasn't involved with the journal during the review process of Donna Riley's article. Since you and [REDACTED] have both offered to meet with the other, I'll leave it to [REDACTED] to answer any specific questions related to the review process, within the limits of the confidentiality of that process. I will say that this article passed a review which was entirely in keeping with the standards of the journal, of the field of engineering studies, and of the various broader fields (e.g., anthropology, sociology, science and technology studies) which most of our authors and reviewers are affiliated with.

As for your question about the photo from *Wired*: the photo doesn't seem to have upset anyone when it appeared in *Wired*, even though the *Wired* article itself indulges in a sexualized interpretation of the photo. What you seem to be saying is that the photo was unproblematic when presented in *Wired*, but that a feminist interpretation of the photo is illegitimate even when that interpretation relies on the overt text – not the subtext – in which the photo was embedded. I respectfully disagree. Feminist critiques of engineering culture and practice are important and necessary and rooted in an extensive literature which Donna Riley's article points to. Of course, scholarship which disagrees with, while engaging with the intellectual merits of, feminist critiques of engineering is also important. *Engineering Studies* will continue to publish articles from both those perspectives and from many others in pursuit of a better understanding of engineers and their roles in society.

Best,

[REDACTED]

From: edwardsm@vt.edu [<mailto:edwardsm@vt.edu>]

Sent: woensdag 10 januari 2018 16:40

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: The specific basis for your final decision

Dear [REDACTED],

I am now writing a critique of the Riley article on my website, and of your decision to support the use of the photo.

One issue unclear to me, is your statement “the *Wired* article itself indulges in a sexualized interpretation of the photo,” and that the feminist interpretation of this photo relies on the overt text.

Based on your reading of the original WIRED article itself, what is the specific overt text you are speaking of? Is it the Vonnegut quote “*He had a penis 800 miles long and 200 miles wide....*”

Thanks in advance for clarifying this one issue for me.

Marc

On Jan 10, 2018, at 10:49 AM, [REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Marc,

There are a couple other passages in the *Wired* article which I suspect Donna would highlight, but the one which most obviously sexualizes the slide rule is:

"Slide rules made me miserable in school, but now I collect them with a passion," said Andrew Davis, who's been collecting the devices for 11 years. "I know it's weird to talk about passion in connection with slide rules, but they fascinate and delight me the way my ex-wife never did. They are functional and beautiful. I guess you could say I'm obsessed."

Best,

[REDACTED]

From: Marc Edwards [<mailto:edwardsm@vt.edu>]

Sent: woensdag 10 januari 2018 16:56

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: The specific basis for your final decision

I understand that, but that particular quote has nothing to do with the image. The person quoted is not in the image. As far as we know that person is not an engineer.

So I do not I understand how that particular quote, supports your prior statement, that the wired article makes an overt sexual interpretation of the image.

Sincerely

Marc

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, January 10, 2018 11:23 AM
To: 'Marc Edwards' <edwardsm@vt.edu>
Subject: RE: The specific basis for your final decision

Dear Marc,

Here's the relevant part of my prior statement: "the photo doesn't seem to have upset anyone when it appeared in *Wired*, even though the *Wired* article itself indulges in a sexualized interpretation of the photo. What you seem to be saying is that the photo was unproblematic when presented in *Wired*, but that a feminist interpretation of the photo is illegitimate even when that interpretation relies on the overt text – not the subtext – in which the photo was embedded."

As I say, Donna's interpretation relies on the overt text in which the photo was embedded. *Wired* chose to begin the article with a photo of the curators holding a seven-foot-long slide rule, and chose to end the article by quoting an overtly sexualized ode to slide rules. It's within the realm of possibility that *Wired*'s editors did not consciously intend to draw a connection; but given what we know about *Wired* (see the Paulina Borsook chapter which Donna cites), it's quite likely they did intend readers to make that connection. Intentional or not, there is an overt sexual reference in the *Wired* article which Donna, relying on the literature she cites, was well within her rights to juxtapose with the photo that accompanies that article. That is the point of my prior statement.

Best,

[REDACTED]

From: edwardsm@vt.edu <edwardsm@vt.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, January 10, 2018 7:02 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: The specific basis for your final decision

Thank you for the explanation. Really appreciate that. Marc

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, January 11, 2018 4:04 AM
To: edwardsm@vt.edu
Subject: Re: The specific basis for your final decision

No problem!

best,

[REDACTED]

Prof. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Email exchange with Dr. Yanna Lambrinidou, Affiliate Faculty, Dept. of STS, Virginia Tech

From: edwardsm@vt.edu [mailto:edwardsm@vt.edu]
Sent: Sunday, January 7, 2018 3:31 PM
To: 'Lambrinidou Yanna' <pnalternatives@yahoo.com>; 'Siddhartha Roy' <sidroy@vt.edu>
Subject: Presentation

Dear Yanna,

Could we get a copy of your keynote indicated below?
Either as a pdf with notes, or as a video, or in any format that is available?

Thanks in advance.

Marc

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Dr. Yanna Lambrinidou, Ph.D., will deliver the keynote address entitled, "Sustainable engagement: Lead in drinking water and the urgency to reimagine technical experts' relationship with the public."

Lambrinidou, an affiliate faculty in the Department of Science and Technology in Society at Virginia Tech, is the founder of the non-profit children's environmental health organization Parents for Nontoxic Alternatives. She is also a co-founding member of the national Campaign for Lead Free Water. Her work focuses on environmental health, policy, and justice; the intersection where scientists, engineers, and diverse publics meet.

From: edwardsm@vt.edu [mailto:edwardsm@vt.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, January 10, 2018 7:59 AM
To: 'Lambrinidou Yanna' <pnalternatives@yahoo.com>; 'Siddhartha Roy' <sidroy@vt.edu>
Cc: 'yanna@vt.edu' <yanna@vt.edu>
Subject: RE: Presentation

Dear Yanna,

Since we did not hear from you, we are re-sending this to your VT email

address as well as your pna address.

We are extremely interested in learning your perspective on the urgent things that lead in water technical experts should be doing to improve their relationship with the public, and we would very much like a full and complete record of your keynote comments.

Marc

From: edwardsm@vt.edu [mailto:edwardsm@vt.edu]
Sent: Friday, January 12, 2018 11:29 AM
To: 'Lambrinidou Yanna' <pnalternatives@yahoo.com>; 'Siddhartha Roy' <sidroy@vt.edu>
Cc: 'yanna@vt.edu' <yanna@vt.edu>
Subject: RE: Presentation

Dear Yanna,

This is our third and final request for your presentation. If we do not hear back from you promptly, we will just assume you do not want us to see your presentation, or learn your insights about the urgent things lead water experts should do in relationship to the public...and give up.

Marc

From: Yanna Lambrinidou [mailto:yanna+canned.response@vt.edu]
Sent: Friday, January 12, 2018 11:29 AM
To: edwardsm@vt.edu
Subject: RE: Presentation

Delivery to the following recipient failed