



May 4, 2026

În Stradă

Iași, Romania

President Christopher L. Eisgruber

Princeton University, Office of the President

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Re: Petition Letter — Disciplinary Investigation and Administrative Leave Pending Review for Professor Corina Tarniță

**Dear President Eisgruber, Assistant to the President Antonetti, Provost
Rexford, Dean Jarrett,**

We, the undersigned Romanian civic organizations, submit this formal petition to Princeton University requesting:

1. the initiation of a transparent, public disciplinary investigation into the documented conduct of Professor Corina Tarniță, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology;
2. her placement on paid administrative leave for the duration of that investigation, consistent with Harvard University's decision to place her former doctoral supervisor, Professor Martin Andreas Nowak, on paid leave under analogous circumstances.

This petition is grounded exclusively in primary source documents — records released by the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) pursuant to the Epstein Transparency Act, available at justice.gov/epstein, together with verified press reporting and publicly available academic records. We cite all primary documents by their official DOJ reference numbers. We note, as a matter of fairness, that the files in the public record do not contain material indicating that Professor Tarniță was aware of or participated in the criminal conduct underlying Epstein's 2019 federal charges. It is the pattern of undisclosed conduct, the unresolved factual contradictions, and the absence of any institutional review that compels this petition.



Professor Tarniță's name appears at least **344 times** in the latest batch of DOJ files — among the highest frequencies of any academic named in those records. The correspondence spans the period from December 2008 to 2012, meaning that her documented contact with Epstein began a mere six months after his 2008 guilty plea to state charges of soliciting prostitution of a minor, and continued for years thereafter.

The emails reviewed by The Daily Princetonian include, in the characterization of that outlet, friendly exchanges, research updates, travel references, birthday and New Year's greetings (sent by Professor Tarniță to Epstein in 2010 and 2011), requests for professional advice, and arrangements for financial transfers. The sustained, warm character of this correspondence — maintained openly after a criminal conviction — is itself a matter requiring institutional explanation.

I. Chronological Record of the Tarniță–Epstein Relationship: Primary Documents

The following establishes the documented timeline of Professor Tarniță's relationship with Jeffrey Epstein, drawn directly from DOJ files and corroborated by academic records. Epstein pleaded guilty to state prostitution charges in June 2008 and received an 18-month sentence in August of that year.

A. December 18, 2008 — First direct email from Tarniță to Epstein

The first recorded direct communication between Tarniță and Epstein dates to December 18, 2008. Writing from Romania, Tarniță reports on meetings with professors at the Universities of Craiova and Bucharest, attaches a joint paper, notes that it does not yet address 'the issues that you raised,' and adds that 'the results in it were produced before the visit to



Florida.' She writes that she is 'carefully thinking' over his suggestions during the holiday break and hopes 'to have some results soon.' Epstein's one-word reply: 'Progress?'

This email confirms that by December 2008, Professor Tarniță was simultaneously receiving and acting on Epstein's substantive input into her own academic research — six months after his criminal conviction.

B. April 8–9, 2009 — Wire transfers executed while Epstein is incarcerated

On April 8, 2009, Tarniță wrote to Epstein asking:

'hi jeffrey, who do you want me to give the wire transfer info to?'

Epstein responded: 'rich in my office,' directing her to his accountant, Richard Kahn of HBRK Associates, New York.

On April 9, 2009 at 9:25 AM, Tarniță emailed Kahn with full banking details for the transfer to 'the girl from Romania, who will receive \$10,000':

the bank's name and address: BANCA TRANSILVANIA

GHICA VODA STREET, No. 3A

IASI, ROMANIA

the SWIFT code: BTRLRO22ISA

the IBAN code of my account: [redacted]

On April 9 at 9:19 PM, Tarniță sent a second email to Kahn: 'This is the last wire transfer info; this time it is for \$5,000,' providing a Wells Fargo account in San Francisco (routing number 121000248).

At 1:39 PM on April 9, Kahn forwarded Tarniță's email to Epstein's account (jeevacation@gmail.com), requesting confirmation of the \$10,000 wire. Kahn



noted: '10,000 was sent Thursday and receipt was confirmed.' In his reply, Epstein asked: 'this is from couq, correct?' — a reference to COUQ, a non-profit foundation of which Epstein was director, suggesting the funds may have been routed through a charitable entity.

Critically: these wire transfers were executed in April 2009, while Epstein was still incarcerated. He would not be released until July 22, 2009. The transfers were thus coordinated between Professor Tarniță and Epstein's accountant while Epstein was serving his sentence for soliciting prostitution of a minor.

C. June 2009 — Dissertation thanks Epstein; Ritz-Carlton reservation for Nowak and Tarniță

In June 2009, Tarniță submitted her doctoral dissertation, 'Evolutionary Dynamics in Structured Populations.' In her Acknowledgments, she wrote: 'I am thankful to Jeffrey Epstein for making PED possible and for allowing me to participate in his tireless pursuit of knowledge.' The dissertation is wholly theoretical and mathematical and contains no experimental component.

Separately, on June 4, 2009, Epstein's assistant Lesley Groff emailed Nowak confirming JetBlue tickets for Nowak and Tarniță — arrival June 18, departure June 21 — with a reservation at the Ritz-Carlton, Palm Beach for those same dates: one room, two guests, 1 King Bed guaranteed, at \$349 per night, booked in Nowak's name. A subsequent email suggests the trip may have been cancelled.



D. Epstein's Involvement in Professor Tarniță's Research and Immigration Affairs

The DOJ files reveal that Epstein's engagement with Professor Tarniță and her supervisor Martin Nowak extended beyond funding and social contact into the substance of their academic work — a level of involvement described by mathematician Jesse Kass of the University of California, Santa Cruz, in comments to *Nature*, as 'unheard of' for a research funder.

Specifically, the documents show that Epstein regularly discussed research topics with both Nowak and Tarniță, including suggestions such as 'commercial evolution' and 'prelife.' In 2010, Nowak shared the page proofs of a paper accepted by *Nature* — the landmark paper co-authored by Tarniță, Nowak, and E.O. Wilson on the evolution of eusociality — with Epstein before its publication, and Epstein provided advice on managing public criticism of the work. The extent to which Professor Tarniță was aware of or party to this arrangement is a question that Princeton's investigation should address.

The documents further show that Professor Tarniță thanked Epstein for his assistance in securing a visa — an interaction that suggests Epstein played a role in facilitating her personal presence in the United States, adding another dimension to the relationship that warrants scrutiny. As documented in the deposition of Epstein's lawyer Darren K. Indyke in spring 2026, Epstein appears to have had a pattern of helping women get US visas.

E. November–December 2009 — The Iași connection revisited

On November 25, 2009, Epstein's assistant Groff emailed Nowak: 'Jeffrey requested I get the name of the University in Romania that you got the people from.' Nowak forwarded the query to Tarniță, who responded to Groff:



'The two girls were both from the University of Iași in Romania. It is the oldest University in Romania, in what used to be our capital a few centuries ago. Please let me know if Jeffrey needs more information.'

On December 14, 2009, at 1:02 AM, Tarniță emailed Epstein:

'i just found out tonight that they decided to accept me for the society of fellows... thank you so much for your advice — not being emotional about it was the smart thing to do.'

The Harvard Society of Fellows selects approximately 12 fellows per year across all disciplines; it is one of the most prestigious fellowships in American academia.

F. January 31, 2010 — Epstein pays for Tarniță's hair appointment at Frédéric Fekkai

Epstein's assistant Sarah K. emailed Epstein on January 31, 2010: 'Is it ok for Martin and Corina to meet you at the house in the morning at 6am and ride with you to the airport? Also, does Corina need highlights or single process?' Epstein responded: 'maybe both.' Epstein arranged and paid for a hair appointment for Tarniță with celebrity stylist Frédéric Fekkai — a personal financial benefit extended directly to a graduate researcher whose academic publications simultaneously acknowledged him as a funder.

G. February 2, 2010 — Nowak's calls to Epstein routed through Tarniță's cell phone

On February 2, 2010, Groff emailed Epstein:

'Jeffrey... Martin Nowak would like to speak with you. Please give him a call on Corina's cell phone.'



Nowak's requests to reach Epstein were being routed through Tarniță's personal telephone — indicating a degree of personal intimacy with Epstein's household beyond the ordinary scope of a professional donor relationship.

H. June 9, 2010 — UAIC Iași awards Nowak an honorary doctorate;

On June 9, 2010, the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași awarded Martin Nowak an honorary doctorate. The honorary degree was awarded seven months after Groff had asked Nowak for 'the name of the University in Romania that you got the people from.'

I. March–August 2011 — Epstein assists Tarniță with U.S. immigration (O-1 visa)

On March 7, 2011, Tarniță wrote to Groff explaining that she had spoken to Epstein about difficulties with her visa. Epstein directed her to his personal attorney, M. Arda Beskardes of New York City.

On August 29, 2011, Tarniță wrote to Epstein explicitly thanking him for his assistance in obtaining her O-1 (extraordinary ability) visa. Epstein thus played a role not only in funding her research and shaping her career within academia, but in securing her legal authorization to remain in the United States.

J. November 1, 2010 and Valentine's Day 2011 — Nature of the relationship

On November 1, 2010, Tarniță wrote to Epstein: 'i enjoy immensely all discussions i have with you... I have the utmost respect for both you and your work.. and as you know i am 100% on your team.'



On February 14, 2011 — Valentine's Day — Epstein wrote to Nowak: 'great day thanks — make sure you get Corina a valentine card.' These communications illustrate the personal character of the relationship that developed between Epstein and Professor Tarniță over several years.

K. December 2011 — The island emails and the Princeton appointment

On December 11, 2011, Tarniță wrote to Epstein apologizing for missing a trip to his private island:

'dear jeffrey, I'm so sorry i couldn't come to the island. My parents have decided to visit at the very last minute... **martin told me he explained the princeton situation to you. i still have no news from them and that's also been causing some anxiety. i'll let you know as soon as i know something.**'

On December 16, 2011: **'great news: Princeton officially wants me! Epstein's reply: 'great.'**

The juxtaposition of these emails — an apology for missing an island visit and the announcement of a Princeton faculty appointment, both addressed to a twice-convicted sex offender — raises questions about the nature and extent of Epstein's involvement in Professor Tarniță's career trajectory that Princeton University has not addressed.

We note additionally that the island in question was frequented by figures connected to Epstein's criminal activity. Virginia Roberts Giuffre stated in a 2016 deposition that Ghislaine Maxwell directed her to provide sexual services to the late MIT Professor Marvin Minsky during a visit to Epstein's island. Professor Tarniță has stated she declined the invitation after being invited by Professor Minsky.



II. The Stated Justification and Its Documented Inconsistencies

Professor Tarniță has offered two interlocking explanations for the 2009 wire transfers:

- a) they were scholarships for early-career women in mathematics, at the suggestion of an anonymous donor inspired by her career;
- b) they were connected to a scientific collaboration between Harvard's Program for Evolutionary Dynamics and the University of Iași that produced 'experiments published in a working paper.'

Both explanations, taken individually and together, present material contradictions with the documentary record:

A. The 'scientific collaboration' claim is not supported by Tarniță's dissertation

Tarniță's doctoral dissertation — submitted in June 2009, the same year as the wire transfers — is entirely theoretical and mathematical. It contains no experimental component. Yet her explanation for the wire transfers includes a claim that her research group was developing a collaboration with the University of Iași that produced 'experiments published in a working paper.' No such paper has been made public.

The only working paper that could correspond to this description is 'Civic Capital in Two Cultures: The Nature of Cooperation in Romania and USA' (SSRN 2179575), posted in November 2012 — three and a half years after the wire transfers. That paper does report on a behavioral economics experiment conducted with students in Iași. However: it is a paper in behavioral economics, not mathematics or theoretical biology, and the earliest known public reference to any experiment at Iași is a June 2010 interview given by



Nowak six days after receiving his honorary doctorate from UAIC, more than a year after the wire transfers.

B. UAIC Iași states that no institutional collaboration documents exist

In March 2026, the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași formally stated, in response to press and civil society inquiries, that no official documents have been identified in its institutional records attesting to the existence of an institutional collaboration between UAIC and the Program for Evolutionary Dynamics at Harvard.

The university further noted that it has not received and cannot receive anonymous sponsorships under Romanian law, which requires the existence of sponsorship contracts and the clear identification of the sponsor.

C. The wire transfers were executed while Epstein was in prison

The \$10,000 transfer to Banca Transilvania in Iași and the \$5,000 transfer to Wells Fargo in San Francisco were made on April 9, 2009. Jeffrey Epstein was not released from custody until July 22, 2009.

The transfers were coordinated between Professor Tarniță and Epstein's personal accountant Richard Kahn while Epstein was serving his sentence for soliciting prostitution of a minor — a fact that has received no public acknowledgement from Princeton University.

D. Recipients remain unidentified; no scholarship documentation has been produced

Despite the public interest in this matter, Professor Tarniță has not disclosed the names of the recipients of the wire transfers, the academic



institution at which the California recipient was enrolled, or any documentation of a formal scholarship program. The names in the DOJ files are redacted. Princeton University has not required their disclosure. The public is entitled to this information.

III. Epstein's Involvement in Tarniță's Research and Immigration

The DOJ files reveal that Epstein's engagement with Professor Tarniță was not limited to financial transfers but extended to the substance of her academic work and her personal legal situation.

Seven peer-reviewed papers published by Tarniță and Nowak between 2008 and 2012 acknowledge Jeffrey Epstein as a funder, including the landmark 2010 *Nature* paper on the evolution of eusociality. Epstein is also thanked by name in the acknowledgments of Tarniță's 2009 doctoral dissertation.

In August 2009 — the day before Tarniță submitted a paper to *PLOS Computational Biology* — she emailed Epstein: 'i just wanted to thank you for this beautiful trip. it was great to see you again and it was such a productive trip — i've learnt so much. we have so many new things to think of right now. next time we meet, we will have a proposal for ECD.' The paper's funding statement reads: 'The funders had no role in study design, data collection and analysis.' Epstein is among the acknowledged funders. This statement appears irreconcilable with the email.

In 2010, Nowak shared the page proofs of the *Nature* paper — co-authored with Tarniță and E.O. Wilson — with Epstein before publication, and Epstein provided advice on managing public criticism of the work.



Professor Tarniță has not addressed the extent of her awareness of or participation in this pre-publication disclosure to a donor.

As documented above, Epstein's assistance extended to Professor Tarniță's U.S. immigration status. He directed her to his personal attorney for her O-1 visa application in March 2011; she thanked him for the result in August 2011. This personal legal assistance, rendered by a convicted sex offender to a junior researcher he was simultaneously funding, constitutes a relationship of financial and personal dependency that Princeton University has not examined.

IV. Princeton's Communications Office: Institutional Advocacy in Lieu of Review

Credible reports in *Nature* indicate that Princeton University's communications office provided active assistance to Professor Tarniță in managing press inquiries, including sharing corroborating emails with journalists to support her account of the wire transfers. This constitutes institutional advocacy on behalf of a faculty member whose conduct is the subject of serious and documented public concern — not the neutral fact-finding posture appropriate to a matter of this gravity.

In contrast, Harvard University has limited its public statements to confirming that Professor Nowak is on paid leave pending investigation. **We call on Princeton to immediately** cease any communications-office assistance to Professor Tarniță in responding to press inquiries about this matter and issue a clear public statement acknowledging that the University is conducting or will conduct an institutional review.



V. Formal Requests to Princeton University

In light of the foregoing, we formally and urgently request that Princeton University:

- 1. Initiate a formal public disciplinary investigation into Professor Corina Tarniță's documented interactions with Jeffrey Epstein, encompassing:**
 - a) the April 2009 wire transfers of \$10,000 and \$5,000 executed while Epstein was incarcerated;
 - b) the personal financial benefits extended by Epstein to Tarniță (hair appointments, travel, visa assistance etc.);
 - c) Epstein's role in her career advancement, including her Princeton appointment;
 - d) the nature of her personal meetings with Epstein;
 - e) Epstein's involvement in pre-publication disclosure of academic research;
- 2. Place Professor Tarniță on paid administrative leave for the duration of the investigation**, consistent with Harvard University's response in the parallel case of Professor Martin Nowak;
- 3. Publish the findings of the investigation in full**, including any institutional communications in Princeton's possession relevant to the matter;
- 4. Release all evidence regarding the allegations against Tarniță**, including any incriminating or exculpatory proof linking her to Romania and the Epstein scandal.



5. **Recuse Princeton's communications office** from any further involvement in managing Professor Tarniță's public response to these matters;
6. **Compel Professor Tarniță to make public** the names and institutional affiliations of the Romanian recipients of the wire-transferred funds, and to produce the working paper she has referenced as evidence of the stated academic collaboration with the University of Iași;
7. **Provide formal institutional responses** to the following questions:
 - a) What is Princeton's official position on Professor Tarniță's appearance in the DOJ files, specifically the April 2009 wire transfers to Banca Transilvania, Iași (SWIFT: BTRLRO22ISA), conducted while Epstein was imprisoned?
 - b) What institutional policies govern Princeton's response when a faculty member appears in documents connected to a federal criminal investigation?
 - c) What review has Princeton undertaken to date?
8. **Provide a formal written response** to each item in this petition within thirty (30) days of receipt.

VI. Parallel Actions and International Context

Our organizations are conducting parallel actions at the Romanian and international level:

- We have formally requested that the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași revoke the honorary doctorate awarded to Professor Martin Nowak in June 2010, in view of the documentary evidence now in the



public domain regarding his sustained relationship with Jeffrey Epstein and the role of the Iași connection in that relationship;

- We have submitted public information requests to UAIC Iași pursuant to Romanian Law no. 544/2001, seeking all institutional documents related to connections between the university and Epstein's network;
- We submitted public information requests to several institutions in Romania regarding the Epstein case: the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons, the Romanian Intelligence Service and the Foreign Intelligence Service.
- We are working in coordination with Romanian and American journalists and civil society organizations to document and publish how Epstein's network operated within American and Romanian academic institutions.

Princeton University has an opportunity to demonstrate institutional leadership. A transparent, public investigation will serve the integrity of American higher education and the rights of the Romanian nationals who appeared in Epstein's financial records without institutional protection or public identification.

We thank you for your careful attention to this petition and look forward to a formal institutional response within thirty days.



Respectfully submitted,

Signatory Organizations:

În Stradă

Corupția Ucide (Corruption Kills)

Activism Civic Craiova (Civic Activism Craiova)

Asociația Civică Tineri Liberi din Timișoara (Free Young People Civic Association of Timișoara)

Inițiativa Timișoara (Timișoara Initiative)

Rezistența Civică Galați (Civic Resistance Galați)

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Brașov.community

This letter is submitted as part of an ongoing international civil society effort. No criminal allegations are made against Professor Tarniță herein. All claims are drawn from publicly available primary sources. The signatory organizations act in the public interest and in the interest of full institutional accountability.