

START A COURSE ON THE BASICS OF SCIENTIFIC ARGUMENTATION

In UNT 2/9 Tore Frängsmyr, professor emeritus at Uppsala University, delivers his point of view on my (and many others) criticism for how the leadership of the university forced two professors at the Department of Mathematics to resign. What Frängsmyr presents is a strange performance. Instead of presenting any evidence for his claim that the two professors were forced to resign because they neglected their duties, he chooses to personally insult me by expressing himself in an obviously underestimating way about my contributions to public debates. By doing this Frängsmyr shows that he does not respect the number one rule of scientific discussion, namely to be able to separate the matter and the person, and that under all circumstances one should not answer objective arguments by personal attacks. I will not lower myself to Frängsmyr's level of debates, but I would like to add some objective arguments to the discussion.

To start with, Frängsmyr is wrong when he claims that I base my argumentation mainly on the records of the meetings with the university leadership, which one of the mathematical professors made public. I have looked at all written documentation, which exists available, and I have many times listened through the interviews with all the involved parties, which were made by Radio Uppland. From this material it is absolutely clear that the Vice-Chancellor Anders Hallberg admits that he acted in affect; that the two professors never got any chance to answer the accusation, which were directed against them; that a documentation describing the duty faults of the two professors does not exist; that the alligations of being scientifically unproductive lack any basis; and that the report about the working environment, which is mentioned, does not say that problems can be solved by getting rid of some people. If Frängsmyr has any evidence for his claims, I demand a very simple thing: put the evidence on the table.

For the second, I am not alone in my criticism about what has happened. Several mathematical societies have protested against this, and even the chairman of the Swedish association of teachers did so. For the third, I would like to deny all rumours that my criticism originates in some conflict with just Uppsala university. When my university took a couple of years ago a similar action against a professor in medical sciences, I criticised that publicly and clearly. Frängsmyr's way to argue shows that if Uppsala University would like to keep the status of a serious university, one should start a course on the basics of scientific argumentation.

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