

Unclear Facts concerning the Mathematical Department at Uppsala University

UNT, July 31rst.

RESPONSE. The deans' article (Myths and Mathematics in an uncommon alliance, UNT, June 17th) contains several statements about the appointment of a professor for applied mathematics. It is amazing that this particular matter takes up a large part of the article, especially as it has been claimed that criticism of the appointment had nothing to do with the chaired professors Burglind Jöricke and Oleg Viro leaving the university. To prevent misunderstandings, that the deans' article might cause, we want to draw attention to the following points:

1. The new professor has been welcomed to the Mathematical Department. We, the undersigned, and many others at the department are looking forward to cooperating with him in various ways in the future.
2. Historically, the appointment of chaired professors in Sweden was not unfrequently surrounded by controversy since it determines the main areas of research for a long time to come. Jöricke and Viro expressed their concern that the university would follow the recruitment group's recommendation and appoint the mentioned professor. After this group had replied to the appeals by the applicants for the position, Jöricke and Viro did not longer comment on the matter.

We think it is important to stress these points in order to prevent new myths. Another point that has worried us is the following sweeping statement in the dean's article: "Employees left their jobs; many felt listless and insecure at their place of work. Staff members suffered from insomnia." - That sounds indeed terrible. The phrase "Employees left ..." is quite strong in this context. It seems to suggest the interpretation that staff members handed in their notice because of the bad working atmosphere before February 8th.

As far as the staff (ourselves included) knows, during the four or five years that preceded Jöricke's and Viro's resignation people only left because they reached retirement age, because their employment contracts had run out or because they were offered another job - not because of the reasons the dean's article seems to hint at.

Discrepancies in information of this nature may easily lead to assessments which discredits the department and its staff unnecessarily. Since an open

and constructive attitude and mutual respect are preconditions for a good work environment we think, quite frankly, it would be wise to investigate the facts of this case publicly (once for all).

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