

Vice-Chancellor accused of trying to silencing criticism

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New allegations emerges that the Vice-Chancellor of Uppsala University Anders Hallberg tried to silence critical voices at the university. Mathematics professor Erik Palmgren says that Hallberg has exhorted him to stop spreading information about the case of the two professors that were put under pressure by the Vice-Chancellor to hand in their resignations earlier this year.

— I was given an exhortation from the Vice-Chancellor not to spread information about the case, and it concerned public documents that included critical letters from scientists around the world.

Erik Palmgren is one of the employees at the Department of Mathematics that reacted against how it came about when professors Oleg Viro and Burglind Jöricke in February were put under pressure by Vice-Chancellor Anders Hallberg to hand in their resignations. It was a way to silence critical voices, says Palmgren.

Together with three other Uppsala mathematicians Palmgren has written an article about the case, appearing on a web site for European mathematicians, in which it is stated that the freedom of expression at Swedish universities is now at stake. Employees no longer know what are the limits for admissible criticism at the Swedish universities, the Uppsala mathematicians write.

Erik Palmgren also sent information about the case to colleagues, among other things about the secret recordings that Viro and Jöricke made of the conversations with the Vice-Chancellor. For this reason, deans and the Vice-Chancellor agreed to exhort Palmgren to "change behaviour in this respect", according to an e-mail to Palmgren from Dean Ingemar Kaj, sent on April 20. This is also confirmed by Anders Hallberg.

— I have said to Ingemar Kaj that I think it is unfortunate, and I have said to all department chairmen that tape recordings is not something we should encourage to be distributed all over the world, since I think it feels incredibly foul, says Anders Hallberg.

— It is totally shocking that something like this can happen at a university in a democratic country, says Erik Palmgren.

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