

It is a lie that the Ethical committee was not unanimous when I was acquitted from accusations of having cheated

Christopher Gillberg

“I demand that the Board of the Sahlgrenska Academy now, however late, immediately take its responsibility and give me the just full restoration, to which I according to statutes of SUHF have the right”, Christopher Gillberg writes in this letter, which he on Friday April 15th sent to the Board of the Sahlgrenska Academy.

Three years ago Associate Professor Peder Rasmussen and I were, for bizarre reasons, accused of scientific fraud by two closely collaborating persons. At the time of the accusations, these persons had for two years pursued a malicious public campaign aiming to hurt me. One of the members of this collaborating duo was an earlier friend of mine and my family from my time of adolescence and the other person is a person who collaborates with the Church of Scientology. The accusations were, according to what Professor Emeritus Ingemar Kjellmer wrote in *Dagens Medicin* no. 22-32/2002, dishonorable, not for Assoc. Prof. Rasmussen or for me, but for the accusers.

One, and only one, set of statutes exists in Sweden for an investigation of accusations of scientific fraud (issued by SUHF, Sweden’s Universities and Colleges Association). There is further a reason to highlight that the faculty should be aware of cases where the accusations are made with the [only] aim to hurt. Also against such behaviors, there is a reason to intervene from the side of those in charge [the Board]. It should be observed that under special circumstances, there is a reason for legal actions for defamation against those who without reason are spreading information about a person, which is meant to expose him for the disregard of others.

It took altogether eleven months for Gothenburg University to investigate the accusations. Assoc. Prof. Rasmussen and I were acquitted by the head of the Sahlgrenska Academy [Faculty of Health Sciences] and the rector of the university according to the regulations issued by SUHF. According to the regulations the term “acquitted with no suspicion of fraud” was used. A unanimous Ethics Committee—who after a petition from the rector had been engaged by head of the academy—came to the conclusion in its verdict that suspicions of fraud could not be substantiated.

According to the statutes of SUHF, an acquittal should be given a public coverage that is needed to restore the honor of the accused.

The guidelines of SUHF: When there has been an investigation about scientific dishonesty, the result should under all circumstances actively be made public by the university. If the investigation has been the duty of the faculty, the faculty has the obligation to make public what it has concluded.

... If the investigation has concluded that there were no facts supporting scientific fraud, it is in regard to the researcher in question important that he receives the appropriate restoration which follows from the decision to acquit him. Furthermore the university has in such a case an interest to clarify that a proper investigation has been done. ... Also it is important that an investigation takes place rapidly.

When now previous members of the Ethics Committee write in *Dagens Medicin* no. 15/2005* and lie about the history of this affair, I cannot remain silent. It is suggested that the Ethics Committee was not unanimous when the committee issued its acquittal verdict. That is a lie. The only division that was reported dealt with one of the members of the Ethics Committee, my nearest boss, Birgitta Strandvik, who in one of the accusations, recommended a further independent investigation by the Swedish Research Council (where she also another time would receive the dossier onto her desk). The reason she gave was not suspicion of fraud, but that the affair had received such public awareness in the media (through the campaign of slander I mentioned earlier). The Ethics Committee, however, recommended that the case should be left without further actions (which means the same thing as an acquittal according to SUHF's definition).

I want in this connection to make clear the very grave circumstance that Birgitta Strandvik is biased, partly because she is my nearest boss, partly because for a long time there has been a well-known conflict between her and me. Strandvik however did not report this conflict of interest [i.e. bias]. That she now, two years after the acquittal, in *Dagens Medicin* continues to pursue her vendetta against me, in close cooperation with Ove Lundgren, does of course not make the case better. Her neglect to report a conflict of interest in a case of this importance is likely to be regarded as misconduct of duty. Strandvik and Lundgren report that Gillberg has not been acquitted. What happened, according to this couple, with all the others who planned and followed through this study? What happened with Bengt Hagberg, Olle Hansson, Max Frisk, K-G Stukat, Peder Rasmussen, Eva Waldenström, Bertil Svenson, Göran Horneman, Gunilla Carlström, Jörgen Groth, Carina Gillberg, Lars Hellgren, Andriette Bågenholm, Ingela Enerskog, Gunilla Campenhausen, and Birgitta Melander? Have they been acquitted of scientific misconduct?

The guidelines of SUHF: The body in charge at a university [i.e. the Board] should always follow the demands of objectivity and for the individual follow a proper procedure by law, before a final conclusion is taken in a case, and it is especially important to stress this when decisions are taken in affairs like this.

I demand that the Board of the Sahlgrenska Academy now, however late, immediately take its responsibility and give me the just full restoration, to which I according to the statutes of SUHF have the right.

Dagens Medicin, 20 April 2005, page 4

* The author refers to the letter available at <http://www.informath.org/apprise/a6400/b2021.pdf>.