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August 7, 2006

Dean Svend Hylleberg
Det Samfundsvidenskabelige Fakultet
University of Aarhus, Denmark

Dear Professor Hylleberg:

I am one of many scientists who have followed your University's investigation of Professor Nyborg. Now that your review committee has concluded that there is no evidence of fraud, the matter should be resolved definitively. Therefore, your decision to remove Professor Nyborg from all his responsibilities is surprising, especially given that he is reaching an age-based mandatory retirement in six months. Apparently, your decision was based on rather subjective views of "due diligence" which held Professor Nyborg to a seemingly impossible standard. Even your own committee commented at length on the highly technical nature of the one paper at issue. Any disciplinary action based on such subjective views would be suspect, at minimum; and the severity of University action in this case, unfortunately, suggests that Professor Nyborg is being disciplined instead for expressing controversial views.

My neuro-imaging research includes several papers on differences between men and women. I can assure you that the technical aspects of brain imaging, like those in factor analysis, are quite complicated and non-experts (even mathematicians) would have a difficult time understanding why a particular method of image analysis may be chosen over many alternative methods in a particular paper. As in virtually all science, such decisions are ultimately judgments best discussed in the scientific marketplace of ideas.

Recently, I contributed a chapter entitled: Brains, Bias, and Biology: Follow the Data-- to be published in, Why Aren't There More Women in Science? Edited by Stephen J. Ceci & Wendy Williams, American Psychological Association (November 2006). Just noting the chapter titles and their authors will demonstrate that this controversial area has attracted considerable mainstream scientific interest (<http://www.apa.org/books/4316085t.html>). Professor Nyborg's participation in such debates should not be punishable, especially on the pretext of a lack of "due diligence" in the reporting of one paper.

In more than 30 years of university service, I have had some administrative responsibility from time to time. I appreciate that you considered many factors in your decision. I hope that you will reconsider and weigh fairness and the principle of Academic Freedom more than other considerations. Allowing Professor Nyborg to retire without any punitive administrative action will only enhance the long good standing of the University of Aarhus as an institution of ideas and free inquiry.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Haier, PhD
Professor-In-Residence

