

13. Oktober 2022

To the employees of Simula,

By January 1st 2023, I will step down as the leader of Simula Research Laboratory. From this date, I have agreed with the Board of Directors that I will enter a position as a Simula Fellow.

So, why now?

Is there a fight going on that you don't know about? No, there is not. There is actually complete harmony both in the administration and in the relationship between the administration and the Board of Directors – and the owners. It is a very peaceful time – a good time to step down.

So, then, why?

The main reason is that I feel that 20 years as the leader of a growing research lab is enough. Being the top leader of an organization like Simula is actually a considerable responsibility. I have worked 365 days per year for 20 years and will probably continue to do so because I am a certified workaholic. But I will not have the same responsibility that I have had for 20 years, and I have noticed over the past few months that I actually look forward to leaving that responsibility to someone else. I decided to leave my position when I was in San Diego this summer.

Will I be able to leave the next leader alone?

Definitely. I have enough scientific problems to deal with for the rest of my life so I will support the next leader and wish the management and everyone else all the best.

How has it been to be the leader of Simula?

Quite good actually. I remember very well the time when I was a PhD student and I talked to other young researchers about everything that didn't really work very well. And I was always thinking: Why don't they fix it? And "they" were the management where I worked. Why do they allow this place to be so poorly organized? And then suddenly I got the opportunity to fix whatever I saw was wrong. In the beginning, I was very surprised when I said something and then things were fixed. Very surprised. And of course, it made me a little bit more careful in what I said. I understood that I couldn't just improvise decisions along the way, I had to find a way to do it – a systematic approach to leadership. I found that way.

So, I have enjoyed being a leader. I can tell you one minor episode that illustrates it. At a management meeting some years ago, we discussed a very delicate and very difficult matter. It was serious business, and one member of the management group exclaimed. "I'm really glad I am not the one who will make this decision" and I answered almost automatically and in a sense underscoring that I really meant it: "I am glad that I will make this decision". So, I have been at ease by being the leader. Always.

I admit that I am proud of what I have done. I really like just about everything about Simula. I got this opportunity to lead the development of a new research lab in Norway. And I grabbed it with both hands and really tried to build this place as best as my abilities allowed.

My main concern when I took the job was whether I would be able to combine the position as the top leader by also doing research on my own. That has been a constant struggle and I have managed it fairly well for three main reasons. The first reason is the superb administration at Simula that makes everything just work all the time with no need for me to interfere. I am very grateful for that. The second reason is the researchers I have worked with; they have fully respected that from time to time I have had to do other things. I am very grateful for that as well. The third reason is my own love of research and my insistence of making time for research absolutely every day of the year.

I will continue to work at Simula and I am happy to help any of you if you think that I can give you advice of any sort. I am an experienced researcher and an experienced leader and mentor, and I am always happy to help people. But don't try to involve me in conflicts with the new leadership – I am not interested.

Have I been able to do what I wanted to do?

Yes, pretty much everything. We still have several initiatives that we talk to our owners and external partners about, and I hope they will be realized at some point. But by and large, everything I wanted to do has been done.

Has it been fun?

It has been absolutely fantastic. I have never had a boring day at Simula. And if I have attended a boring meeting, I have pretended to be busy and just left. Sorry about that.

Am I grateful?

Very much. I have been given opportunities that very few get, and I am very grateful for that. I am also very grateful for the help and support I have received over the years from a very

long list of colleagues, from the Board of Directors and from our owners. I don't think I should start to mention names because the list is so long that I am more or less bound to forget someone and then I am in trouble and I am not happy about being in trouble.

Have I done anything wrong?

I will not tell you about my mistakes.

What happens now?

This is up to the Board of Directors to decide, but I have given them my clear advice. Kyrre Lekve has been appointed as temporary leader starting January 1st 2023.

Will I miss it?

Not really, - I don't think so. Because I will be occupied with other challenges. And the hardest challenges for me have always been in research.

Will you miss my leadership?

I hope so.

Best wishes,

Aslak

Professor Aslak Tveito