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16 May 2018

Renn Breitkreuz  
Chair  
Alberta Canola Producers Commission  
14560-116 Avenue NW  
Edmonton, AB T5M 3E9

D'arcy Hilgartner  
Chair  
Alberta Pulse Growers  
#101, 4721 – 47 Avenue  
Leduc, Alberta, Canada  
T9E 7J4

Kevin Bender  
Chair  
Alberta Wheat Commission  
#200, 6815-8th Street NE  
Calgary, Alberta  
T2E 7H7

Jason Lenz  
Chair  
Alberta Barley  
#200, 6815 – 8th Street NE  
Calgary, AB T2E 7H7

Dear Mr. Breitkreuz, Mr. Hilgartner, Mr. Bender, and Mr. Lenz,

Thank you for sharing concerns about the Suzuki honorary degree conferral in your open letter dated May 10, 2018. The members of Team Alberta are long-time and highly valued partners of the University of Alberta, and your feedback is important to me.


Since the list of honorary degree recipients for Spring Convocation was announced in early April, the university has heard from hundreds of Albertans, expressing both anger and support for the selection. I understand the frustration; however, David Suzuki was selected for an honorary degree through a thorough process which the university must stand by and honour.

In spite of our different perspective on the university's response to this particular controversy, I believe we share an interest in preserving the long-term well-being of the university and protecting the independence and autonomy of the learning and research environment the

University of Alberta creates and sustains for students and faculty. Every day, our faculty, students, and staff work in partnership with communities, organizations, industries, businesses, and governments. We work with groups such as yours to identify problems, develop research programs, and devise solutions. We challenge our students to take theoretical knowledge and test it against real-world situations, knowing that this will serve them well throughout their lives and their careers. The emergence of new ideas is a long-term process—one that involves years of hard work, and vigorous debate, disagreement, and controversy. It takes time to refine and test ideas. Collectively, Team Alberta has been part of this creation of new discoveries and knowledge for decades.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our research programs and our students. I know that Stan Blade has already reached out to you with an offer to meet and discuss your concerns. I extend the same invitation, to talk about our current situation and to discuss our shared future.

Yours sincerely, .



David H. Turpin, CM, LLD, FRSC  
President and Vice-Chancellor

cc The Honourable Rachel Notley, Premier of Alberta  
The Honourable Marlin Schmidt, Minister of Advanced Education  
The Honourable Oneil Carlier, Minister of Agriculture and Fore4stry  
The Honourable Shannon Philips, Minister of Environment and Parks  
Stanford Blade, Dean, Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Science