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July 18, 2013

Mr. Joseph Hickey
Executive Director
Ontario Civil Liberties Association
180 Metcalfe St, Ste 204
Ottawa, ON K2P 1P5

Dear Mr. Hickey:

I have received your letter of June 17, and apologize for the delay in responding. Mid to late June is the convocation time and wrap up of our governance year, and it takes some time to catch up with all correspondence.

I was sorry to read your letter, which in my view unfairly and inappropriately characterizes York's actions with respect to the events of March 27 last as "cynical, disproportionate and absurd" and "heavy handed suppression" of a student group.

While you have correctly referenced York's statements of commitment to civil and human rights, you have made a number of incorrect assumptions about the university, the facts that underlie the actions taken in this instance, and the consequences for the SAIA student group.

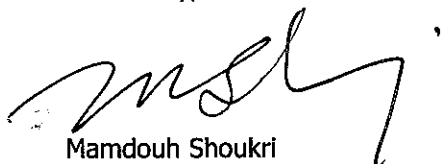
As you will know, the university is bound to enforce the policies promulgated by its governing bodies. I believe that the policies are fair and equitable, and support the basic tenets to which your organization subscribes. More to the point, I believe the policies sustain the goals of the university: to allow students to study and learn without disruption.



Maintaining a balance between competing rights is always a challenge, and engagement of the parties in open and reasoned debate is always our goal. It is only in rare instances, and usually after attempts to mediate and balance these competing rights have failed, that incidents which breach policy occur and some action is taken.

So that you will understand both the context of the university's actions in this instance, and the consequences of the suspension of SAIA's student group status, I have asked the Vice Provost Students, Dr. Janet Morrison to write to you under separate cover elaborating on these issues.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'msl', with a small dot at the end of the final stroke.

Mamdouh Shoukri
President and Vice Chancellor

:hl

Cc: Janet Morrison, Vice-Provost Students, York University