



Email: daldabba@uwo.ca

February 7, 2008

To: Public Interest Research Group (PIRG-UWO)

Dear Diala,

I am responding on behalf of Dr. Paul Davenport to the invitation from the Public Interest Research Group inviting him to participate in a panel discussion March 19. Dr. Davenport is declining your request and I would like to explain his reasons for this, and outline why he has agreed to stand as the 2008 Negev Dinner Honouree.

The Negev dinner recognizes a person who has demonstrated leadership and commitment to diversity, tolerance and defending human rights. Those are values that are rooted in the culture at Western. Since his arrival in 1994, Dr. Davenport has strived to maintain them as an essential part of Western's tradition of excellence and that is why he is proud to accept the honour.

Dr. Davenport acknowledges the objections your group has to National Jewish Fund policies that date back more than a century. Those issues have been intensely debated by Israelis in recent years. Israel is a democracy and a legal challenge to those policies remains before Israel's High Court.

While it is his hope that these land issues will be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, Dr. Davenport is consistent in not getting involved in publicly commenting on the policies of another country. In his role as President, he has travelled to other countries where tribute is paid to him and Western by governments that have policies that some Canadians find objectionable. Dr. Davenport does not get involved in debating the policies of those nations either.

Dr. Davenport strongly supports the right of members of the Public Interest Research Group to invite Dr. Ismail Zayid to express his views and even denounce Dr. Davenport's decision in a public forum. Because the Negev honour is being given to him personally, Dr. Davenport does not feel it is appropriate for a representative from Western to appear on his behalf on the panel.

Please know that Dr. Davenport and Western remain strongly committed to celebrating diversity, promoting tolerance and encouraging free speech.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'H' followed by the name 'Connell'.

Helen Connell
Associate Vice-President

HC: am