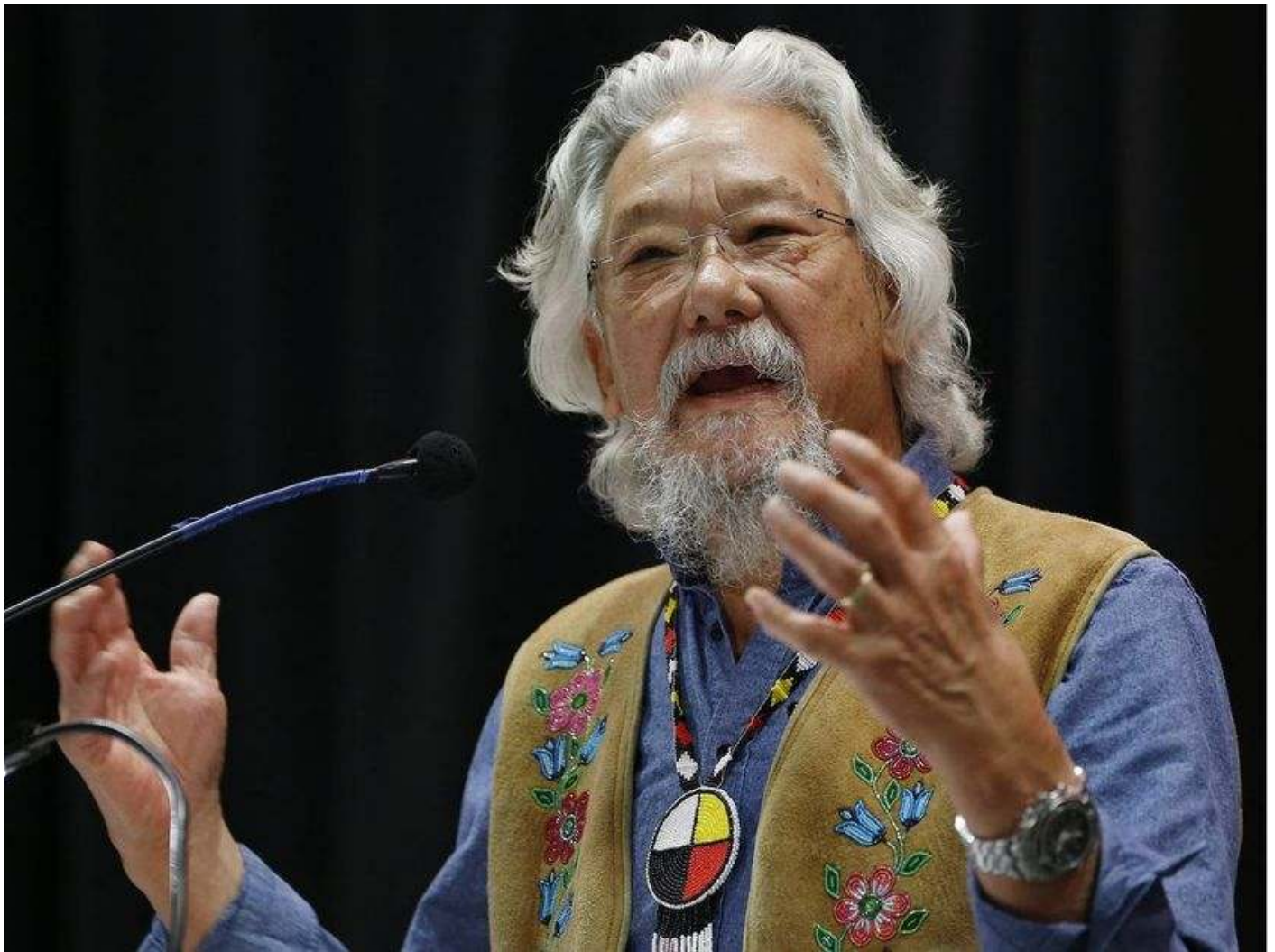


# David Turpin: Suzuki controversy shows U of A champions freedom of thought



DAVID TURPIN

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Dr. David Suzuki speaks at a Special Chiefs Assembly / Conference on Climate Change and the Environment in Winnipeg, Tuesday, November 29, 2016. File photo. JOHN WOODS / THE CANADIAN PRESS

David Suzuki is a controversial figure. A Companion of the Order of Canada, his promotion of science literacy and education has been an inspiration to many across the world and a force for major societal change.

He has also attracted strong criticism for the positions he advocates. Since the University of Alberta announced we will confer an honorary degree on Suzuki at our spring convocation, that controversy has flared.

Suzuki is a vocal critic of Alberta's energy industry. I have heard from many Albertans who are dismayed by our decision, especially now that the Trans Mountain pipeline project is under threat. I understand the importance of Alberta's energy industry and we are proud of the role U of A researchers and alumni have played in its development since the 1920s.

Many alumni, donors, and friends have asked me to reverse the decision. They have let me know that their financial gifts and partnerships with the university depend on it. Others have suggested the university's very reputation rests on our doing so.

Withdrawing Suzuki's honorary degree might seem an easy solution to the controversy. So why would the U of A continue to support such an unpopular and untimely decision?

We will stand by our decision because our reputation as a university — an institution founded on the principles of freedom of inquiry, academic integrity, and independence — depends on it.

Universities must not be afraid of controversy. Instead, we must be its champion. Stifle controversy and you also stifle the pursuit of knowledge, the generation of ideas, and the discovery of new truths. Take uncomfortable ideas, debate, and conflict out of the university and its fundamental role in society disappears.

There are few, if any, organizations in society that can tolerate the discord that comes along with freedom of inquiry. That is the university's special role. To preserve it, we must allow our people, and honour others, who pursue ideas that sometimes trouble us, shock our sense of the true and right, and even provoke our anger.

The university must give people the space and support they need to think independently without fear of external control or reprisal. Otherwise, the constraint on the imagination and the intelligence will slow the speed of change

and innovation, if not suppress it altogether. Our students will learn that conformity, rather than creativity and innovation, is the goal of learning and education.

In the early days of the U of A, president Henry Marshall Tory toured Alberta making the case for research. He was often met with scepticism about its value because people feared that it would challenge conventional wisdom. When Tory raised the possibility of developing the oilsands, for example, one community leader responded by saying: “God has been mixing those tars and sands for thousands of years and probably knows more about it than the fellows at the University.”

Tory was undeterred. He instead recruited Karl Clark, who went on to develop the first successful means of separating and refining heavy oil from the oilsands.

Alberta’s energy industry is what it is today precisely because scientists, thinkers, entrepreneurs, and educators have had the independence and ability to pursue ideas that many thought were absurd, perhaps even disrespectful.

Today, researchers continue to ask difficult questions and they teach their students how to do the same. The U of A supports research that both strengthens Alberta’s energy industry and examines the environmental evidence, holds the industry to account, and leads to innovations and policy that make it more sustainable.

The U of A is home to many such contradictory and conflicting modes of inquiry, research, and teaching. Each year, that diversity is reflected in the nomination and selection of honorary degree recipients.

We recognize that for many Albertans, Suzuki is an unpopular, untimely choice but his very nomination is an indication that for many others he is a worthy, timely choice. That contradiction and controversy is a sign that the U of A is what it should be: an independent, autonomous institution of higher learning that champions freedom of thought and academic integrity above all else.

*David H. Turpin is president and vice-chancellor of the University of Alberta.*

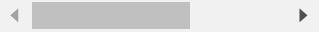
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**Norah G Fon** ·

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH BETRAYED ITS FORMER STUDENTS BY HONOURING DAVID SUZUKI !

David Suzuki has also been honoured by University of Guelph ( U of G ) ! Really !?! Suzuki was given his honorary degree in 2012 !

Officials at the university have conveniently forgotten about Suzuki's carnage in Ontario inflicted by prohibition the destroyed the professional lawn care industry. Suzuki destroyed the livelihood of the U of G's former students. He needlessly victimized decent hard-working people !

Perhaps in 2012, U of G ofials did not fully understands that David Suzuki operates a foundation that is an anti-pesticide, golf-hating, & environmental-terrorist organization that conspires to impose reckless and arbitrary prohibition against pest control products across the nation. David Suzuki Foundation has represented a direct destructive threat against former U of G students.

David Suzuki himself was honoured three years after the government of Ontario imposed its prohibition against pest control products used in the urban landscape. Because of Suzuki's interference in partisan anti-pesticide conspiracies in Ontario, thousands of decent, hard-working, and law-abiding people, including former U of G students, have lost their jobs and have suffered hardship because of disintegrating customers and plummeting revenues in the professional lawn care industry.

For more information, please explore the following links ...

√ -- Suzuki -- Betrayals By University Of Guelph -- BLOG

<http://pesticidetruths.com/.../guelph-turfgrass.../>

√ -- Suzuki -- Honoured By University Of Guelph -- REFERENCE

<http://pesticidetruths.com/.../Reference-Suzuki-2012-06...>

√ -- Suzuki -- Political Interference In Ontario -- REPORT

<http://pesticidetruths.com/.../Force-Of-Nature-David...>

<http://pesticidetruths.com/> WILLIAM H GATHERCOLE AND NORAH G

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**Renaldo Richardt** · Fort mcmurray, alberta

Well, Mr. Turpin, by all means feel free to stand by your misguided posturing and justification of handing this polarizing figure an honorary degree. Someone who condescendingly talks the talk but never walks the walk, the man should receive nothing less than our scorn - and your institution deserves the financial outcome your posturing is generating.

Of course, you wouldn't want to use the occasion to find an Albertan to recognize, perhaps someone whose research and innovative approach to oil sands extraction has set higher standards for an industry so vital to our province. An opportunity lost to counter the negative perceptions that your jetsetting eco-bully has created, far better instead to invite him, right?

Who's next on your list of recipients - Naomi Klein...?

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**Greg Gartner** · Chief cook, bottle washer and janitor at Self-Employed

Once they decide to award one to Tzeporah Berman I am burning my U of A degrees.....

Like · Reply · 18 · 4d



**Nick Dixon**

Greg Gartner

Don't burn your degrees. You earned them. Just vote with your wallet.

Like · Reply · 19 · 4d



**Tom Barrett** · University of Alberta

Greg Gartner How about David Schindler for an honorary doctorate? Surely you admire his research.

Like · Reply · 1 · 3d · Edited

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**Arnold Pye** · Owner at Self-Employed

Oh give us a break. Is the UofA going to promote conservative viewpoints as willingly as they do those of the radical left? Would they as easily invite Jordan Peterson to speak, for example? Or Ezra Levant?

There is also a big difference between inviting people with differing viewpoints to speak on campus and conferring an honorary degree upon them. I doubt that many would fret too much about Suzuki coming to speak. But doubling down on his tone deaf decision to grant Suzuki an honorary degree simply highlights Turpin's hubris.

Like · Reply · 36 · 4d · Edited



**Greg Gartner** · Chief cook, bottle washer and janitor at Self-Employed

Arnold - this hit the nail on the head. No one is denying Suzuki's right to stay whatever unscientific and hysterical nonsense which comes out of his mouth on any particular day. AS a matter of fact - I welcome it. The more hysterical the environmental zealots get, the more the average Joe starts to tune it out. And the "doubling down" comment - pure gold. The donor flight has already started - this little exercise in ass covering is not going to help.

Like · Reply · 24 · 4d



**Martin Kennedy** · North Eugene High School

It is a very, very, very alternative universe where Ezra 'lying' Levant is held as an equal to Suzuki. You may hate his comments regarding oilsands, but he's not lying. There are problems...from tailings ponds to CO2 emissions. You can rant, but you won't find an engineer up there that would deny this. Levant, on the other hand, doesn't rely on science, but on emotion, to stir up those who refuse to take a look at the entire picture.

Like · Reply · 6 · 3d



**Arnold Pye** · Owner at Self-Employed

Martin Kennedy Great, you don't like Levant... that's your right. But would you be willing to let him speak on campus? If so. great... at least you support free speech. Now. would you be

...and speaking out against it, you're already a supporter of the speaker, would you be willing to give him an honorary degree? Bet you would be first in line to protest if it was suggested. That's how many of us feel about awarding an honorary degree to one who positions himself as the sworn enemy of Alberta's economy, on top of being an unrepentant hypocrite. Get it?

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**Sonja Lonson** · Calgary, Alberta

I think awarding an honorary degree to Suzuki at this time was a poor business decision. This will likely end up being the most expensive honorary degree the U of A has bestowed upon someone.

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**Alvin Finkel** · University of Manitoba

"A poor business decision"? That point of views shows how anti-intellectual so many of the commenters are here. I do want to see the pipeline go ahead and to see the transition from fossil fuels to another economy move slowly enough that we do not create unemployment in the process. But to deny the science about climate change and fossil fuels that over 99 percent of climate scientists endorse is reckless and irresponsible. Universities are not supposed to be about "business," but about the search for truth. While David Suzuki's conclusions about how quickly we need to transition away from fos... [See More](#)

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**Sonja Lonson** · Calgary, Alberta

It was 'my opinion' that 'at this time' it was a poor business decision. I am not anti-intellectual. Neither am I emotional about these things or judgemental comments. I'm just saying it was poor timing. I'm not debating my opinion. It is what it is.

Like · Reply · 14 · 4d



**Paul Conquest** · Founder at Track Junkies

I've read elsewhere this decision was approved by the University Senate. As per the UofA website, the Senate's mission is "To inquire into any matter that might benefit the University and enhance its position in the community." To approve conferring an honorary degree upon David Suzuki at the expense of losing hundreds of thousands of dollars of annual donations neither benefits the University nor enhances its position in the community. This is a failure of epic proportions, and I think the entire Senate should be taken to task for this decision.

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**Rob Delaney**

Mr. Suzuki is far above the gutter comments some on here are making. So is anyone else. Whatever happened to intelligent debate, without the name calling, bashing, and trolling. I most certainly want to hear ALL SIDES in a debate, but to stoop low and name call, etc. only makes one subject to being dismissed as 'just another troll'. If you disagree, I'd welcome hearing your argument, in an intelligent format, absolutely. This is how peoples minds can change, bend, etc. When there is an 'open mind/open ear' debate, people will listen. Anything else is empty rhetoric.

Like · Reply · 11 · 4d



**Shawn Wylie**

Because it's coming from Conservatives who live to spread hate and discord especially if they think mentioning Ezra Levant is intelligent.

Like · Reply · 5 · 4d



**Tim Cameron** · Lakeland (Limited)

Shawn Wylie this issue is non-partisan. Expect intellectual and moral perfection from the right when the left side is able to provide it as well.

Like · Reply · 11 · 4d



**Shawn Foran** · School of Hard Knocks, The University of Life

If they invited him to speak I would not have a problem, universities all over the world invite all kinds of people to speak, to enlighten, and to challenge the student's pre conceived notions. I do not agree with giving him an honorary degree. In fact, I disagree with anyone getting an honorary degree. You want a degree? Put in the hours! Some guy flying in on a jet to scoop up this "degree" and then leaving must be hard for anyone who has put in years for the same degree. Even if his is honorary.

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**Bert Robinson** · St.Paul Regional High School, St.Paul,AB

This article illustrates that Mr. Turpin is ignorant of the true nature of David Suzuki's ideas. Turpin states that the U of A stands for freedom of expression. You would hope then that Suzuki would also support this essential value. Turpin seems unaware of the fact Suzuki does not support this value. The following is well known to anyone who cares to do a bit of research:

Last week, the Australian edition of Rolling Stone magazine reported that this Canadian national icon (referring to Suzuki) is "happy to chat" about "giving jail sentences" to people whose climate views differ from his own. Here's the full quote:

I really believe that people like the former Prime Minister of Canada [Stephen Harper] should be thrown in jail for wilful blindness. (As reported by several news services).

Mr Turpin you have deceived the readers of this newspaper and you should apologize for your ignorance of this basic fact about Suzuki.

Like · Reply · 11 · 3d



**Geoffrey A Pounder** · Rocky Mountain House, Alberta

Obvious fallacy. The basis of Suzuki's objection is not freedom of speech, but Harper's failure to take action on climate in Canada and wilful obstructionism globally.

Such failure of leadership has far-reaching environmental, economic, public health, and moral implications. Inasmuch as climate change deniers are impeding action to reduce climate change impacts and costs, they should be held liable.

Trudeau and Notley are likewise guilty of gross negligence. Unfortunately, these politicians will not have to answer for their (in)actions. But they will have to live with their conscience.

Like · Reply · 3d · Edited



**Linda Shaben** · Powell River, British Columbia





Geoffrey A Pounder Thank you for being a voice of reason in this unhinged discussion. Governments worldwide have ignored the interests of much of their constituents in order to further the economic interests of large corporations. People like David Suzuki and Naomi Klein have dedicated their lives to sounding the alarm as we all sit like frogs in the pot as the temperature slowly gets turned up by the people who place greed over the health and survival of our ecosystems.

Like · Reply · 5 · 3d



**Robert Grisch** · NAIT

Linda Shaben this is ALL business. Unless your gullible enough to swallow this tripe that Suzuki spews, Why haven't YOU read any of the REAL authorities ; the lies that are ALL based on ONE paper ! Q?:why have thousands, world wide, of scientist joined the search and found it IS a lie . The lie global "warming" , now dressed as "Change", media aaand is still IMPLICITLY warming in the media leftist/greenies eyes.  
Look out the window - WHAT do you see ..weather, climate change, everyday, for CENTURIES That's Climate Change. You actually have NO idea how manipulating the data e.g. "Hockey stick" goes to line pockets , Al Gore, architype, who springs to mind of modern PROFITEERS, Pirates who profit from the fear they propagate. NONE of their models work PERIOD. NONE can predict any event. Its ALL conjecture with fearmongering foremost in mind, like magic smoke and mirrors.

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