

Appendix 12: Canadian Association of University Teachers coverage of a June 5, 2009, discussion on SSHRC suffering consequences in the next budget

Canadian Association of University Teachers

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Issues & Campaigns

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(Ottawa, September 28, 2009) Minister Gary Goodyear's office threatened to withhold federal budget funding for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) over its decision to fund a controversial academic conference, according to an email obtained by CAUT through Access to Information.

CAUT first learned in June that Minister Goodyear had telephoned SSHRC president Chad Gaffield to insist on reconsideration of a peer-reviewed decision to fund an academic conference called "Israel/Palestine: Mapping Models of Statehood and Paths to Peace" held at York University later that month.

"At the time we considered this personal intervention by the minister so serious we called for his resignation," said CAUT executive director James Turk. "Little did we know then that the phone call was apparently accompanied by a threat from the minister's office to withhold increases in federal budget funding."

Marked "Extremely Urgent," and sent to SSHRC president Chad Gaffield on June 5, 2009, the email is written by SSHRC's communications manager Trevor Lynn and describes what he has just been told by Minister Goodyear's Chief of Staff, Phillip Welford:

"He [Welford] said that this is a serious issue and is so serious that it will make it hard for the Minister to recommend increased funding for SSHRC in the next budget."

"This email raises serious questions about how decisions are made about federal government funding for academic granting councils," said Turk. "Minister Goodyear must be called upon to explain his chief of staff's actions, and if he cannot provide an adequate explanation, Prime Minister Harper must safeguard the integrity of academic research in Canada by asking for the minister's resignation."

The original email can be viewed in PDF format [here](#).

CAUT represents over 65,000 academic staff at 121 universities and colleges across Canada.

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