

Law Dean/osgoode
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To "Dr. Mamdouh Shoukri"
cc
bcc
Subject June conference - possible solution

Mamdouh I think the organizers are not going to agree to postpone the conference. I spoke with one of them this evening and he was very hostile to the notion. I don't think it will fly with them. And we can't force them to delay it. That will only hurt us.

I've been trying to think of a way to finesse this. The source of the problem, really, is that the conference has been designated as an official York 50th event. This is being interpreted as the university somehow endorsing the views expressed at the event. But this is not the case. The views expressed at the conference will reflect a range of opinion, and the university does not necessarily endorse the views of any of the participants.

I am wondering whether we couldn't issue a disclaimer of some kind, clarifying this point. In effect we would say that this is an independently organized academic event; that the views expressed at the conference are those of the participants and will reflect a range of opinion; and that these views do not necessarily reflect those of the university.

This is a standard disclaimer that is not exceptional since the university does not generally endorse the particular opinions of faculty members. This reality seems to have been lost in the current context.

This does not suggest that we are withdrawing our sponsorship of the event as a York 50th event, just that we are clarifying that this financial support does not imply support of the substantive views and opinions expressed at the event.

If we put out such a statement, then we would just let them proceed with their event as they wish, without attempting to make any further changes.

I think we can defend this position academically from criticism from both sides.

BTW, I have to speak at Conference downtown tomorrow morning and will not be at UEC until after 10 am. We could perhaps chat then about this approach.

I think this could work.
Patrick