

April 5, 2011
Dr. Trish Fulton,
Interim Principal,
Huron University College.

Dear Principal Fulton,

I am writing to you on behalf of a local group of alumni, friends and faculty (present and former) of the University of Western Ontario to express our alarm over the disclosure that two Islamist organizations -- the Muslim Association of Canada (MAC) and the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) -- will provide most of the \$2 million in funding for a new Chair in Islamic Studies in the Faculty of Theology at Huron University College. While we commend the College for undertaking to "make a substantive contribution to understanding of Islamic thought and Muslim identity in pluralistic societies" through the establishment of this Chair, we think it is extremely ill-advised of the College to accept funding from any organization implicated in violent jihad.

Published reports state that the IIIT has agreed to match funds raised by the Muslim Association of Canada, the London Muslim Mosque and private individuals. That means that the IIIT contribution will be up to \$1 million. The IIIT is incorporated in the United States and is believed to receive most of its funds from Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries.

While leaders of the IIIT and the MAC insist that they are peaceful, moderate and democratic, these assurances cannot stand up to inquiry. Evidence to the contrary is overwhelming.

MAC states on its website that its mission is: "To establish an Islamic presence in Canada, that is balanced, constructive and integrated." For greater clarity, the statement adds: "We believe that, in the twentieth century, the approach of Imam Hassan Al-Banna best exemplifies this balanced, comprehensive understanding of Islam."

Al-Banna was the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). The MB was the creator of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas). In the existing Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas quotes Al-Banna's declamation: "Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it."

The IIIT is also an affiliate of the Muslim Brotherhood. Two examples of IIIT's involvement with terror: In 2003, Shaykh Taha Jabir al-Alwani, a co-founder and former president of the IIIT, was cited as an un-indicted co-conspirator in the trial of Sami al-Arian, an Islamist activist who served a 57-month prison sentence in the United States for conspiring to channel funds to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), a designated terrorist group in the United States and Canada. In pleading guilty, al-Arian admitted that he knew that the PIJ engaged in suicide bombings and other "horrific and deadly acts of violence" against the people of Israel.

Jamal Barzinji, founding member and current vice-President of the IIIT, has likewise been implicated in funding for terrorists. In a sworn affidavit filed in 2003, a senior special agent with the United States Customs Service testified: "I believe that Barzinji is not only closely associated with PIJ as evidenced by ties to Al-Arian..., but also with HAMAS."

Connecticut-based Hartford Seminary (HS) is deeply involved with the IIIT. Several IIIT academics are appointed to positions at the HS and a year ago it accepted a \$1-million gift from the IIIT, despite the organization's well-known radical links. Meanwhile, the Muslim studies courses and programs at the seminary are roiled in controversy. In an article published last month by the National Association of Scholars, *Islam-Correctness at Hartford Seminary*, Andrew Bieszad, a Catholic who graduated from Hartford Seminary last year with a master's degree in Islamic studies, relates his very unpleasant personal experience at HS. He concludes: "In Islamic studies at universities today it has become difficult to disagree with Islam and still maintain one's credibility, safety, or ability to study in school. Academia has refused to question Islamic teachings, and has thus become a participant in promoting Islamic orthodoxy at the expense of academic integrity. I know this because I am a product of this environment."

In 2008, Temple University refused \$1.5 million in funding from the IIIT for a chair in Islamic Studies. University President Ann Weaver Hart explained in a statement that Temple University had decided not to act on "this generous offer" by the IIIT, "until post-9/11 federal investigations of the IIIT are complete."

A few days before the new Chair in Islamic studies at HUC was announced, newspapers all over the world were reporting the enormous embarrassment of the London School of Economics as its acceptance of funds from Gadaffi's Libya became known. The scandal resulted in a student revolt and the resignation of the Director of LSE. We do not want to see similar headlines about our university some day in the future.

We urge Huron University College to follow the example of Temple University and refuse funding from both the IIIT and MAC. Otherwise, Huron University College will not only jeopardize its exemplary reputation for academic integrity, but also seriously undermine its efforts to raise funds from other individuals and organizations that would not want to provide financial backing to a university that is affiliated with Islamist groups that provide moral and/or material support to violent jihadists.

We look forward to your response to our concerns.

Sincerely,
John Palmer
Associate Professor
Department of Economics, UWO

Robert Addington, Retired public servant
Mary Lou Ambrogio, Former Federal Conservative Candidate for London Fanshawe
John K. Bracken, Resident of London, retired lawyer
Eric Cartman, Alumnus, current employee of UWO
Douglas Cassan, Alumnus
Susan Cassan, Alumna
Elizabeth Glowe, Resident of London
Albert Gretzky, Former federal candidate for London West
Andrew Lawton, Student, Huron University College
Rory Leishman, Former lecturer in Political Science, UWO
Robert Mann, Alumnus, Lecturer in Ed. UWO & High School Principal retired
Harold Merskey, Prof. emeritus, Psychiatry, UWO

Alan Perlmutter, Alumnus, UWO
Jacob Peretz, Resident of London
Ron Posno, Alumnus, educator, business consultant
Alex Rostas, Former Asst. Prof. of Medicine, UWO
Eva Ryten, Former Director of Research, Association of Canadian Medical Colleges
Ben Singer, Professor emeritus, Sociology, UWO
Bob Siskind, Alumnus, retired lawyer
Gayle Smallbridge, Resident of London
John Smallbridge, Professor emeritus, UWO
Robert W Stanley, Alumnus HUC,
Joanne Thomas, Resident of London
Gary Tomkins, Alumnus, Assoc. Prof Econ. & Dir. of Faculty Assoc., Univ. of Regina
Henry Wolkowicz, Prof. of Mathematics, Univ. of Waterloo

Copies to:

Amit Chakma, President, University of Western Ontario
The Rev. William Danaher, Dean, Faculty of Theology, HUC
Ken Andrews, Executive Director, Huron University College Foundation
(A package of documents and articles relevant to this letter will be delivered separately.)