

January 22, 2009

Raminderjit Singh Sekhon
Spokesperson, Coalition of Gurdwaras of California
Sikh Temple Riverside
7940 Mission Boulevard
Riverside, CA 92509

Dear Mr. Sekhon:

This letter responds to your letter and request dated November 7, 2008 (received November 12th) along with associated documents regarding Professor Pashaura Singh's academic scholarship, in which you assert that "...Dr. Singh has published derogatory Sikh literature under the guise of academic research...".

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Since receiving your letter, we have evaluated your allegations per University of California Riverside ("UCR") Policy & Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct (UCR Policy 529-900; copy attached). This policy directs the UCR Vice Chancellor for Research, Dr. Charles Louis, to review the allegations in his capacity as the Research Integrity Officer for UC Riverside. As such, he is charged with coordinating all procedures related to allegations of research misconduct by anyone performing research, broadly defined, under the campus' sponsorship.

UCR policy defines three increasingly formal stages of review: a. preliminary assessment; b. inquiry; and c. investigation. Each successive stage of review is initiated only if the outcome of the earlier stage(s) indicates, against exacting criteria, that a subsequent stage of review is warranted. In compliance with Policy 529-900, Vice Chancellor Louis conducted a "preliminary assessment" of the allegations. The preliminary assessment determines whether the complaint falls within the definition of research misconduct, is under the purview of this policy, and whether the allegation is sufficiently credible and specific so that potential evidence of research misconduct may be identified.

Within the context of the University's policy I have set out Dr. Louis' analysis and conclusions below. The first test is comparing the allegation against the definition of research misconduct. Research misconduct means fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism, in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.

a. Fabrication is making up data or results and recording or reporting them.

Evidence is not presented that the scriptures or texts were fabricated.

b. Falsification is manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.

Evidence is not presented that the texts were manipulated by changing or omitting data or results.

c. Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.

Evidence is not presented that the academic publications of Professor Singh were copied or plagiarized from someone else.

d. Research misconduct does not include honest error or differences of opinion.

The allegations against Professor Singh appear as differences of opinion or of interpretation of the sacred scriptures. This is presented clearly in the opening line of the allegations that Prof. Singh's work consists of "sacrilegious publications" (page 1). In other places the allegations refer to some works as the ideas of "heretics" (page 5). The allegations place Professor Singh's work in a context of "schismatic manuscripts" (page 6).

The Coalition states in its allegations that Professor Singh is wrong in his conclusions, but the Coalition asserts its own beliefs in matters must be accepted on faith, and not on scholarship.

All of the allegations relate to issues of opinion, faith, and belief; as such, none of them is actionable within the purview of the UCR policies on research misconduct.

The second test is to identify if there is evidence that suggests or substantiates research misconduct. A finding of research misconduct requires that:

a. There be a significant departure from accepted practices of the relevant research community;

There is nothing in the allegations that indicate that Professor Singh's practices departed from standard academic practice. To the contrary, the complainants allege that their scriptures cannot be judged nor evaluated by the usual standards of western academic scholarship. The complaint seeks to "denounce" these methods (page 5). This complaint thereby implies that Professor Singh is, in fact, following standard western academic procedures

of evaluation. The complainants fault Professor Singh for following standard western academic procedures.

b. The misconduct be committed intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly;

Evidence is not given of any misconduct.

c. The allegation be proven by a preponderance of the evidence. "Preponderance of the evidence" means proof by information that, compared with that opposing it, leads to the conclusion that the fact at issue is more probably true than not.

The allegation of misconduct is not proven. Disagreements are asserted, but no evidence of misconduct is given. Evidence of disagreement over interpretation of scripture is provided, but there is certainly no preponderance of evidence on any issue other than the fact that there are faith-based disagreements.

The Coalition's allegations state that there are several points on which Professor Pashaura Singh is wrong. The Coalition alleges that it so firmly believes its interpretation that it believes that the truth of its interpretation is self-evident to anyone with the knowledge to evaluate it. The Coalition also argues that anyone who does not agree with its interpretation obviously lacks the knowledge needed to evaluate its allegations. This cyclical reasoning makes it impossible to disagree with the Coalition's views without being wrong in the Coalition's perspective.

The Coalition's letter alleges research problems with Professor Singh's Ph.D dissertation, with the members of that committee, and the standards of the granting university. Since these allegations relate to matters that took place in Canada they are neither under the purview nor authority of the University of California, Riverside.

The complaint places Professor Singh's scholarship in a tradition of anti-Sikh scholars. Professor Singh, however, cannot be judged by the scholarship of other people with whom he is alleged to have similarities. The complaint when based upon Professor Singh's precise deeds, works, actions, teachings and publication in scholarship does not meet the standard required.

In conclusion, evidence is not presented that meets the criteria specified by the University as misconduct in research.

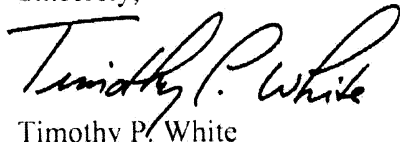
The heart of the complaint is stated on page 7 where Professor Singh is represented to have already "accepted his guilt in totality... and apologized to the Sikh community." The complainant perceives, however, that Professor Singh has "again defied the Sikh

community.” On this basis, the complaint alleges that his remarks “should not be tolerated.”

The University’s policies promote the toleration of ideas. University policies do not provide a framework for assigning guilt for “wrong” ideas, nor procedures for apologizing to people whose authority has been “defied.” The focus of this complaint is on limiting toleration of ideas, and the remedies requested are not within the authority of the University.

After careful review, I concur with Dr. Louis that the allegations asserted by the Coalition fail to fall within the definition of research misconduct established by UCR policy, and that these allegations are not sufficiently credible and specific to warrant further investigation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy P. White". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Timothy P. White
Chancellor

Attachments: University of California, Riverside Policy & Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct (UCR Policy 529-900)

Policy 529-900

Title: Policy and Procedures for Responding To Allegations of Research Misconduct

Effective: 11/1/2006

**POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO
ALLEGATIONS OF RESEARCH MISCONDUCT**

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE