

Letter from Mrs. Saranjit Kaur Saini Sent Last Year to Chancellor UC Riverside To Invite Proficient Sikh Scholars To Head Dr. Jasbir Singh Saini Endowed Chair.

June 5, 2007

Dr. France A. Cordova, Chancellor
University of California Riverside
4108 Hinderaker Hall
Riverside, CA 92521

Dear Dr. Cordova,

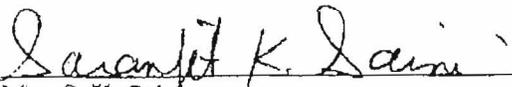
It is my intent to sincerely appreciate the ardent pursuit of the University of California's remarkable programs for teaching eastern religions and languages including Sikhism and Punjabi Studies. The ingenious idea of establishing Chairs for such purposes can only come for the halls of intellectual aficionados immersed in the sea of literary assemblage. We as philanthropists are honored to participate in such programs not only for betterment of the cause but to help the community we represent as well. It is a sincere desire of the Saini family to encourage study of Sikh religion and Punjabi studies at the universities. We believe that study of Sikh and Punjabi culture can truthfully and honestly bridge a logical gap between the peace loving Sikh community and their neighbors. In the quest to achieve the objectives of the Sikh Chair we should remain focused in imparting true meaning and principals of Sikhism to students.

Fear of failure is my greatest inspiration and a positive driving force. In the advent of recent events I have realized that some Sikh scholars may have intentionally exhibited scholarly qualities to merely fit the academic parameters for the purposes of establishing themselves as Sikh literates in the western universities. These scholars have misinterpreted and misrepresented Sikhism by using unethical academic approach which has been extensively discussed among reputable Sikh scholars. Their work has been assessed as derogatory by panel of Sikh scholars appointed by central Sikh authority. If the trend continues then the resulting confusion will not only hinder the understanding between Sikhs within the community, but it will produce undesirable Sikh religious perspective and lead to misunderstanding with their immediate fellow beings.

The influx of unethical Sikh scholars into the western universities can be academically challenged by giving opportunity to authentic Sikh scholars who have done research based on ethics and legitimate evidence from across the world. I am aware that, in June 2005, local Sikh community leaders approached and met Dr. Ellen Wartella and the university officials and made several pleas regarding this matter. Dr. Wartella subsequently notified the Sikh community leaders in a letter dated August 31st, 2005 that "University of California Riverside is offering Dr. Pashaura Singh the position of Professor of Religious Studies.... Dr. Singh was previously considered a candidate for the Dr. Jasbir Singh Saini Endowed Chair in Sikh and Punjabi Studies. It has been determined that he will not hold this Chair....". It has come to my notice that Dr. Pashaura Singh is still in contention for the position in spite of university's determination that he can not hold the Chair. To make the process congenial for the entire Sikh society the university should stand steadfast on its decision and not offer the Chair to Dr. Pashaura Singh through any stipulation. The entire Saini family and I will be greatly pleased if the University of

California will give an invitation to proficient Sikh scholars at the international level to head the Dr. Jasbir Singh Saini Endowed Chair in Sikh and Punjabi Studies at Riverside.

Sincerely


Mrs. S. K. Saini

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