

# Academic Freak Show: Univ. of Alberta Honors Anti-GMO Activist David Suzuki



By Alex Berezow, PhD — April 27, 2018



Credit: Holger Motzkau 2010/Wikipedia  
[1]

Academia is in a pathetic state.

Last week, Fresno State's Randa Jarrar put on public display why so many Americans despise the institution: After a [hateful Twitter rant](#) [2] in which she defamed the recently deceased Barbara Bush, she clogged ASU's suicide hotline by tweeting out its phone number. During the controversy, a [video surfaced](#) [3] in which Jarrar is endorsing the hijacking of airplanes (1:03), talking about throwing grenades into a house (1:16), and making a lewd sexual gesture (1:55).

None of that matters. As she bragged at the time, she will never lose her \$100,000-per-year job. She was correct. She will [neither be fired nor even reprimanded](#) [4]. No wonder that [only 55% of Americans](#) [5] think higher education is positive for the country.

## An Honorary Doctorate for a Science Denier

Now, Canadians are being treated to their own academic freak show. The University of Alberta will give an honorary doctorate degree to David Suzuki, an anti-GMO, environmental activist who has spent much of his career undermining science... from within academia.

His opinion on GMOs defies the [overwhelming scientific consensus](#) [6] that they are perfectly safe. Instead, he believes, "Any politician or scientist who tells you these products are safe is either very stupid or lying." This and many other of his transgressions have been extensively documented by the Genetic Literacy Project in a profile aptly titled, "[David Suzuki: Canada's 'science guy' turned eccentric anti-GMO, chemical scaremonger?](#)" [7] Some of the lowlights include:

- Suzuki believes that GMOs and many safe pesticides should be banned.
- Suzuki claimed, without evidence, that 90% of cancers are due to environmental causes, such as pesticides and "thousands of different molecules synthesized by chemists."
- Suzuki, [whose grandparents immigrated from Japan to Canada](#) [8], believes that Canada should stop accepting immigrants because they're bad for the environment.

Other critics are weighing in. In an [open letter](#) [9] to the University of Alberta, Vancouver-based writer Vivian Krause recalls her investigation into what she believed was scientific misconduct by the David Suzuki Foundation. University of Alberta's Dean of Engineering, Fraser Forbes, [wrote](#) [10] that he was "ashamed." [Donors are pulling money](#) [11]. Even a [celebrity](#) [12] has condemned the award.

### Academia's Middle Finger

Of course, these complaints -- as they usually do -- fall on deaf ears. David Turpin, the President and Vice Chancellor of the University of Alberta, [justified](#) [13] the honorary degree because of Suzuki's "promotion of science literacy."

That's the sort of statement that could only be made in an Orwellian universe -- where up is down, right is wrong, and the truth is just a matter of opinion. But that's the state of academia in 2018.

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#### Links

[1] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David\\_Suzuki#/media/File:Right\\_Livelihood\\_Award\\_2009-press\\_conference-6.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Suzuki#/media/File:Right_Livelihood_Award_2009-press_conference-6.jpg)

[2] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/04/18/fresno-state-professor-randa-jarrar-psychology-pure-hate-12856>

[3] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvNrlhD5Ulg>

[4] <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2018/04/24/no-punishment-fresno-state-professor-barbara-bush-tweets/548477002/>

[5] <http://www.people-press.org/2017/07/10/sharp-partisan-divisions-in-views-of-national-institutions/>

[6] <https://www.realclearscience.com/blog/2013/10/massive-review-reveals-consensus-on-gmo-safety.html>

[7] <https://geneticliteracyproject.org/glp-facts/david-suzuki-canadas-science-guy-turned-eccentric-anti-gmo-chemical-scaremonger/>

[8] <http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2009/11/23/nikkei-heritage/>

[9] [http://fairquestions.typepad.com/rethink\\_campaigns/2018/04/uofa-david-suzuki-hon-doc.html](http://fairquestions.typepad.com/rethink_campaigns/2018/04/uofa-david-suzuki-hon-doc.html)

[10] <https://www.ualberta.ca/engineering/news/2018/april/message-from-fraser-forbes>

[11] <https://www.thestar.com/edmonton/2018/04/23/law-firm-pulls-donation-from-university-of-alberta-as-suzuki-backlash-continues.html>

[12] <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-april-26-2018-1.4636157/david-suzuki-should-not-be-celebrated-in-alberta-says-former-dragons-den-star-1.4636160>

[13] <http://edmontonjournal.com/opinion/columnists/david-turpin-suzuki-controversy-shows-u-of-a-champions-freedom-of-thought>