



## Professor's firing stirs hot debate

### Bombing suspect's swift dismissal raises questions about academic freedom, Carleton hiring standards

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Was it outrageous, or the right thing to do?

The mysterious firing this week of a Carleton University professor – wanted in France for a 1980 bombing – is being hailed by some as common sense but condemned by others as a blow to academic freedom.

Graduate students at the Ottawa campus are demanding officials apologize for – and overturn – the sudden dismissal Tuesday of sociology professor Hassan Diab, whom France has called the mastermind behind the bombing of a Paris synagogue that killed four people.

Carleton's own department of sociology and anthropology is also demanding Diab be reinstated, in a letter on behalf of its 42 faculty members.

And the union representing Diab has launched a grievance against Carleton for cancelling Diab's \$4,600 summer contract, with no notice or explanation, the same day a Jewish organization criticized the university for putting an alleged terrorist in the classroom.

"If he is connected to the bombing, he should be brought to justice – but he is innocent until proven guilty so Carleton should reinstate him and apologize," said PhD student Nick Falvo, vice-president of the Graduate Students' Association. "To fire someone with no notice sets a dangerous precedent."

Others argued that hiring Diab in the first place set a dangerous precedent.

B'nai Brith vice-president Frank Dimant penned a scathing statement earlier this week condemning Carleton for hiring an accused terrorist, and yesterday welcomed his firing as "a step in the right direction."

"Really, should an individual wearing an ankle bracelet who is wanted for murder by a major democracy – France – be allowed to teach Canadian students? It's common for any teacher facing accusations to be removed from the class pending an investigation."

Carleton officials remain mum, except to say they replaced Diab to provide a "stable, productive academic environment that is conducive to learning."

Diab is a Lebanese-born Canadian citizen who taught part-time for both the University of Ottawa and Carleton, until France named him last fall as the suspected bomber, and he was arrested by Canadian authorities.

He was granted bail in March and he is awaiting a hearing as to whether Canada should release him to France, which plans to charge him with murder. He has denied any role in the bombing.

While Diab's bail conditions limit his movement – he must wear a GPS tracking bracelet – he is permitted to work, and in July, Carleton hired him to replace a sick professor for the summer course Introduction to Sociological Issues.

Sources say the university obtained legal advice that it was entitled to hire Diab while he was out on bail.

However, B'nai Brith called it "deplorable" to hire Diab, in a statement released hours before he was fired.

"The firing is obviously politically motivated," said Vladimir de Baghy, executive member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees 4600, which represents part-time faculty at Carleton.

"It's not for outside organizations to determine who can and cannot teach at the university."