



**Corporate Watch**

Principal or Vice Chancellor  
University of \_\_\_\_\_

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4<sup>th</sup> March 2003

Dear Principal,

### **Re: New report on university links with oil industry**

We are writing to draw your attention to our new report (enclosed), entitled 'Degrees of Capture'. The remit of the report was to examine the relationship between the UK higher education sector and the upstream oil industry, in the context of the threat of climate change.

Climate change is a particularly interesting problem, from a higher education perspective. On the one hand, it is academia (in fields ranging from physics to geography to economics) that has been foremost in developing our understanding of the problem, and in proposing solutions. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change consists of hundreds of scientists from 99 countries – over 70 of them from Britain.

The IPCC's most recent report found that global average temperatures are likely to rise by between 2<sup>o</sup>C and 6<sup>o</sup>C over the next century – causing widespread ecological disruption and economic damage, as well as threats to human health and the creation of many environmental refugees. The government's recent Energy White Paper estimates that each tonne of carbon emitted to the atmosphere causes £70 of damage – a unit cost that is increasing by £1/tC per year. Global emissions amount to 6 billion tonnes of carbon per year.

On the other hand, academia plays a key role in developing the technologies and skills which serve the economy. In the case of the oil industry, this latter role conflicts with the imperative to prevent climate change. 'Degrees of Capture' finds that there is an extensive link between academic research and the private interests of the oil industry, and examines how this impacts on the economics of the energy market.

We urge you, as a university leader, to ensure that your institution's work does not run counter to the public or academic interest, and in particular that it serves to reduce rather than increase society's dependence on climate-disrupting fossil fuels.

We would be very grateful to know your view on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Greg Muttitt  
PLATFORM

Andrew Simms  
New Economics Foundation

Rebecca Spencer  
Corporate Watch