



UNIVERSITY OF
STRATHCLYDE

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

24th April 2003

Mr G Muttitt
Degrees of Capture
c/o PLATFORM
7 Horselydown Lane
London SE1 2LN

Dear Mr Muttitt

Degrees of Capture: Universities, The Oil Industry and Climate Change

Thank you for your letter of 4 March and the copy of the above report. I note and share your concern that, in relation to climate change, the work of universities should not "run counter to the public or academic interest". Of course, this begs the question, 'what is the public or academic interest?'. You will appreciate that a university as large as Strathclyde encompasses many activities that impact on sustainable development in general and climate change in particular. It is therefore difficult to form a response that encompasses the wide range of prevailing viewpoints. That said, it is possible to summarise the general context that directs our activities:

- Fossil fuels will continue as a major source of energy until mid century. We must therefore strive to reduce demand, attain greater levels of energy efficiency and ensure that carbon emissions are reduced through capture and sequestration.
- The widespread deployment of renewable energy systems presents a formidable engineering challenge given the stochastic nature of the resource, its remoteness from population centres and its often low power density.

In response to this situation, the University of Strathclyde aims to maintain a balanced portfolio of activities covering the spectrum of energy supply and demand issues. In particular, we undertake research that aims to increase the performance/impact ratio of fossil-based energy systems, while improving the technical and economic viability of the renewables-based technologies that will progressively be deployed in the coming decades. As time passes, we expect this balance to shift in favour of the latter research activity.

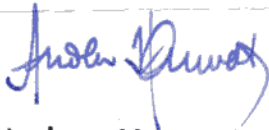
THE PLACE OF USEFUL LEARNING



Further, we believe that universities have a duty to continue to examine critically accepted viewpoints, especially when these are based on conjectures about the future that embody incomplete scientific evidence and assumptions that are subject to considerable uncertainty. In particular, we will continue to test the assumption that climate change is the central issue in sustainable development.

However, the University of Strathclyde will remain committed in its attempts to contribute to sustainable economic growth. This, we see, is the best way to benefit society at large and so adhere to our self-image as 'the place of useful learning'.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Hamnett