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For Immediate Release

<http://stopBP-Berkeley.org>

Student Campaign to Stop BP at Berkeley

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## **Trojan Horse Delivered to UC / BP Scientists at Biofuel and Energy Conference “Generous gift” turns into “oil slick” contamination at demonstration against BP deal**

Berkeley, Calif.— Students and citizens demonstrated today against the proposed \$500 million research deal, funded by giant oil company BP, that would create an Energy Bioscience Institute (EBI) to develop genetically engineered plant crops and other organisms for use as biofuels.

Protestors wearing white lab coats bearing the BP logo delivered a Trojan Horse to the conference, with a label reading “A Generous Gift To Berkeley From BP.” Upon arrival, the horse delivered an “oil spill” at the entrance to the Bancroft Hotel, where the conference was just opening. The “oil” — actually a harmless mix of molasses and water — made a sticky mess that conference-goers were forced to step around or track behind them on their shoes. The “oil slick” was clearly marked with a sign reading “Contaminated.” Between 200 and 300 students and others accompanied the horse, and chanted and held signs outside the conference.

The occasion was a conference on “Biofuels and the Search for a Fuel of the Future” at the UC Berkeley campus. This conference was officially hosted by the EBI, even though the research deal — involving BP, UC Berkeley, the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, and University of Illinois — has not been signed.

If critics of the deal have their way, it will never be signed. Many students, faculty and observers contend that the research money will contaminate one of the world's most top public universities. “The university's administration is inviting a corporation with a terrible reputation — some say a criminal reputation — to decide what the questions are regarding energy,” Professor of Anthropology Laura Nader said at a news conference before the demonstration. “There's a reason why we keep an arm's length from business and corporations,” Nader told listeners, “money can make students do anything. We should be protecting students from the seduction of big money.” The EBI would bring up to 50 industry scientists to the Berkeley campus, where they would be allowed to design curriculum, teach classes, and mentor students.

“Students come here to enroll in a public university,” said Professor Miguel Altieri of the university's College of Natural Resources, “they're going to be enrolled in a university where the research agenda is dictated by private interests.” Many students at the news conference wore T-shirts reading “I didn't enroll in UC-BP,” which were donated by John M. Simpson of the Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights ([consumerwatchdog.org](http://consumerwatchdog.org)).

Student activist Keith Brown told news conference attendees, “Our hope is that the deal is not going to happen. A deal which can look like a great deal for the University, as Robert Reich has said [Berkeley Professor of Public Policy, former labor secretary], could be a noose around our neck.” Brown is part of the Student Campaign to Stop BP at Berkeley, which opposes the deal on three grounds:

- \* The social and environmental consequences of large-scale biofuel production and genetic modification.
- \* BP's control over the research agenda and the public university.
- \* The undemocratic decision making and negotiation processes.

More information about the campaign, including resources for reporters, and past and future actions (and coverage of the recent appearance of the UC-BP controversy on the *Boston Legal* TV show), can be found at <http://stopBP-Berkeley.org>.