



bperkeley
University of California

BP Applauds UC Berkeley Administration's Secret Choice to Sell Portion of Campus to BP

(For Immediate Press Release)

Berkeley, California, April 1, 2007 – **At BP**, we are overjoyed to announce we have chosen the University of California at Berkeley to improve our public image. Our \$500 million (small change for BP) will be the largest deal with a for-profit corporation in UC Berkeley's history, and will single-handedly double corporate funding for any and all departments at the institution. It will buy us a separate research facility at UC Berkeley devoted to pursuing BP's research agenda for biofuels, petroleum production, and coal use, and will place 50 full-time BP employees onto campus, doing everything from teaching classes to mentoring students.

Furthermore, BP wishes to express its deep appreciation of the way the UC Berkeley administration decided to pursue and accept the deal. Although after UC Berkeley's \$25 million deal in 1998 with the Swiss company Novartis school administrators and researchers alike called it a catastrophe for academic freedom, we have been surprised and very pleased that those words seem to have slipped their minds. After that deal, an independent academic review concluded that the problems would have been far greater had the deal been larger, and recommended greater public transparency, broader debate early on in developing research agendas, and overall, to “avoid industry agreements which involve complete academic units”. We are pleased to confirm that such recommendations have been treated as mere noise.

We applaud the UC administration's choice to suppress broad debate over the forms alternative energy research should take, instead consulting only the researchers who would receive BP's money. The administration wisely chose to avoid any public announcements of its goals or means, and merely sent a single email to academic department heads at UC Berkeley, asking for like-minded researchers to contribute proposals. We thank the administration for avoiding the public transparency that might have prevented the university from serving our corporation.

As for democratic incorporation or oversight by independent faculty and students, BP truly appreciates the straight-shooting attitudes of the administration, epitomized by Vice Chancellor Beth Burnside's statement that “democratic processes” were unacceptable because there could never be agreement on the issue. We appreciate her continuing insistence that any community input on the deal be relegated to a non-binding “contributing” role to the administration's negotiation of the agreement, and that all participants be banned from disclosure until the deal is signed. For his part, Chancellor Robert Birgeneau has said that this deal is part of “reinventing the public university”. We at BP could not agree more, but we might have phrased it “selling off the public university”. We recognize the administration's eyes-on-the-money approach as the hallmark of a great public university, a great aid to industry, and a great friend to BP.

See www.stopbp-berkeley.org for more details.