

c/o Louise Broadbent  
Environment and Ethics Officer  
UCL Union  
25 Gordon St  
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Dear Professor Grant,

We are writing to you on behalf of the UCL People & Planet group and UCL Union regarding the University and its environmental performance. Today, Britain's universities have a huge environmental impact that could be massively reduced. Several UK universities have already shown that high environmental performance is possible - cutting greenhouse gas emissions through reducing energy use; reducing water use; increasing recycling rates and reducing landfilled waste; purchasing environmentally friendly products and services; eliminating unnecessary consumption; promoting environmentally friendly travel options to university sites; and working towards improving local biodiversity.

Unfortunately, UCL appears to be taking very few, if any, steps to mitigate its considerable environmental impact. Whilst it is true to say that there are sporadic recycling and efficiency initiatives underway in various departments and halls of residence, these are disparate and uncoordinated initiatives, lacking the coherence to deliver true environmental benefits. We also recognise that UCL runs a commendable Combined Heat and Power scheme that powers the Gower Street campus and certain halls of residence, but remain concerned about the lack of evidence of the following:

- full-time staff dedicated to environmental management;
- a comprehensive impact assessment of UCL's environmental performance;
- a publicly available, written environmental policy;
- active, public support of senior management for environmental management;
- a green purchasing policy;
- targets for reducing energy and water use; and
- targets for increasing recycling and/or reducing waste for landfill.

This compares unfavourably to most other universities nationwide and in London, most of which have recognised that environmental performance is of key importance, not only as an end in itself but also increasingly in marketing terms as regards prospective students and in reputational terms as regards external organisations. Universities in London that have taken steps towards improving their environmental performance in recent years include: Imperial College, King's College, The London School of Economics, London Metropolitan University, Middlesex University, Roehampton, Royal Holloway and the School of Oriental and African Studies. We have enclosed some details of the measures that they have implemented on a separate sheet.

It is a particular shame that, despite references in the responses to your 2004 Green Paper to a need for UCL to promote a "sense of global citizenship, social justice and environmental responsibility" and the fact that many of the key overarching research questions identified by the departments in their responses were environment-related<sup>1</sup>, the resultant White Paper contained absolutely no mention of, let alone commitments on, environmental issues (aside from a brief mention of cycle-parking facilities). We are also disappointed to note that the response submitted by the Geography Department to the HEFCE Consultation Paper entitled "Sustainable Development in Higher Education" was not to our knowledge followed up by an official response from Senior Management.

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<sup>1</sup> These included: sustainable development, climate change, supply and management of fresh water, conservation and development, urban governance, etc

On the subject of UCL's research priorities, we believe that there is a fundamental contradiction between UCL's status as one of the pre-eminent universities nationally (and even internationally) for research into environmental issues<sup>2</sup> and its position as one of London's poorest-performing universities from an environmental perspective. Indeed, as an environmental lawyer yourself, we are sure that the policies advocated in the first paragraph above are second nature to you in your academic work. We acknowledge also that you have on occasion raised your concerns regarding UCL's poor environmental performance. What we would like to see now, however, is theory being translated into concrete local action.

The enclosed report 'Going Green' sets out the key steps that all universities need to take to achieve high environmental performance. It includes case studies of good practice, and we believe that our University should follow their lead. The four factors policy initiatives referred to (and set out below) are common to almost all the institutions that are leading environmental performance within the UK Higher Education sector.

Specifically, we believe that UCL needs to adopt the following four policy initiatives if it is to legitimately claim that it is committed to environmental responsibility:

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of all the University's environmental impacts - so that current impacts are measured, potential improvements identified, and performance monitored.
2. Produce a publicly available environmental policy - to provide a formal demonstration of intent regarding environmental performance improvement, and against which to compare practice.
3. Employ full-time staff dedicated to environmental management - developing objectives, setting priorities and significant, time-bound targets to fulfil them.
4. Finally we believe that your support for high environmental standards is particularly important. Experience shows that no programme to green the University will work without the active, public support of senior management.

Far from increasing UCL's costs, most of the measures outlined in Going Green report would, even in the short-to-medium term, save the university money. Indeed, as one of the initial steps in the process towards a more sustainable university, we have ascertained that the Carbon Trust will carry out a free audit of UCL's energy consumption. They can provide advice on how to make energy savings of up to 30% by implementing low- or no-cost measures that more than pay for themselves very rapidly, and result in large long-term net savings.

We will be launching a campaign in the coming weeks designed to highlight the University's environmental record and to garner further student and faculty support for sustained and meaningful action. In the meantime, we look forward to hearing from you and would of course be more than happy to meet with you to discuss any of the matters referred to above,

On behalf of UCL People & Planet

On behalf of UCL Union

Louise Broadbent

Robert Triggs

[Name]

Cc: Director, Estates and Facilities Division, UCL

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, UCL Environment Institute, Environmental Change Research Centre, Centre for Law and the Environment, Faculty for the Built Environment, London Environment Online, Environment and Society Research Unit, Centre for Sustainable Heritage.

Head of Facilities Services, UCL,  
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