

To: Chancellor Larive

Cc: Vice Chancellor Reiskin, Associate Vice Chancellor Cobb, Interim Vice Chancellor Macmillan, and SPCC Chairs Erickson and Jinnah

Dear Cindy and Team,

First, thank you so much for taking the time to meet with Climate Coalition representatives on Feb 16. Particular thanks for sending us information about possible funding sources for next year's Student Climate Conference.

This letter is our response to your response to [our petition](#) (the key "asks" of which we reproduce, slightly condensed from the original, below). We hope that this information will prove useful as you weigh options for UCSC's future in this historic time. We look forward to your response and to meeting with you again in the near future.

1. **BAN fossil fuel funding** of faculty research and university projects. Partnering with the fossil fuel industry in any capacity represents an inherent conflict of interest with UCSC's core academic and social values, compromising institutional integrity, academic freedom, and our ability to respond effectively to the climate crisis.

Summary of Administration's discussion points: Banning is too extreme. Fossil fuel companies have done useful work on climate mitigation and renewable energy. Transparency as to research funding is what's needed, per VC Macmillan's email; we can confirm that there is some direct funding of faculty research by the fossil fuel industry.

CliCo's response: More transparency is indeed a step in the right direction. But fossil fuel funding sources must be trackable and available in a publicly-accessible database, since searching through publications for individual researchers' funding sources isn't feasible and doesn't capture fossil fuel funds that result in unpublished work. At the very least, UCSC should institute a policy of transparency and create a conflict of interest oversight procedure for researchers accepting fossil fuel funding that is in line with the [Regents' policy governing tobacco funds](#).

However, an outright prohibition would be more in line with UCSC's own stated mission, goals, and reputation as a university that prioritizes the environment and the fight against climate change...which largely equates to a fight against fossil fuel hegemony. Accepting ANY fossil fuel funding helps these companies continue their notorious practices of greenwashing¹ and climate

¹ 60% of fossil fuel companies' advertising mentions green projects, though these amount to just 12% of their portfolios, per the research of independent British climate and energy think tank [InfluenceMap](#).

action obstructionism.²

We don't dispute that fossil fuel companies have done some good, just as [tobacco companies have usefully researched lung cancer treatment](#). But this small amount of good work – the fact that renewables R&D constitutes just [12% of Big Oil's R&D](#), or that these companies are the perpetrators of the damage they now devote a tiny fraction of their [vast profits](#) to mitigating – shouldn't provide cover for UCSC to cooperate with them in any way. **Big Oil's continued obstruction of climate action involves both greenwashing that allows them to continue with business as usual and political pressure**, through [lobbying](#) and [campaign financing](#), of the very politicians who refuse to act, even [pressuring the IPCC itself](#) – the international organization that some of UCSC's own scientists proudly serve. Even at their best, corporate promises – particularly on climate action – are notoriously [difficult to verify](#). **To safeguard its image and values, UCSC must not allow itself to be part of this greenwashing.**

More importantly for UCSC's reputation, the danger of fossil fuel funding corrupting or at least tainting research is high. The damage done to ag powerhouse UCD when the [Clear Center scandal](#) broke was huge. Now the same thing is happening at [UCSD](#): the Regents and San Diego County are being sued for failing to disclose that a researcher whose findings supported a utility company had financial ties to that company. The [Climate Social Science Network](#) of US academics has an entire working group devoted to industry influence on academic research.³

We highly recommend [Paul Thacker's \(2022\) BMJ overview](#) of how (like the tobacco industry before it) fossil fuel companies are pouring money (for professorships, research, and academic centers) into U.S. higher education, thereby [amplifying industry perspectives and skewing research priorities](#). Worse, the fossil fuel industry can then [use that research](#) for more greenwashing, for climate inaction, and even to [shift public policy](#).

More quantitatively, in peer-reviewed research, [Almond, Du, & Papp \(2022; overview here\)](#) have exposed how fossil-fuel-funded academic research treats renewable energies less positively, and natural gas more positively, than publicly-funded research. **UCSC's reputation as a climate leader would be better served through the model of [Princeton University](#), which recently completely dissociated from any financial ties with fossil fuel companies.**⁴

2. DISSOCIATE UCSC's finances from any commercial banks who lend to or underwrite the debt of the fossil fuel industry and their allies – financing that

² See e.g. [Supran and Oreskes \(2021\)](#) or, more generally, [Oreskes and Conway \(2010\)](#); most recently, in *The Climate Crisis* (2022, available at [library.ucsc.edu](#)), UCSD Professor Adam Aron tracks these industry influences, motivations, and obstructions.

³ The sad case of [UCB Biology Professor Tyrone Hayes](#), and the response of his industry partner Novartis when his research yielded results the company didn't like, is just one example.

⁴ FossilFreeResearch.com lists other schools, particularly in the UK, that either have pledged to dissociate or are moving in this direction.

is not only [accelerating the climate crisis but deepening environmental inequities](#) – contrary to UCSC's support for climate justice.

Summary of Administration's discussion points: Big banks provide services small banks cannot. And by remaining part of a big bank, it's possible to "work from within" for change. Per VC Reiskin's email, our banking is centrally determined by UC; the only local control is over the kiosk leases on campus.

CliCo's Response: We had not realized that there was no local control at all over UCSC banking. Clearly, a systemwide campaign will be necessary to convince UCOP and the Regents that pressure from within doesn't work; we hope that, understanding the complicity of dirty banking with the fossil fuel industry and the extremely limited success of investor pressure,⁵ you will support such an effort.

However, on the retail end, [UC Davis](#) and [UC San Diego](#) both now partner with University Credit Union for banking services and some campus projects. Could UCSC do the same? What is required for UCSC to end the Wells and BofA kiosk leases and make a credit union (that helps local communities) the institution's retail partner?

3. SYSTEMATICALLY DEEPEN UCSC'S CLIMATE EDUCATION via

- a. a "climate basics" super GE⁶ enabling every undergrad to learn about the greatest crisis our world has ever faced, and
- b. several options for "deeper" exposure to climate change through
 - i. formal climate tracks for majors in as many depts as appropriate
 - ii. an interdisciplinary major⁷
 - iii. an interdisciplinary minor

Summary of Administration's discussion points: Professor Jinnah noted that the SPCC education working group likes the idea of a universal GE for every undergraduate but sounded less certain about supporting interdisciplinary major/minor and climate "tracks" in departments, where relevant.

CliCo's Response: A climate GE that would reach all students is critical for preparing students for the future they'll face. Models could be drawn from the climate GEs that already exist at UCSD and UCSB, as well as the interdisciplinary, solutions-oriented UC-wide course [Bending the Curve](#).

⁵ A [2022 NYT article](#) notes that despite investor pressure, the dirty banks are essentially continuing business as usual.

⁶ That is, a GE intended to reach all students, much like the current C1/C2 requirements, rather than part of a menu of options like the CC, ER, IM, MF, SR etc GEs.

⁷ Perhaps modeled on the proposed GE curriculum above, but many courses rather than one.

But we would also like to reiterate our support for a **"breadth AND depth" approach** to climate education. Interdisciplinarity is key: in terms of comprehending the problem, understanding energy systems, economics, earth systems, eco-systems, politics, health, psychology, and cultures all play a role: **the climate crisis is not a science crisis but a crisis with all these other systems.**

Similarly, in terms of a solution, not just the Physical and Biological Sciences but the Humanities, the Arts, Engineering, and of course the Social Sciences have a role to play. If UCSC shows its students – undergrad and grad alike – the usefulness of each field, students will face the future with renewed hope, and many will find ways to leverage their own fields, to participate in mitigating further losses, and to be part of building the sustainable world – and the sustainable university – of the future. UCR, UCSD, UCB, and UCD have interdisciplinary majors/minors/tracks that might be models for us.

4. **IMPROVE ON-CAMPUS TRANSPORTATION** (and decrease on-campus transportation emissions):

- a. Acquire for the university fleet from 2024 forward ONLY zero-emission and hybrid vehicles; correspondingly, expand the university's EV charging infrastructure.⁸
- b. Strengthen the functionality of loop buses by
 - i. Establishing a real time, accessible, user- and mobile-phone friendly loop bus tracking system,
 - ii. Increasing loop bus service, especially around class times, and
 - iii. Establishing *predictable* headways.
- c. Encourage bicycling by
 - i. Creating *protected* bike lanes⁹ on Coolidge, Hagar, and Empire Grade
 - ii. Building bike infrastructure (e.g., signage, traffic calming, sharrows)
 - iii. Running the bike shuttle all day, and
 - iv. Partnering with the City of Santa Cruz to establish a more unified, less-segmented bike path network.
- d. Deeply discount carpool permits.

Summary of Administration's discussion points:

The Decarbonization and Electrification Task Force is already looking at electrifying our vehicle fleet. There is an app in development for loop bus tracking in partnership with SC Metro. There's not enough funding to increase bus frequency. E-bike rentals are coming to Santa Cruz city and campus, hopefully by fall. Due to timing constraints we did not discuss improving biking

⁸ [UCSD](#), in partnership with the US Department of Transportation, has such plans in the works.

⁹ Studies have already been done that show the feasibility of many of these projects: see the [UCSC Transportation and Environment Lab](#).

infrastructure on campus, increasing bike shuttle frequency, or deeper discounts on carpool permits.

CliCo's Response:

- a. On fleet electrification: we know this will take time since UCSC is already heavily invested in ICE vehicles. But since President Drake's 2022 [Presidential Priorities](#) on climate change already ask that campuses "establish more aggressive transportation goals (e.g., discontinuing the purchase of new fossil fuel vehicles by 2025)," can we ask for a commitment that UCSC will meet this presidential priority – and ideally exceed it, by signing no new contracts for ICE vehicle delivery effective immediately? Our sister campuses UCI and UCD provide good models for bus electrification, particularly.¹⁰
- b. Regarding buses generally, we are happy to hear that there already is an app in development. Importantly, however, more frequent buses (including to the Coastal Campus) are a core demand that affects students on a daily basis: students' lost time waiting for buses that, being full, do not stop equates to lost learning time and lost classroom time. We understand that there are funding constraints, but how can we work together to make this happen? Have any quantitative studies been done on bus system capacity versus student need? If not, could such a study be commissioned? How can we lobby for more funding for TAPS?
- c. We appreciate the university's work with community transportation partners – especially since UCSC students, faculty, and staff are members of these same communities. In connection with this, we want to draw attention to an upcoming Protected Bike Lane Project that the City of Santa Cruz Transportation and Public Works commission is proposing, that would create a protected biking corridor along Bay street from the base of campus to West cliff (see item 6 on their [recent agenda](#)).

But protected bike lanes within the City will be of little use if bike lanes on campus remain largely unprotected. Students need better bike infrastructure right now. Providing such protection would not be expensive, but the payoffs would be significant: multiple

¹⁰ [UCI](#) is the first campus in the nation with an all-electric bus fleet, and [UCD](#) has recently put into service a number of new electric buses. UCB's [Haas Energy Institute](#) has a useful overview of the social as well as environmental benefits of electric buses. And the California Air Resources Board recently proposed [transitioning the entire California urban bus fleet to ZE by 2030](#); while the final [regulation adopted](#) bumped to 2040 the date for complete transition to zero-emission buses, all urban fleets are expected to have rollout plans in place this year. UCSC should make similar plans, with a 2030 zero on-campus Scope 3 emissions goal.

studies conclude that protected bike lanes are safer¹¹, and if built, ridership will increase.¹²

Also, are more frequent bike shuttles possible? Since the bike shuttle already exists, this seems like a very easy fix.

- d. Due to time constraints, we didn't get to discuss discounted carpool permits, which would provide real incentives to students/faculty/staff to decrease Scope 3 emissions – not currently (to our knowledge) being much addressed in current strategic planning. What are the administration's plans to address Scope 3 (transportation) emissions? Could discounted carpool permits be part of those plans?

¹¹ In a [study](#) conducted by Portland State University, researchers found that 80% residents in several major U.S. cities felt that biking was safer because of protected bike lanes. Additionally, a NYC DOT [study](#) found that installing a protected bike lane on 9th Ave led to a 58% reduction in injuries to all street users.

¹² A NYC DOT [study](#) found that weekday cycling nearly tripled once protected bike lanes were installed on Prospect Park West.