

23 December, 2005.

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Dear Sir.

This is no time for an end to teaching at Wye Campus

When Wye College was taken over by Imperial College in 2000, much progress was being made in reorienting the teaching programme away from traditional agricultural courses towards business management and environmental policy, and widening the student base through the Distance Learning Programme. Through the D.L.P. about a thousand students are studying for M.Sc. degrees, Postgraduate diplomas and short course certificates. This policy has continued to be very successful. About 200 undergraduate students started the Business studies degree course in October. About 110 new postgraduates have come forward in the last few weeks for Distance Learning qualifications, many for a brand new M.Sc. in Sustainable Development, which builds on Wye's long and fruitful overseas connections. Until 2004-5 it was possible to take similar postgraduate courses in residence at Wye. This has now ended, and there is an intention of transferring the Business Studies course to the University of Kent, thus eliminating all resident students from Wye. Presumably this is to ensure that the whole Wye site can be redeveloped with new buildings for technological research,

It is widely recognised that related research only flourishes in close geographical proximity to the parent teaching institution. 'Science Parks' on the outskirts of Cambridge have been moderately successful, remote ones, such as that promoted by Trinity College, Cambridge on the outskirts of Ashford, tend to become little different from other commercial and industrial estates. A genuine opportunity exists for a new and groundbreaking Institute for Sustainable Development on the Wye Campus of Imperial College. It is vital that this should include a teaching programme with appropriate staff to give academic backbone to its research and development activities. Without this link the only rationale for the proposed centre is that Imperial College happen to own a site which is in most respects totally unsuitable for it.

Yours sincerely,

DR. PAUL BURNHAM
Wye.