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**Upstream of Upstream: Preparing Professionals for the Petroleum Industry**

The key challenge to maintaining a robust petroleum industry is ensuring adequate supply of well-trained professionals now and in the future. In order to meet the challenge it is imperative for all stake holders (academia, industry and government) to realize that an educational/professional continuum exists: the upstream part of E&P is the University! Education of students in petroleum disciplines is more critical than ever, as the work force in the oil and gas industry is aging, and employee numbers are dwindling through attrition. There are not enough students in the "pipeline" to meet, what many companies are realising, are the opportunities being provided by rapidly developing technologies in the fields of Petroleum Geoscience and Engineering. What's more, these students must be able to "hit the ground running". There is also growing demand for continuing education because technology in the field of petroleum is evolving so rapidly that most industry workers are simply not able to keep abreast of the majority of new advances. Major companies used to cover their training needs with in-house expertise, and smaller companies would traditionally recruit individuals "properly" trained by the majors. As this is generally no longer true, practical, industry-focussed training must be an important function of Universities. Universities must address this need by providing courses and degrees that are relevant and taught by dynamic and enthusiastic scientists in touch with industry problems today. Unfortunately, as the need for increased training at University level increases, most departments are finding their funding from traditional sources diminishing markedly. As support for education from traditional sources decreases, companies must apply the same carefully thought out strategic business decisions regarding their future human reserves as is done for their hydrocarbon reserves. Government, industry and academia must form viable partnerships engaging, involving and investing in one another.