

March 14, 2005

The Regents of the University of California

Dear Regents:

On behalf of the American Cancer Society, California Division, we are writing to urge you to prevent the Academic Council from adopting the resolution that will prohibit academic units from adopting their own policies that will deny research funding based on the source of the funds. The resolution would have the effect of preventing the adoption of policies or derailing policies already existing, such as in UC Berkeley's School of Public Health, which refuse research funding from tobacco companies.

There is a long history of tobacco companies using research funding as a tool to discredit the research of independent scientists and to influence the direction of tobacco-related research. Tobacco companies are also known to seek relationships with prestigious academic institutions to gain public credibility and redeem their image in order to influence policymakers, and avoid government regulations and jury verdicts. Tobacco companies would dearly covet an affiliation with the University of California. It would provide that mask of respectability they so desire in order to conceal their primary aim, which is to sell their deadly products.

For years, the American Cancer Society has urged private and public sector organizations to turn away tobacco funding and to cease their dependency on tobacco industry donations and sponsorships. We have called on institutional investors to divest all holdings in tobacco companies. We are pleased to note that the tobacco industry is excluded from UC's investments. We work with other organizations, tobacco control advocates, and the UC's Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program in an effort to counter the tobacco industry's predatory marketing and promotional efforts and reduce the numbers of cancers and deaths these lethal products cause.

We applaud several of the UC academic schools that have passed policies prohibiting the acceptance or solicitation of tobacco industry research funding. Forcing the repeal and prohibiting the future adoption of similar tobacco industry research funding policies would abet the tobacco industry and be detrimental to public health.

Do not betray the trust of many who support the University of California. Stop the Academic Council from adopting the resolution on March 30.

Sincerely,

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