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Joel Michaelsen, Chair
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April 10, 2007

John Oakley, Chair
Academic Council

RE: RE-89 – Regents’ Proposed Policy Restricting Funding from the Tobacco Industry

Dear John:

The Santa Barbara Division has completed its review of RE-89. The proposed policy was reviewed by the faculty executive committees of all the colleges and schools, several central councils, and the Executive Council. The clear and unanimous response was to oppose RE-89.

Any restriction of a source of funding from any area, whether private or government, was seen as an affront to academic freedom, and a dangerous form of micromanagement that may set a precedent for further restrictions—not only on funding sources, but also on research topics. There may be sources of funds that may objectionable to some faculty, administrators and even Regents, and acceptable to others. Those faculty, administrators, and even Regents, should not be in a position to determine which sources are acceptable and which are not on political, or even ethical grounds. The burden of determining acceptability of funding, assuming all existing University criteria are met, must remain with the faculty researcher.

Government, professional, and University policies, regulations and procedures are in place to address breaches of research integrity. These appear to be functioning effectively, and the University should continue to rely on them rather than setting a potentially dangerous precedent by banning funding from specific sources.

Sincerely,

Joel Michaelsen
Divisional Chair