

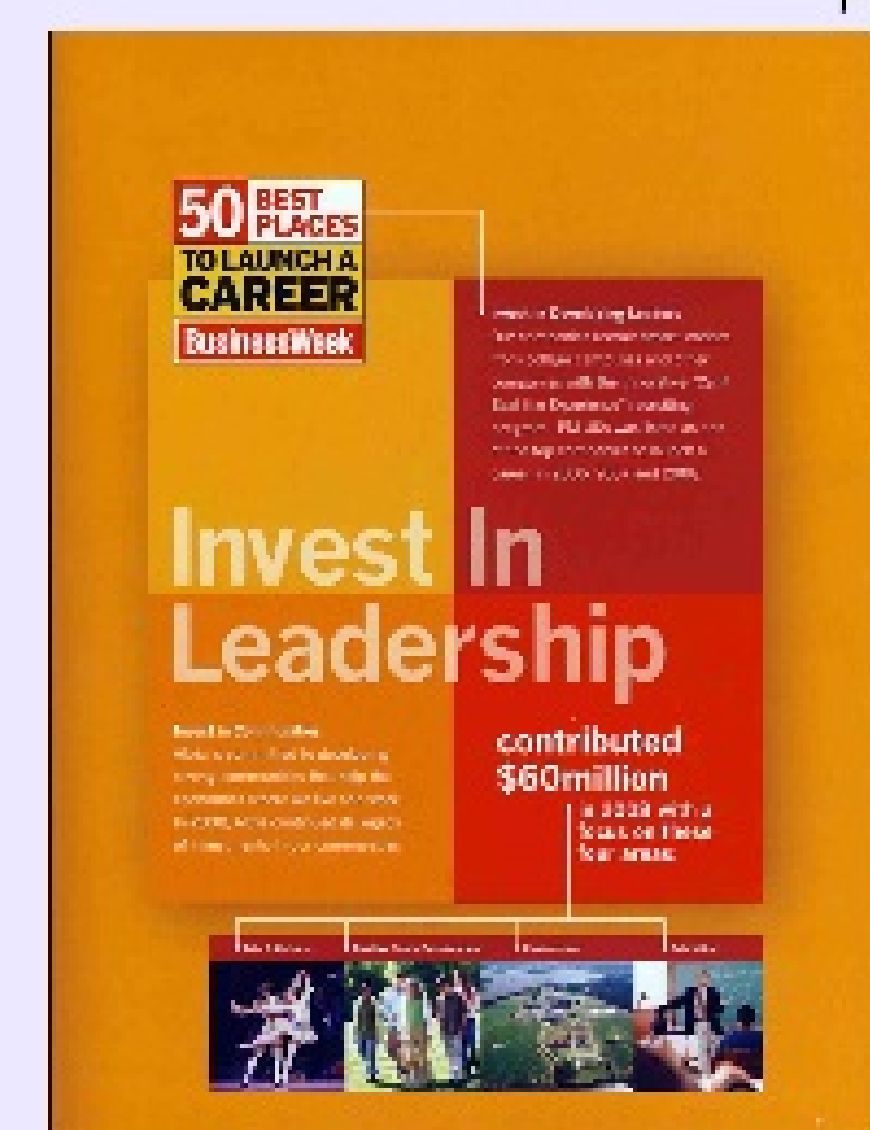
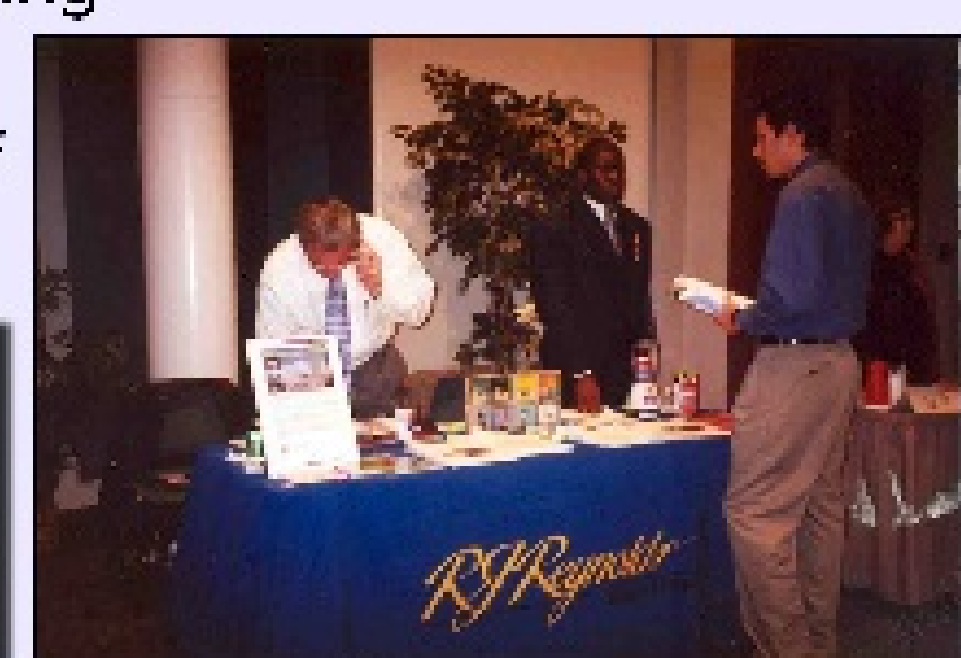
An Insidious Obstacle to Tobacco Control

PROGRESS ON SMOKE-FREE POLICIES, BUT SMOKING PREVALENCE STILL A PROBLEM

Although more than 1,750 colleges and universities in the United States alone have become smoke free campuses over the past 20 years (including nearly 1,500 that claim to have adopted entirely tobacco-free policies), progress in reducing cigarette, smokeless tobacco, and hookah use among U.S. university students has slowed. Prevalence may be as high as 25%. Globally, reported smoking prevalence among university students ranges from 14% in Brazil to 60% in Bangladesh. A little-studied obstacle to reducing tobacco use among university students is the ongoing financial relationships between the tobacco industry and academia. Coordinated strategies to diminish the influence of the tobacco industry in academia are lagging and require greater attention by tobacco control proponents.

PARTICIPATION IN CAMPUS JOB FAIRS

Little attention has been paid by health organizations to the ongoing involvement by cigarette manufacturers Altria (Philip Morris USA, makers of the number one brand Marlboro, and Reynolds American, maker of Newport, Camel, and Winston) in career centers at major universities and at job fairs held on their campuses twice each year. These include the University of Virginia, the University of North Carolina, the University of Georgia, the University of Alabama, the University of Texas, the University of Arizona, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Kansas, the University of Washington, and dozens of others. At these job fairs, recruiters tout the companies' integrity and social responsibility and insist that cigarettes are marketed only to adults who already smoke. The companies seek public relations and marketing majors, athletes, debate team members, women, and minorities to become territory sales managers, which consists of restocking tobacco products in convenience stores, drug stores, and supermarkets in a defined geographic area. These college graduates thus continue the cycle of promoting cigarettes to the poorest and the least educated.



RESEARCH GRANTS

Tobacco company donates \$25 million to university

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RESEARCH GRANTS

In 1982, the University of Sydney became the first university to reject tobacco industry funding. Few universities have followed the leader. Indeed, the University of California Faculty Senate and Board of Regents passed a policy that prohibits barring researchers from accepting tobacco money. In 1992, the American Medical Association rejected a policy statement urging medical schools to reject tobacco industry research grants. Duke University, Virginia Commonwealth University, the University of California at Los Angeles, and the University of Virginia are among the dozens of universities that have accepted tens of millions of dollars in tobacco industry research grants in recent years. The industry has long used selected findings from the scientific literature and legislative testimony. Some researchers have accepted funds from both the tobacco companies and the federal government.



INVESTMENT IN TOBACCO STOCKS

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In 1984, the U.S. physicians' activist group Doctors Ought to Care (DOC) created Project S.N.U.F.F. (Stop Noxious University Funding Forever) to influence universities with medical schools to divest tobacco stocks from their endowments. The University of Illinois and a handful of other institutions agreed. Most others did not. The president of Rice University, holder of the most tobacco industry stock by any university in the 1990s, defended its investment by claiming that the lucrative dividends helped keep down tuition costs.

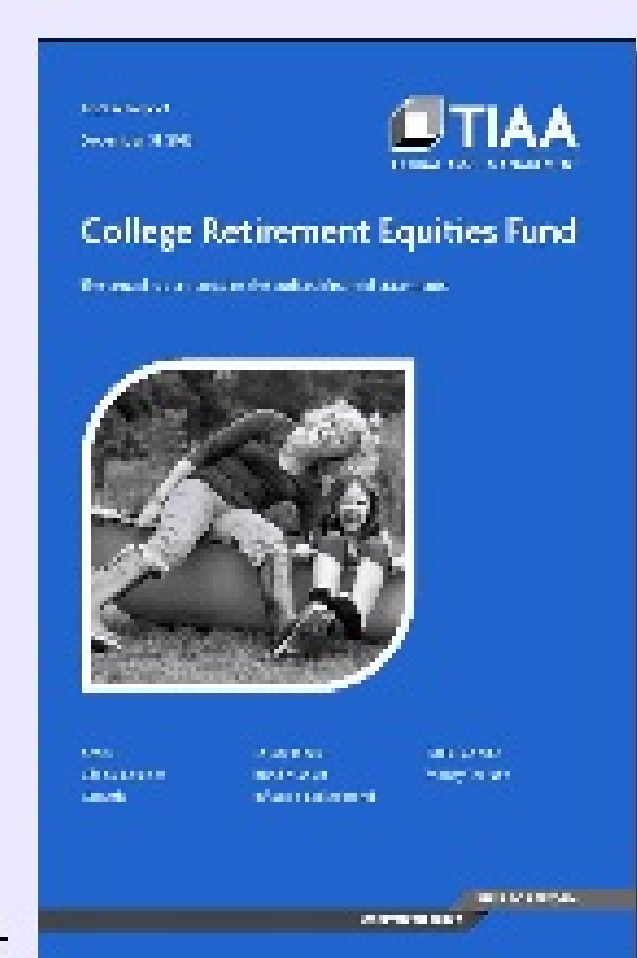
Other universities with prominent medical schools that divested their tobacco stocks include Johns Hopkins University (1991), Stanford University (1998), University of Washington (2000), and University of California (2001). Not all divestment efforts were successful, however. The University of Texas (UT), with its world-famous reputation for the treatment of cancer at its MD Anderson Cancer Center, invested almost \$50 million in tobacco stocks. In 1991, a single student, aided by DOC, succeeded in persuading half of the Board of Regents to vote to divest tobacco stocks, but the chairman broke a 4-4 tie by voting to retain the investment. As a consolation, the board passed a resolution banning smoking on the entire campus.

In 1986, the author, along with faculty members, students and investment managers from many U.S. colleges and universities, attended a meeting on ethical investing. They discussed the ethics of holding shares in companies that produced items used in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or with ties to apartheid South Africa. When the author challenged the participants to urge their institutions to divest their tobacco stocks because of the health toll caused by smoking, audience members voiced concerns about abrogating freedom of choice and the right to smoke. Only when the author pointed out that Philip Morris held a major stake in the South African cigarette company Rothmans did the group acknowledge that divesting Philip Morris stock might merit consideration.

Like the vast majority of universities, US academia's largest retirement provider of financial services, TIAA (Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association), hasn't sold its tobacco stocks, which are simply too lucrative. This means that thousands of physicians and other public health professionals who teach in medical schools—including the author—also benefit from tobacco stock profits as members of TIAA.

In 1996, at the height of the lawsuits brought by the state attorneys-general against the cigarette manufacturers and when public enmity toward the industry was growing, TIAA created a separate investment fund, the Social Choice Account, as a tobacco-free vehicle for retirement investors. But TIAA has rebuffed all calls to sell its vast tobacco stock holdings. In its 2017 annual report, TIAA lists investments totaling more than \$450 million in Philip International, maker of Marlboro, the world's best-selling cigarette, and its counterpart Altria, which controls over cigarette market. TIAA is thus one of the biggest investors in Big Tobacco.

Nor has TIAA stood with the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility in its shareholder resolutions aimed at curbing the tobacco industry's aggressive expansion into Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe.



NAMING OPPORTUNITIES

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Several universities in the US have scholarships, professorships, hospitals, and even medical schools that have been endowed by and named in honor of tobacco industry figures. Duke University has at least 27 professorships endowed by the Duke Foundation (established by tobacco magnate James B. Duke) including one in radiation oncology, as well as an RJ Reynolds Professorship of Medicine and Philip Morris Minority Scholarships. Bowman Gray School of Medicine is named for a past president of RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company. New York University's Tisch Hospital is named for the late controlling owner of Lorillard Tobacco, since absorbed into Reynolds American, US arm of British American Tobacco (BAT). The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania has an endowed professorship of social responsibility named for a former head of the National Association of Tobacco Distributors. (In 2014 the university's board voted not to divest tobacco stocks.) Virginia Commonwealth University has a Philip Morris Endowed Chair in International Business. Syracuse University has an endowed chair in business and government policy named for a past president of United States Tobacco Company, which popularized smokeless tobacco. In the UK, Cambridge University has an endowed chair named for a former chairman of the board of BAT.