

March 11, 2008

Letter to the Editor, *Science*

**Defending Tobacco-Related Research at the University of California re:
Philip Morris Pulls the Plug on Controversial Research Program**

Grimm seriously misrepresents tobacco industry funding of research at the University of California (1). The Philip Morris External Research Program (PMERP) has funded high quality, peer-reviewed tobacco-related research, not “bogus” research. The PMERP has been made “controversial” primarily through the unethical tactics of Stanton A. Glantz, who hypocritically holds the “American Legacy Foundation Distinguished Professorship in Tobacco Control” at UCSF (2). The American Legacy Foundation (ALF) receives all of its funding from the tobacco industry (including Philip Morris), through the Master Settlement Agreement (3). However, while PMERP funding has been permitted at UC since its inception, ALF funding has been prohibited since 2003 because it violates the academic freedom of UC faculty members who wish to use direct tobacco industry funding (4). In spite of this clear UC policy, UCSF has allowed Glantz to receive ALF funding and to engage in *ad hominem* attacks on me and Edythe London as part of a so-called “Campaign to Defend Academic Integrity” (5). Fortunately, the UC Academic Senate, UC Office of the President, and UC Regents continue to strongly support academic freedom at UC (6). Consequently, I have been able to successfully conduct and publish important epidemiologic research on the health effects of active and passive smoking (7).

The real tragedy is that the Lysenko-like environment created by Glantz and other anti-tobacco activists has made it increasingly difficult to conduct the additional new research that is needed to fully understand and reduce major tobacco-related diseases like lung cancer (7). Ironically, the ALF vice chair and president recently editorialized about the current underfunding of research and stigmatization associated with lung cancer, without realizing that the ALF itself has helped create this very situation (8). Hopefully, attacks on honest scientists will end and sufficient funding will be devoted to understanding and reducing tobacco-related diseases.

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David Grimm has written two news articles about tobacco industry funding at the University of California that have specifically mentioned me and my research:

Grimm D. Philip Morris Pulls the Plug on Controversial Research Program. *Science* 2008;319:1173

Grimm D. UC Balks at Campus-Wide Ban on Tobacco Money for Research *Science* 2007;315:447-448

However, I believe that both articles, particularly his February 29, 2008 article, do not properly describe this issue. Thus, I have submitted a letter and hope you will publish it so that your readers can get my perspective. If you have any questions, I will be pleased to clarify my sentences and explain my references.