Nottingham University and British American Tobacco

J Britton, A Knox

Like many employees of Nottingham University we were both surprised and dismayed to learn in early December that the University had decided to accept funding from British American Tobacco to establish an International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility. Apparently the major focus of the International Centre will be the developing world, from which it is proposed to appoint a visiting Professor and to provide competitive scholarships for students from developing nations to study the “environmental responsibilities of multinational companies”.

We believe that this funding has been awarded in an attempt to gain respectability and credibility for an industry that is fundamentally unethical at a time when the industry is having to expand into the developing world to replace markets currently being lost in more affluent countries. A comprehensive discussion of the ethics of this decision and other comments relevant to the company involved have been presented elsewhere in the public domain and we do not propose to add to these comments here. However, we do believe that accepting money from the tobacco industry degrades the reputation of our University and undermines the work of all with a commitment to the teaching of medicine and the promotion of public health.

JOHN BRITTON
ALAN KNOX
Executive Editors

4 Bates C. University of Nottingham takes £3.8m from BAT for a Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility (http://www.ash.org.uk/html/conduct/html/nottingham.html).

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JOHN BRITTON and ALAN KNOX

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