

Press Notice

Immediate, 12 March 2001

SASH urges boycott of Nottingham University Open Day and asks, How open is the University about their 'blood money' links to BAT?

Nottingham University will face more controversy this Saturday (17 March 2001) as it opens its doors to potential students. Course applicants will visit the university during an open day, but health campaigners are asking would students visit if they knew about the university's links to British American Tobacco?

The university recently took £3.8m for an 'International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility'^{1[1]} from the tobacco giant that is being investigated by Department of Trade and Industry for its role in tobacco smuggling and has since been embroiled in controversy^{2[2]}. Campaigners are asking if they are planning to tell potential students about how the decision has damaged student and staff harmony and brought widespread condemnation from the international academic community and health lobby^{3[3]}.

Student leaders are also calling upon potential students of Nottingham University to stay away. Chair of Students for Action on Smoking and Health (SASH), Patrick Mackerras, said, "Students can choose from many universities. In these days when a good degree, from a good university is no longer enough to guarantee a job upon graduation, students have to be asking do I need a degree from a university that is embroiled in strife and has a tarnished reputation?"

Mackerras, who is a student at Oxford University, added, "I doubt very much the University will be very open about their links to a company like BAT. Why would you if you were trying to show the university in a positive light. But students have a right to know about these things before they end up spending three years at Nottingham University."

Karl Brookes, a spokesperson for health charity ASH, said: "With academic staff concerned by the decision and students split over the university's links to the tobacco industry the campus can't be a happy place to spend three years. The idea of students taking a course in corporate responsibility sponsored by a tobacco company would be laughable, if it were not so serious. Many students will take a look at the situation and ask do I really need to study here?"

^{1[1]} [ASH Press Release](#), 4 December 2000

^{2[2]} BAT to be investigated by Department of Trade and Industry - [DTI](#) Press Release, 30 October 2000

^{3[3]} Visit [conduct](#) part of the ASH website for further details

Brookes added: “This provides an insight into the ethos of the University’s leadership. I can’t imagine why it would be attractive to students.”

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ISDN available for radio interviews. Please call 020 7739 5902 to arrange an interview.

To discuss this decision email: Nottingham@globalink.org