

# University funding ethics put under the microscope

FUNDING • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

However, Les Hagen, executive director of the anti-smoking group Action on Smoking & Health, argued that this should've been implemented long ago, and called for a "campus-wide policy against tobacco industry funding."

"What I have a problem with is a publicly funded academic institution accepting funding from a rogue industry. In my view the University is out of step with community standards, and it's out of step with the times," Hagen said, pointing to the fact that tobacco kills and its revenue shouldn't be used to research health.

"In my view, for the same reason that you wouldn't take funding from the Ku Klux Klan for a race-relations program, you should not accept tobacco industry funding for any health research."

**LES HAGEN,  
ANTI-SMOKING ACTIVIST**

Els further argued that this restriction of funding wasn't a matter of academic freedom.

"We know that the tobacco industry has a very long track record in concealing information when it comes to the potential risks of smoking. There's a long list of tobacco industry obfuscating the science in terms of the risks of smoking," Els said.

While Phillips conceded that tobacco companies have manipulated research in the past, he argued that many of those instances occurred decades ago and that the extent isn't greater in this particular industry than any other.

"You can't pick up the papers for a week without seeing some new scandal about pharmaceutical companies hiding information," he said.

"There's certainly plenty of evidence that energy companies do that—governments do that as a matter of course. There's obviously nothing unique about that."

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Phillips emphasized that his grant was unrestricted by the industry that provided it, meaning that experiments are done at his own prerogative and that the funder won't see the results of until they're made public. His grant is budgeted to fund research until the end of 2009.

As of press time, the University Administration wasn't available to comment on whether the BoG would pursue a campus-wide tobacco-industry funding ban, but Nugent said that the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry wouldn't pressure the University to adopt their policy.

"Our concern is with our own faculty. We leave it to other faculties to determine their own policy," Nugent said.

# U of A nurses help in Uganda

Angela Heino and Bonnie Fournier have both chosen to use their medical expertise towards helping improve the living conditions of Ugandan kids

JENNIFER HUYGEN  
News Writer

University of Alberta nurses have been crossing borders and transferring their skills as health-care workers to Africa.

Angela Heino, 30, is currently in the process of establishing a health-care clinic in the Ugandan villages of Bufukhula and Makhai with help from Canadian Food for the Hungry International (CFHI). Heino has been in southern Uganda since 10 March, 2007, setting up new medical equipment and teaching villagers about topics such as HIV/AIDS care, nutrition and sanitation.

"Angela [is] working on the medical side of things because she's a trained nurse," said Jodi Martens, Marketing and Communications Manager for CFHI. "[She's] taking that equipment, dividing it between two different villages and setting up a medical clinic."

The Gateway was unable to contact Heino, but Martens described how Heino's work is contributing to integrated development practices in the more impoverished areas of the country.

"[Our work] provides [the Ugandan children] with education, health care, nutrition, clothes," Martens stated. "[CFHI addresses] physical needs, educational needs, spiritual needs that the whole community deals with."

Uganda is a land-locked country in Eastern Africa and is home to approximately 27.6 million people. Human

rights abuses in Uganda first became a major concern during the military rule of Idi Amin who held power from 1971–1979. Under his rule, approximately 300 000 people died. Since the mid-1980s, there's been an increased recognition of human rights in Uganda, and the political situation is currently less tense in the southern half of the country.

**"For the past 20 years, there's been a civil war and there are rebels that abduct children and take them in and they either become child soldiers, sex slaves or porters."**

**BONNIE FOURNIER,  
THE CHILD IS INNOCENT**

she realized the potential for change and founded a not-for-profit organization, The Child is Innocent, which is committed to addressing the issue of "night commuters" in northern Uganda. Between 20 000–40 000 children are believed to commute every night and they generally are children aged seven to 18 who risk abduction in their everyday lives by the LRA.

"For the past 20 years, there's been a civil war and there are rebels that abduct children and take them in and they either become child soldiers, sex slaves or porters," Fournier explained.

"What these children do to escape the risk of being abducted by the rebels is they commute every single night either from their village or from a camp," she said. "About two million people in Northern Uganda are living in these internally-displaced-persons camps."

Fournier will be returning to Uganda in May 2007 to implement a peer education program training local youth in peace and conflict resolution modules.

She further acknowledged that while the situation in Uganda is serious, little is known in Edmonton about its political and humanitarian circumstances.

"It's the way the media portrays things, and so what's hot now [are] issues in Iraq and Afghanistan and that's kind of what dictated the media," Fournier said. "Oftentimes these other long-term small conflicts don't get as much attention."

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