

Tobacco research money secret at VCU

by UPI

RICHMOND, Va. -- There's little debate at Virginia Commonwealth University over accepting tobacco research money because it's a virtual secret, school officials say. Restrictive language in a 2006 contract with Philip Morris USA, the nation's largest tobacco company, keeps professors from publishing results of their research, or even talking about them, without Phillip Morris' permission, The New York Times said Thursday. School officials at the Richmond, Va., public institution, are barred from commenting on the project. Francis L. Macrina, Virginia Commonwealth's vice president for research, acknowledged that many of the provisions violated the school's guidelines for industry-sponsored research. "In the end, it was language we thought we could agree to," he told the Times. "It's a balancing act." Macrina wouldn't say how much money Philip Morris paid for the contract. Last year the company, not usually a major contributor, gave \$1.3 million in research grants that included the restricted contract. Restrictions in the contract surprised other university researchers. Stanton A. Glantz, a professor at the University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine, told the Times, "University administrators who are desperate for money will basically do anything they have to for money."

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