

Enforce Corporate Accountability: Keep Coca-Cola Off Smith Campus

In the spring of 2007, after a two year long, student-run campaign demanding Smith cut their contract with Coca-Cola, the company was kicked off campus. The campaign highlighted many of Coke's social justice violations including "Coke's collaboration with paramilitaries in Colombia to crush union organizing efforts through murder, torture, and intimidation; their groundwater depletion and environmental degradation in India; and their discriminatory hiring practices in the United States."¹ In May 2005, Carol Christ responded to student demands and wrote a letter to Coke stating that Smith would most likely not be renewing the contract in 2007 "unless we are persuaded that Coca-Cola is making significant progress in addressing issues related to union organizing and environmental degradation." Despite attempting to clean up their image, Coke made little progress in the intervening two years in actually remedying the wrongs they had committed.

And now, nearly five years after they were kicked off campus, the same can still be said: Coca-Cola has yet to accede to the demands of union organizers in Colombia, which include paying reparations to the families of the victims and developing and following a global human rights policy; continues to degrade the environment in India and deplete groundwater; and sells products outside of the U.S. and E.U. with levels of toxins known to be harmful to an individual's health. In a 2007 letter to Coca-Cola notifying the corporation that Smith would no longer be doing business with them, Carol Christ wrote that "in severing our ties with the Coca-Cola Corporation, Smith joins other institutions and organizations around the world in urging Coca-Cola to take significant steps toward more responsible business practices across all realms of its operations."² Given that this has very clearly not happened, we ask that the Smith community continue to enforce the campus-wide ban on the sale Coca-Cola products.

We look forward to talking further with you about this important issue, and will be providing you with an comprehensive information packet about Coca-Cola's operations. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us as SSJIC@smith.edu.

Sincerely,

Economic Justice,
a working group of Students for
Social Justice and Institutional
Change (SSJIC)

¹ <http://cokeoffsmithcampus.blogspot.com/2007/04/why-smith-needs-to-cut-its-contract.html>

² <http://cokeoffsmithcampus.blogspot.com/2007/04/why-smith-needs-to-cut-its-contract.html>