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PRESS RELEASE...PHOTOCALL

SCIENTIFIC SOLUTION FOR BUSINESS PROBLEM

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University of St Andrews scientists are working in partnership with the world's leading premium drinks business to beat counterfeit fraudsters.

The "Scientific Solutions for Business" competition, a University initiative which Diageo helped develop, identifies new scientific solutions to real business issues. Ultimately, it is hoped that the solutions sparked by the initiative could attract further funding for additional research programmes prior to product development and prototyping stages.

The initiative was sparked when the Diageo Brand Technical Centre, based in Clackmannanshire, approached the University to help with their anti-counterfeiting programme. Increasingly, owners of leading brands of spirits, perfumes, clothing and other luxury products are finding themselves under attack from counterfeiters.

Robert McElroy, Diageo's UK Technical Director said, "Our aim is to ensure that people enjoy our brands every day, everywhere. In achieving this, Diageo takes positive action to protect its brands and consumers against illegal counterfeit activity. Our work with the University is a good example of this."

The University's Research and Enterprise Services unit, together with Professor Malcolm Dunn, Vice-Principal (Research), identified five teams to research, report on and present their ideas.

The winner was Professor Naismith (Centre for Biomolecular Sciences) whose analytical solution for testing the authenticity of their spirits was singled out as being the most cost-effective and efficient solution with most relevance to the marketplace.

Professor Russell Morris (School of Chemistry), who devised the idea of a security system which prevents tampering with containers, was awarded second prize.

On this occasion, the competition was incentivised by Diageo. The teams shared £20,000 for participating and the winners shared additional prize money of £10,000.

Professor Malcolm Dunn, Vice-Principal (Research) said, "We are delighted with the outcome of this enterprising competition devised by Diageo. It has engaged University staff in identifying practical solutions for a particular commercial problem facing industry. We see it as a means for promoting other such University-Industrial engagements in the future."

"The idea of running a competition between groups of the University of St Andrews' most able minds was both compelling and intriguing," said Robert McElroy, Diageo's UK Technical Director. "Compelling as the outputs were bound to be practical yet different, intriguing in that new insights into our issues would be generated. We are delighted with the outcome of the competition. Everyone involved, including myself, took some individual learning from the experience and Diageo was presented with good practical ideas to take forward."

The University of St Andrews welcomes enquiries from other companies who may be interested in participating in the "Scientific Solutions for Business" initiative. Fife-based companies may be eligible for financial support. Inquiries should be directed to Alistair Main, Associate Director, Research and Enterprise Services, University of St Andrews, New Technology Centre, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9SR - telephone 01334 462165 or email abm4@st-and.ac.uk.

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NOTE TO EDITORS

You are invited to send a reporter/photographer to Professor Naismith's lab on Level 3 of the Centre for Biomolecular Sciences, North Haugh, St Andrews at 11.15am on Tuesday 5 November 2002.

Professor Naismith; Professor Morris; Alistair Main, Associate Director, Research and Enterprise Services, and Professor Malcolm Dunn Vice-Principal (Research) will represent the University.

Diageo will be represented by Innovation Scientist, Willie MacKenzie and Robert McElroy, UK Technical Director.

Diageo is the world's leading premium drinks business with an unrivalled collection of brands including Johnnie Walker, Guinness, Smirnoff, J&B, Baileys, Cuervo, Tanqueray and Captain Morgan. Diageo is a global company, trading in over 180 markets around the world. The company is listed both on the London Stock Exchange (DGE) and on the New York Stock Exchange (DEO). For more information about Diageo, its brands, people and performance, visit us at www.diageo.com.

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