

*Students Org.
- Alliance for Democracy*

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Protesters plan to interrupt Regents

Students object to UW receiving money from corporations involved in illegal activities

BY MIKE GILLIARD
NEWS REPORTER

Defending political and social liberties the world over, the UW Alliance for Democracy planned Tuesday to storm the upcoming Board of Regents meeting. Their protest centers on accusations that UW is, with public money, funding inhumane labor laws and political tyranny in many Third World countries.

"Under state law, we are barred from investing in corporations which do business in countries where discrimination is a matter of policy," said Erik Gustafson, member of both the Madison Coordination of the East Timor Action Network and the Alliance.

"This [evidence of UW-sponsored corporations participating in such activities] is well documented," said Alliance member Ben Manski.

Late last year, the Alliance presented to the University a chronicle of this corporate malfeasance. Citing volumes of the vast worker exploitation by the major corporations the UW is financially supporting, the effort went wholly ignored by school officials.

"None of them have done the scholarly, academic merit that went into this research," said Alliance member Todd Price.

The difficulty in conveying its message to the public is a major hurdle for the group. All members, therefore realize that voicing their opinion at Friday's meeting, with its large press coverage, is essential to exposing the university to a larger audience.

A session member summarized their objectives on Friday. "We want to make things harder for them [the University]," Manski said. "That's what it comes down to. We can influence their policy; however right now we have no responsibility for the companies we invest in."

"We are going to speak, and if you think you can tell us if the public will speak or not, that's not right, that's not correct," Manski said.

The Alliance's major grievances with the UW overall are summed up in the following:

According to the Alliance's mission statement, the organization calls for a preservation of Wisconsin citizen's rights.

"We call on the UW to abide by a state law forbidding it from investing in companies that do business in countries that discriminate," the statement reads. "We object to the use of our facilities and our students and faculty for the benefit of private corporations. We believe that the only solution for unaccountable corporate bureaucracy is true direct democracy. The students, workers and people of Wisconsin are the only true possessors of our UW system, and we should run it."

The group claims that university ties with such businesses are not only immoral, but blatantly illegal as well. Focus on both the social and legal breaches the UW has created will be the main topic of the group at the Board meeting. Members feel that the integrity of the University as a whole is at stake, a sentiment they plan to express.

"The choice is whether the university will continue to uphold its public mandate of serving the people of Wisconsin or if they will they continue to represent corporations that by no means represent the best interests of the state," Gustafson said.

Although the group has been consistently prevented from expressing its views at previous meetings, many members are "eagerly awaiting" having them heard on Friday.

However, many of its members are not as optimistic, viewing the meeting as a political ultimatum, a do-or-die situation to preserve the rights of the Wisconsin people.

"It's becoming clearer and clearer that [the administration] is just dismissing us utterly," member Todd Price said. He expressed his frustration an administration unwilling to hear his demands.

"You can't say 'Oh, you don't have any idea what you're doing', even though that may be the case," Price said.

"If the Board of Regents thinks they can do this behind closed doors, and ignore the repeated requests for a policy, they're wrong," Manski said. "We're going to continue to be in their faces, calling for this policy."

"Every day our money is sitting in the pockets of these corporations who are causing these abuses and until we have this policy, people will continue to be killed, slave labor conditions will persist, and environmental structure will continue to crumble," Manski said. "We're keeping it in the public eye. We're making a statement. It's not going to go away."

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Madison Radio Group to be sold

By Dave Becker
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Madison Radio Group, the newly formed consortium that operates six local stations, will be bought out by one of the biggest radio conglomerates in the country under a deal announced Tuesday.

Lee Leicinger, vice-president and general manager of Madison Radio Group, confirmed that the company had struck a tentative deal with Hicks, Muse, Tate & First, an investment firm operating on behalf of Texas-based Capstar Broadcasting. The sale is subject to approval by the Federal Communications Commission, which is expected to take six months.

Leicinger said he expected no changes in the formatting or personnel of the stations — WMAD-FM, WIBA-AM and FM, WZEE-FM, WTSO-AM and WMLI-FM — due to the sale.

He noted there were no major personnel changes as a result of the Madison Radio Group merger and said the prospective new owners have already promised to keep him as general manager. However, he would not disclose the number of employees at the stations.

"As long as I'm here, nothing's going to change," he said. "We're a well-run company — that's why they sought us out."

Madison Radio Group was formed by the merger last year of Point Communications and Midcontinent Broadcasting, a result of new FCC rules that allow one company to own as many as six stations in a market of Madison's size.

As a result of the sale, Point sold off WMAD-AM, which is now operating as an offshoot of Christian station WNWC-FM. The company also changed formats for WTSO-AM, switching the station from news-talk programming to the syndicated adult pop/nostalgia music WMAD-AM used to carry.

Capstar was formed last year by Texas financier and Dallas Stars owner Thomas Hicks in response to recent changes in FCC ownership rules. Hicks has said he plans to acquire 200-300 stations in mid-sized markets across the country. Currently, the company owns more than 120 stations, in locations ranging from Anchorage, Alaska, to Shreveport, La. This would be the company's first venture in Wisconsin.