

Regents study discrimination ruling

South Africa investment action delayed

The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents' business and finance committee delayed Thursday any plans to sell UW holdings in companies which conduct significant business in South Africa.

The committee voted to delay action until next month to allow administrators time to study a report presented by Prof. Gordon Baldwin of the UW-Madison Law School.

The Board of Regents decided this summer to divest holdings in such companies because of an opinion by State Atty. Gen. Bronson La Follette.

La Follette ruled the UW System was violating the law with such investments because of racial discrimination practiced in South Africa.

The section of the Wisconsin State Statutes dealing with investment of university trust funds reads:

"No such investment shall knowingly be made in any company, corporation, subsidiary or affiliate which practices or condones through its actions discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, creed or sex."

In his opinion, La Follette said the regents shouldn't as-

sume the "burden of proving the total absence of discrimination in every company in which it invests," but when circumstances make "reasonable persons suspect discrimination," divestiture should proceed.

No limitations

Baldwin told the committee Thursday that the state can't place limitations on the board's investments abroad.

He said the no discrimination clause cannot be considered a "binding command" by the state.

"Such a command may come from the federal government, but may not law-

fully be given by a state legislature, a state official or from an explicit regent policy," the report said.

Baldwin said the board would have to become involved in international affairs if it follows La Follette's opinion.

Jim Eagon, president of United Council of UW Student Governments, presented the group's position paper to the committee.

Student position

Eagon said the group's recommendation is the board divest such holdings immediately and develop a

strong anti-discrimination policy for future investments.

"We feel that the University of Wisconsin is in a position to open this national policy issue up to public debate," the United Council report said.

"The trend in higher education in the last few decades has been to make a search for veritas (truth) relevant to the greater society; here, in a grand way, the UW Board of Regents can put its money where its mouth is."

The report stated the board had invested heavily in major multi-national corporations which contribute to nearly 16 per cent of all South African investments.

"We believe that investors must begin to be responsible for the human and social costs of their investments," the report said.

By Altoona council

Order to investigate chief rescinded