

# Campus DJs boycott Polygram

OTTAWA (CUP) — Campus radio stations across the country are digging in for a long fight against Polygram records over service fees.

Polygram started charging campus stations about \$100 per year for promotional records and press releases in March.

But 25 campus radio stations have refused to pay the fees, and are boycotting interviews and events with Polygram artists.

The National Community Radio Association, an organization of 29 campus radio stations, is organizing the boycott because they say they are doing the company a service by promoting their records.

"They think they're doing us a favour by sending us free records," said Chris Migone, one of the boycott organizers and music director at CKUT at Mont-

real's McGill University.

"But it's a two way street," he said. "We air their records, interview their artists and publicize their events."

Polygram is the only company that charges campus radio stations. Migone said if Polygram can get away with it, others might follow.

CKDU's policy is to follow guidelines set by the NCRA. They will not pay the service fee, list Polygram records on their charts or interview Polygram artists, unless the interview is about the service fee. While CKDU continues to place Polygram records in new release bins, their hope is that programmers will use their own discretion and not play Polygram records.

"A lot of programmers have been talking about it on the air," said program director Lex Gige-

roft. "They are the only major record company which still charges service fees. We are not charging any major financial benefits by playing their records."

Kathy Rowe, station manager at Memorial University's CHMR said WEA, another major record label, backed off their plan to charge campus radio stations after the NCRA threatened a boycott a few years ago.

Chris Buchanan, program director at the University of British Columbia's CTR said the company has the wrong idea about campus radio.

"Polygram puts us in the same category with commercial radio, but our philosophy is different," Buchanan said. "Our mandate is to play music that isn't heard anywhere else. We're here to support up and coming bands before

they're ready for commercial radio.

While the stations won't prevent DJs from playing Polygram artists, they won't chart any new Polygram releases, cover any Polygram concerts, or interview any Polygram artists, unless it's about the boycott.

Rowe said several artists, distributed by Polygram support the boycott, including Billy Bragg, Michelle Shocked and the Go-Betweens.

Polygram official Ken Ashdown said business is business. "We're not a charity," he said. "Besides, we're not asking for an amount that is beyond their reach."

Buchanan agreed that the fee was not exorbitant, but he said the boycott was on principle.

"We're also protesting on

behalf of the stations that can't afford to pay anything."

Ashdown said the fee will help cover the cost of shipping records, publicity photos, long distance phone calls, and tour support.

Ashdown said the boycott wouldn't hurt his company.

"Campus stations that are eclectic or alternative have a limited target (audience) and I'm not sure that their total impact on the market is relevant," he said.

Migone said the boycott will mostly hurt listeners and new artists who need campus radio publicity.

"It's a last recourse," Migone said. "We negotiated for the better part of a year with Polygram and nothing came of it. We hope to be able to publicize the fact that they're doing this and to bring pressure from all sides against them so that they drop the charge."

## Matching grants come to an end

by Chris Lawson

OTTAWA (CUP) — Ottawa's ivory towers are quivering just a bit.

A five-year-old program that matched private grants to the three national research granting councils with federal money is nearing its end, and so far, there is no indication that anything will take its place.

The matching grants policy was launched in 1986 to encourage corporate and other private sector contributions to the councils. Next year, 1990/91, will be its last.

The three councils, which cover natural sciences and engineering (NSERC), social sciences and humanities (SSHRC) and medical research (MRC) had their base budgets frozen in 1986. The federal government matches any private sector contributions, so long as those contributions grow no more than six per cent per year.

"Right now the granting cou-

cils don't know what's going to happen, what their budget is going to look like, or anything," said Liberal science and technology critic John Manley.

"If science and technology research is as important as the prime minister says, the councils should be given enough warning to deal with it," he said.

Science and Technology minister Bill Winegard said the fate of the matching grants policy would be decided with the least possible delay.

"There's no doubt it has helped to put funding into the councils," he said, "but the question is did it do what it was designed to do."

Alan Fox, director of policy and planning for SSHRC, said the council was quite concerned about the end of the policy.

"With the money from this program drying up in less than two years, our budget may take quite a precipitous drop," he said.

Fox said it was difficult for the council to plan more than two

years in advance.

"We support the work of a lot of doctorate fellows," he said. "That support has to continue for four years. We need to know if we'll have the money to fully support these students."

While the complete review of the policy has yet to be released, sources say the reviews are bad.

"There hasn't been an outcry about this because nobody — I don't know what you think — the Tories — but nobody believes they could possibly cut the program without some form of renewed funding," Manley said.

The policy brought \$25.5 million to NSERC, \$1.5 million to SSHRC and \$12.3 million to the MRC last year. This amounted to about seven per cent of the councils' combined \$673.1 million budgets.

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