

KUGN

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Savage's show began to draw heat in the spring.

Donovan, market manager for Cumulus Broadcasting's six Eugene-area radio stations, said while he appreciates student input on the issue, KUGN is concerned with more than just the University market. Broadcasts by the station are heard by 53,000 different people in a typical week, and both Donovan and radio personality Carlin were quick to point out that most students listen to music, not talk radio.

Still, with a million-dollar University contract at stake, what student groups think of KUGN could make a difference, if they pressure the University and athletic department to require the station to distance itself from controversial content when the University's agent, ESPN Regional, negotiates a final, exclusive radio broadcast contract for 2003-2004.

Donovan said the more immediate concern is dealing with people who enjoyed Savage's show. He said the station has already received hundreds of e-mails and phone calls from irate Michael Savage fans, a trend he said that often happens when a popular show first goes off the air.

"I don't think many in the University community understand the extent to which Michael Savage appealed to a lot of residents of Lane County," Donovan said. "The Michael Savage fans regard him as a stand-alone product" that cannot be replaced by other conservative hosts like Rush Limbaugh or Michael Medved, he said.

Some conservative criticism has come from students.

"I'm upset about KUGN's decision to take Savage off the air and to play it out like University (groups) had no input in the decision," College

Republicans Chairman Jarrett White said, adding he was worried the change might become a trend.

"I think this is just a step. Student groups align themselves against what they call 'hate radio,' then spout off against groups they don't agree with. I don't think they have a clue what real diversity is."

ASUO Co-Multicultural Advocate Eddy Morales, like Ogan, emphasized the student-led efforts against KUGN weren't seeking to yank Savage from the airwaves.

"We didn't mind (KUGN) carrying the show, but we didn't want them affiliated with the University of Oregon," Morales said. "It was really hard distinguishing what was KUGN and what was University of Oregon."

University administration, however, doesn't think the distinction is difficult. In a November letter to the ASUO, which the administration said is still an accurate description of its position, University President Dave Frohnmayer said the separation is clear.

"I am not convinced that anyone believes the University has any connection with KUGN programming or that of any station beyond the broadcasts of our athletic programs," he wrote.

Carlin, who started broadcasting his new show "CrossTalk" Wednesday in the coveted 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. timeslot, agreed with Frohnmayer, saying he doesn't think there's any need to add a disclaimer tag to controversial radio programs.

"All talk is understood to be opinion, no matter what," Carlin said. "I can see their concern about Savage; he wasn't my kind of guy, either. But if students think they should have control over content, where does that end?"

By all accounts, the fight over KUGN's affiliation with the University is far from over. Student

groups say they will continue to urge the administration and athletic department to require KUGN to distance itself in some way from controversial programming if the station wants to continue as the "voice of the Ducks." Some groups may even press for removal of that slogan or bring contract issues to the University Senate.

Community advocate and former University Sports Information Director George Beres said his group, RADIOACTIVISTS, will pressure the Athletic Department and University to deny broadcasting rights to any station that airs programming that demeans minorities or promotes bigotry. And new radio host Carlin said he expects to weather more angry calls from "Savage Nation" fans and potential irritation from students as well.

"I'm not sure (student groups are) going to like me much better than Savage," he said. "I'm not going to call anyone names, but I'm an opinionated guy."

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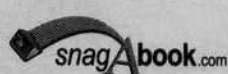
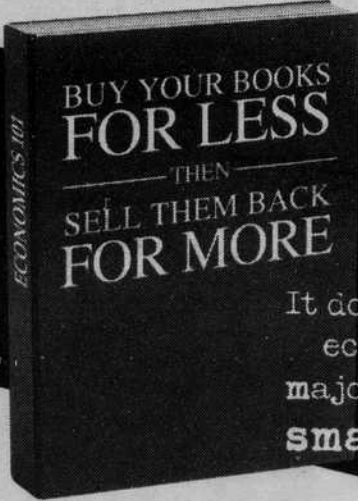
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