

Opinion

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SATURDAY
October 9, 2004

LOCAL 9

dailyreviewonline.com

Cal State Hayward shouldn't ignore roots

CALIFORNIA State University, East Bay? Forget it. Like Rodney Dangerfield, Hayward "just can't get no respect."

Cal State Hayward is our university. It's a landmark in our community, stamped with the identity of Hayward in its name.

Yet, after a year of studies, focus groups and forums, CSUH President Norma Rees announced that she would recommend the campus be renamed California State University, East Bay.

The arguments in favor of the change point to expanding the vision of the university as a regional institution with an international reach. But why

must its location — in Hayward — be obliterated for the sake of the "big picture"?

To follow that line of logic, next thing you know, San Jose State would become Cal State South Bay, and San Francisco State would be Cal State West Bay. After all, only seven of the 23 campuses in the CSU system aren't named after the city where they are.

Having the school's location in the name hasn't hurt UC Berkeley (UC Bay Area?), yet Berkeley definitely has a global vision and reputation, and the name hasn't limited the university's impact or its ability to draw students from all over the nation and the world.

It's true that Cal State Hayward has satellite campuses in Oakland and Concord. If those

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campuses should get big enough to go their own way, they could become Cal State Oakland and Cal State Concord.

Rees says Cal State Hayward has undergone a transformation over the past four decades, and she wants the CSU system to change its designation to that of a regional university.

"This will help position us for a broader role in meeting the higher education needs of the East Bay, especially in Alameda and Contra Costa counties," Rees says.

That expanded role can be accomplished as Cal State Hayward, if the university will focus on promoting itself and its not inconsiderable advan-

tages over other schools that would encourage students to enroll here. The lament that the 13,500-student campus must change its name to identify with the other East Bay communities that it serves is hollow.

Cal State Hayward has a lot to offer to students from all over the Bay Area as well as other parts of the country. Let's focus on promoting those positive improvements, including the massive construction and face-lift now happening on campus.

Rees' contention that it would be impractical to survey students about the name change is also disturbing. While, as she says, it might not have been practical to query

every student about the idea, at the very least the Associated Students Inc. should be included in the discussions. Darrell McKinney, Associated Students Inc. chair, said student leaders don't think a name change is warranted. And he said the ASI leaders were not invited to participate in the discussions. The message here is the students' opinions don't matter.

Cal State Hayward is a beacon of higher learning and a source of pride for the city whose name it bears. Let's not get so carried away with changing the image to ignore its roots.

We don't want to lose our identity in the rush to renovate the campus. Let's keep the name.