

Daily Review, The (Hayward, CA)

January 12, 2004

Perhaps CSUH should do its homework

Section: Reader's Letters

Estimated printed pages: 2

Article Text:

CAL State University, Hayward, expects its students to do their homework and their research. "We want to be known as a university that offers an achievable degree." Question: Will CSUH do its own homework and research? Will CSUH attempt to distinguish itself and increase its enrollment by changes of substance in classes and degrees, or cosmetic changes of name -- at its accessible, beautiful campus in the Hayward Hills? What were the enrollment effects of name changes in 1961, 1963, 1972? What have been the enrollment effects of name changes at other CSUs? Other state universities in other states? UC campuses? Universities of other states? Or comparable private universities in California and other states? Is its name the problem, or is it competition from nearby St. Mary's College, Holy Names, JFK University, DeVry and Patten?

Contrast CSUH with CSU Sonoma/Rohnert Park and CSU Monterey/Seaside, where there is little competition from nearby private and public schools. Chabot Community College and CSUH are about the same age. Since I moved to Hayward in 1968, it is clear that Chabot consistently brings outside performances to its theater while CSUH rarely does. Chabot also has an architectural unity that CSUH lacks. These are community identity/loyalty factors. Are they enrollment factors?

CSUH Contra Costa will certainly be an independent CSU "Name Game" someday. It was in the works in the 1960s, then halted. How does its enrollment affect CSUH campus enrollment? How did CSUH allow the University of Phoenix to steal and eat its lunch right under its nose? Why doesn't CSUH go to working people, taxpayers, entitled to college educations less expensive, their "degrees achievable"? If it were CSUH "by any other name" -- Castro Valley, Fremont, Oakland, Pleasanton -- I suspect that name change would not be a consideration. If UC Merced, not "UC Central Valley," is good enough for UC, then CSU Hayward, not "CSU East Bay," is good enough for CSU.

Cal State Poly Hayward! Now there is a name change of substance that makes sense! Better grab it before CSU Concord/Mt. Diablo Valley/Delta does. Be the first Cal Poly in Northern California. Someone will if CSUH doesn't. Is CSUH serious? For example, will it participate in the National Survey of Student Engagement? It began in 2000 at the Indiana University Center for Post-secondary Planning and Research. Already it has more than 730 participating schools that represent 58 percent of undergraduate enrollment at four-year schools in the United States. CSU Monterey Bay, younger than CSUH, participates and voluntarily posts its NSSE results on its Web site. That is a serious effort to distinguish a school and increase its enrollment. Is CSUH up to the challenge?

Peter D. Reimer is a resident of Hayward.