

Battle for CSUH name near final stages

■ Both sides in debate load up to make their case before trustees in Long Beach

By **Katy Murphy**

STAFF WRITER

HAYWARD — In two days, the acronym CSUH could be history.

The California State University Board of Trustees will decide Wednesday whether California State University, Hayward, will keep its name — concluding an emotionally charged debate that has tensions running high between the administration and its students on one hand, and

the administration and the school's host city on the other.

University President Norma Rees, who proposed the new name, California State University, East Bay, was gearing up Friday for her presentation to the board's Committee on Institutional Advancement. The committee meets Tuesday afternoon in Long Beach — the day before the vote.

Meanwhile, Hayward city officials, who have outspokenly opposed the notion as a slap in the face, sent packets of information detailing the other side of the story to the trustees.

Neither side is taking any chances. On Tues-

day, Rees is flying at least two students in favor of the change to Long Beach, where they will share their points of view with the committee. Likewise, the city of Hayward is sponsoring a bus for students who wish to speak out against the change.

Hours before the sun rises Tuesday morning, a group of 40-plus students are expected to be traveling south on the bus.

"We're very nervous," said Kerry Barlow, a student leader and member of Students for CSUH. "It's been a really long journey and a really hard struggle."

Like other students and faculty fighting for the

survival of their school's identity, Barlow is afraid the school will lose its "brand equity" if it is renamed. That, she argued, could hamper attempts to recruit new students and faculty, as well as fund-raising efforts.

Barlow also is concerned about the expense. Opponents have estimated the cost of conversion to be as high as \$1 million — money, they say, that could be better spent. Rees said Friday that the number should be closer to \$200,000 and will be paid with nonpublic funds.

Equally troubling to Barlow and others is, as

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CSUH awaits decision on name

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she put it, "the unilateral decision-making and the exclusion of students in the CSU governance." And because Cal State chancellor Charles Reed supports Rees' proposal, many believe the trustees' vote is a done deal.

A student opinion survey taken last May by the university's Department of Communication showed that 76 percent of students did not favor the change, 9 percent supported it and 15 percent were undecided.

The Academic Senate, which includes mostly faculty and some students and staff, voted 23-20 against the change, with one abstention. Associated Students Inc., the student government, voted unanimously for a resolution against the change.

The Cal State Hayward Alumni Association Board of Directors, however, voted unanimously in favor of changing the name.

In her office Friday, with its panoramic view of the city, Rees said she hadn't ignored the students who disagreed with her idea. She simply disagrees with them, she said.

"I asked for their opinion. They gave me their opinion. We talked about it for considerable length, and I continue to disagree with the organized opposition by the students," Rees said.

Rees emphasized that for her and others who support the proposal, the issue is not about the city. Rather, she said, it's about the future of the university, which she hopes to expand.

Kim Huggett, director of public affairs for Cal State Hayward, echoed Rees' sentiments

earlier in the week.

Huggett, a Hayward resident who was called a "scoundrel" in a posting on the city's Web site, www.yestocseh.org, said that though he understands how the change could be threatening to some, he disagrees with the way the debate has been framed.

"The story is bigger than the university versus the city of Hayward," he said. "We're a regional facility, not one that serves a single city."

Rees, Huggett and other supporters say the name "East Bay" will better reflect the mission of the university, which serves both Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Still, the perception that outsiders view Hayward as an industrial, crime-ridden city is undoubtedly at the heart of the matter as well.

A packet given to focus groups last year provided the following information about the city after a bullet point: "Hayward place name is not an asset and is somewhat problematic." It continued, "Prompts questions or concerns of safety and quality."

Such a mentality bothers Winnie Thompson, a Castro Valley resident and alumna, who earned her master's degree in education at the university in 2001.

If the reputation of Hayward is problematic, Thompson said, "Why not work to improve it instead of insulting the thousands of people who live and work in this area and are striving to make this a better place?"

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