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HAYWARD

Proposed CSU name change riles city

Dropping 'Hayward' for 'East Bay' called 'foolishness'

Tanya Schevitz, Chronicle Staff Writer - Tuesday, October 12, 2004

The idea of changing the name of California State University Hayward to CSU East Bay is not resonating well in the namesake city, where some politicians and residents think their town has been dissed.

"It's really a slap in the face to Hayward to use the word East Bay," said Hayward Mayor Roberta Cooper, who said she wasn't even given a heads-up on the proposal. "It is just foolishness. There may be an agenda here, it is somewhat of an implied insult."

The mayor and others noted that Hayward is a city of 145,000, where million-dollar homes are selling "like hotcakes" and the redevelopment of downtown into a transit, housing, restaurant and entertainment hub has been recognized by the League of California Cities.

Campus President Norma Rees announced last Wednesday that she would ask the CSU chancellor and Board of Trustees to approve the name change to better reflect the university's broader geographical reach.

And Monday, Rees said she didn't mean to offend anyone in the city, but she has to do what is best for the university.

"They ought to be pretty pleased to have a regional university in their backyard with a name that matches the region," Rees said. "We are, after all, in two counties, and we have three separate sites.

"I've always been a very proud resident of Hayward, but the university has outgrown its name, and that is the situation I'm trying to deal with now."

Her proposal is likely to be presented to the Board of Trustees as an information item in November and then will be brought back for a vote in January, said CSU spokeswoman Colleen Bentley-Adler.

City officials have promised to fight the name change and will go to the CSU board if they aren't successful in changing Rees' mind.

"If you look at their Web site, they say it will be 'CSU East Bay, Hayward Hills,' like you don't want to be associated with the rest of Hayward, " said Hayward City Councilman Kevin Dowling.

He predicted that the university will name itself into obscurity.

"East Bay has no meaning outside of the Bay Area at all," he said.

Cooper agreed and called it ridiculous to say that the school has outgrown its name. She said that the other CSU campuses also have a long reach for enrollment and aren't named for the region, except in a few cases where they are not located in a significantly size city, such as Humboldt State.

"It is Cal State University Hayward. That is where it is located. While it draws students from around the world, we don't want to name it Cal State University, the World," Cooper said.

According to 2000 data from the U.S. Census, 19.9 percent of Hayward residents 25 or over have a bachelor's degree, compared with 45 percent in San Francisco; and 26.7 percent of Hayward residents work in management or professional occupations, compared with 48.3 per cent of San Francisco residents.

The median household income is \$51,177, compared with \$55,221 in San Francisco.

But Ernest Avellar, a Hayward resident and former member of the Alameda County Board of Education, said in an e-mail that he would put Hayward up against San Francisco or any other "self-proclaimed great city" anytime.

"We don't have rah-rah professional sports teams or the opera, but we have Little League, school teams and many cultural activities for the common man/woman," he wrote. "Our local paper doesn't feature high-muck-a-mucks of the society world sipping wine at some self-congratulatory event, but we celebrate the ordinary citizen doing something for others."

In 1998, Hayward built a new City Hall, with an art gallery. It boasts a blues festival and the Zucchini Festival.

As part of its revitalization, the city is building two new elementary schools -- its first in 40 years. A new 12-screen theater is going in downtown and the old Cannery in West Hayward is being redeveloped with new housing, schools and park space. The city houses the headquarters for Mervyn's and has the largest Pepsi plant west of the Mississippi River.

There are two golf courses in town, and a country club with 600 luxury homes is under construction.

"We really are a hidden treasure," Cooper said.

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