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City wants CSUH to keep name

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HAYWARD -- In a move that could be perceived as purely symbolic, the Hayward City Council expressed its displeasure with the proposal to change the name of California State University, Hayward, by passing a resolution opposing the recommendation.

All but one council member -- Bill Quirk, who abstained from Tuesday's vote -- supported the resolution that City Manager Jesus Armas said will be forwarded to California State University trustees and to the city's delegates in Sacramento.

Armas, who along with Mayor Roberta Cooper met with Cal State Hayward President Norma Rees and her assistant Bob Brauer on Monday to discuss the city's position, said he views the resolution as more than a symbolic gesture.

To the contrary, Armas said, the purpose of the resolution is "to express where the political community" in the city stands on Rees' proposal to remove Hayward from the name of the 47-year-old, 13,500-student campus.

"It's more than symbolism," Armas said Wednesday. "But what weight ... Chancellor (Charles Reed) will provide it is something we can't answer."

Armas said he and Cooper met with Rees and Brauer to determine the "rationale that led to the proposal," but Rees rejected their pleas that she reconsider the recommendation.

"The mayor wanted to tell Rees on behalf of the city that we believe this should be reconsidered and re-evaluated," Armas said. "(Rees) led up to the conclusion that she hasn't seen anything to date that would cause her to change her mind.

"So she's moving forward with the recommendation. We're at a loss."

Cooper called the proposal to change the campus's name "distasteful."

"It's wrong, and the reason for the change is scurrilous," Cooper said.

While Rees said she respects the position of city leaders, she pointed out that they "have no authority" over the matter.

"I'm really saddened that they feel this way," Rees added. "It seems to me that another way the city can look at it is it has in its back yard a regional university with a regional name."

Rees said reaction to her proposal has been mixed.

"It's like anything else," she said. "There are some people who don't like change. But people who are thinkers can think big and see that the future of the university is as a regional one."

Armas said he expects Rees' proposal to go before CSU trustees in November as a nonaction, information item. However, Armas said trustees could vote on the proposal by January, giving the city some time to generate opposition for the proposal in Sacramento. Rees said this month that changing the name would reflect the geographical region the university serves, with a satellite campus in Concord and a business center in downtown Oakland. Rees also said the change is necessary in order for the campus to be viewed as a regional institution.

City Councilman Kevin Dowling, however, said changing the name to Cal State East Bay would only confuse those who know little about the Bay Area.

"If she wants to make the campus more regional or global, the term 'East Bay' has no meaning outside of the Bay Area," Dowling said. "Plus, almost every campus is named after its city."

Armas agreed, saying a "generic name compounds the problem of identity for the university."

There are those in the community who believe that Rees is attempting to distance the campus from the city. If so, Armas said her proposal ignores the rich history between the city and the campus.

"To have the university distance itself from the community in which it's located is not a positive thing at all," Armas said. "We think it also disregards the historic association between Hayward, the community and the university."

"It's been associated with Hayward for over 45 years. That's a long association."

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