

Readers oppose new name for CSUH

■ Respondents to Daily Review poll vote 20-1 against change, saying location matters more than region

By Michelle Meyers
STAFF WRITER

HAYWARD — Last month Cal State Hayward President Norma Rees sparked widespread community debate when she announced her proposal to change the university's name to Cal State East Bay.

The issue became the topic of student forums, business meetings and political resolutions. Rees' recommendation, which will be voted on by California State University trustees in January, even

led the city of Hayward to launch a Web site opposing the name-change proposal.

To better gauge community sentiment, The Daily Review asked readers to send written comments on the issue. Results of the unscientific survey showed widespread opposition to Cal State East Bay, a name some in jest have referred to as Cal State eBay.

By a margin of 20-1, respondents, who were predominantly alumni and Hayward residents, opposed the name change. The poll's results mirror the results from a similar survey conducted on the city's Web site, yestocsuh.org, where respondents have voted 229-30 against Rees' proposal.

The main theme of readers who responded

was that the university's name should reflect its actual location, not a region, if for no other reason than for clarity. Some mentioned that there are several "East Bays" along the coast. Others used the example of San Jose State, which is not Silicon Valley State or Cal State South Bay.

That counters Rees' rationale that the university's name should better reflect the region the university represents, particularly because Cal State Hayward has a satellite campus in Concord and the Professional Development and Conference Center in Oakland.

The name change could help boost the school's image and would make it easier to solicit donations from the non-Hayward-area residents, Rees said, citing focus group and other research.

One respondent, Hank Ruelas of Hayward, agreed with Rees. He said Hayward isn't well known and is devoid of a major athletic team, entertainment center or notable shopping mall. And its public schools, newspaper and community college are nothing to brag about, he added.

"The reality is that I know several families that moved from the west bay to Fremont, Castro Valley and San Ramon because of their 'better' school systems compared to Hayward," Ruelas wrote. "Norma Rees should be commended for her thoughtful justification for the name change."

Former City Councilman Larry Ratto saw the merits on both sides of the issue and recom-

Please see **NAME**, Local 8

Readers say keep CSUH name

► **NAME**, from Local 1

mended a compromise name, California State University Hayward/East Bay.

"This change would help the university better define what it does and the region it serves and at the same time honor the city in which the main campus has been located since the university's inception," he wrote.

The rest, however, were passionately opposed to the proposed name change.

Hayward photographer Steve Rubiolo, who took pictures of the university's groundbreaking ceremony four decades ago, said the name change "is one of the stupidest things" he's ever heard of.

"Our forefathers who worked so hard to bring this great university to Hayward would roll over in their graves if they knew that the university president would even think of such an idiotic idea," he wrote.

Rubiolo said he recently took passport photos of a Cal State Hayward student from Sweden who said he looked up Hayward on a map when he first received information from the school.

"He told me that if he had received information on the college as California State University East Bay, how could he look up East Bay, California?" Rubiolo wrote.

All you have to do is look at the list of California universities to determine that most denote the name of the city or area they where they are located, even though they serve a larger geographic area, added Doris Marciel, a retired San Lorenzo teacher and area historian.

"Has this hindered enrollment or donations at other CSU schools?" questioned Hayward resident JoAnn Cola, who also argued that the name change doesn't prove any sort of commitment to the larger region. "UC Berkeley didn't have to change its name in order to prove a commitment to its satellite extension program, which has campuses all over the Bay Area," Cola wrote.

Hayward resident Mira Villasenor-Murphy

said her family members together have earned eight bachelor's and three master's degrees from Cal State Hayward.

"We get calls for donations for the university, yet we never got a call to ask us for our opinion for this important issue," she wrote. "I think it is a great disservice to the current students and alumna/alumnus to not include them in any input."

Villasenor recognizes that Hayward doesn't have the same name recognition as other cities that are home to universities, "but I don't think that we would be having this debate if the university was located in a more affluent and homogeneous city, such as Danville or Pleasanton."

Resident Carrie Elmendorf was one of several to point out that while private donors would foot the bill for the name change, the money would be better spent on other things.

"With all of the truly important things that are happening in our community, the county and the world," added alumna Linda Cliff, "to think that changing the name of a college is a serious issue is almost immoral. I am and always will be a graduate of Cal State Hayward."

Added Coral Minton: "This lady (Rees) needs to get her priorities straight and put the money into new facilities, equipment or perhaps set up another scholarship so more students can afford to attend CSUH, not waste money and effort with a frivolous name change."

Hayward resident James Gebel is worried about what the name change would mean for alumni like his son.

"I am a victim of the name change in the 1970s from San Fernando Valley State College to Cal State University Northridge," he wrote. "It has caused many problems when I say I graduated from SFVSC and potential employers and others can't find it."

"The proposed name change seems to only be important for the staff and not the students or graduates of CSUH," he concluded.

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