

CSUH A 'Best in the West' College by Princeton Review

By CSUH News Service

One of the top guides for university-bound students in the United States has selected Cal State Hayward as a "Best in the West" college for 2005.

The Princeton Review provides college preparation aid to more than 117,000 students annually and gave CSUH the high recommendation after a survey of CSUH students about campus life, academics, and their classmates.

The review reported that CSUH students gave the university high marks for qualities including small class sizes, knowledgeable professors, and its scenic location in the Hayward hills.

"This recognition is gratifying because it tells the nation what we've known about the university for a long time," said Norma Rees, CSUH president.

"It also comes at a significant time in our history, as we're entering the 21st century with a renewed emphasis on student achievement and a new vision



of a broader and deeper role in the civic, cultural and economic well-being of our region."

Rees was notified of CSUH's ranking in a letter from Princeton Review publisher Robert Franek, who noted that CSUH was one of 134 colleges receiving the "Best in the West" designation.

He said that this year more than 700 American universities were surveyed in five geographic regions.

Each year more than half of all college-bound students in the United States turn to the Princeton Review books and Web site, seeking information to help them choose the right college. Last year, more than a half-million persons visited the Princeton Review Web site on the day the results for best colleges went live.

Many of the responses of CSUH students to the survey questions have been posted on the Princeton Review's Web site.

"I love this school because the class sizes are smaller than other state schools," wrote one CSUH student. "My teachers all know me by name and are always willing to help."

The university received one of its highest ratings in the Quality of Life section, where one student wrote, "Fun? You've got to be kidding! This is the San Francisco Bay Area. We have it all: clubs,

restaurants, museums, parks, natural resources, the ocean, skiing and, the real topper, the weather!"

Some of the survey respondents noted the popularity of CSUH's 90 campus clubs. The university also has created "learning communities" for incoming freshmen that will allow further opportunities for students to interact.

Answering questions about their classmates, those who were surveyed made numerous references to the diversity of the university's student population.

"There is no typical student," said one.

"That is the beauty of it. I can say that CSUH is truly a melting pot."

Responses to the surveys are included in the Students Say section at PrincetonReview.com.

Rees said she viewed the Princeton Review designation as a reflection of CSUH's progress in a number of areas affecting

See Best, page 7.

CSUH Top Pick By Princeton Review

Best, from page one.

first-time freshman enrollment, up by 37 percent this fall compared with 2003, and creating a more traditional four-year undergraduate experience at the university.

"We plan to immerse our incoming freshman class with a new learning experience, the core of which is an innovative learning communities program," Rees said. "It will give freshmen the foundation courses and social connections necessary for a successful four-year experience."

Early pilots of the program demonstrated that participants earn higher grade point averages, develop superior writing and communications skills and are more likely to graduate in four years than students not in the program. This year's first-time freshmen were able to enjoy a convocation assembly and participated in orientations, social programs, mentoring programs and intramural sports.

Work will also begin this fall on three new residence buildings to be added to the Pioneer Heights student residence facility. The project will double the student capacity to nearly 800 and will allow the university to guarantee housing to first-time freshmen for up to four years. The plan includes creation of theme-based living communities to integrate academics with the living arrangements.

A freshman building, scheduled for completion by the fall of 2005, will have 230 beds in double-occupancy apartments. Two buildings for sophomores, junior and seniors would hold 176 single-occupancy apartments and are scheduled for completion in the spring of 2006.