

# UCSC moves ahead with research center report

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SANTA CRUZ — The UCSC administration is going ahead with an environmental impact report on the proposed research and development center at the campus.

Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer has called the step an important one in the project's planning process.

Environmental Studies Professor James Pepper, director of the project's environmental assessment staff, said by next October he hopes to have a "hard-nosed and clear" assessment of how the project will affect the campus and community environment, what modifications to the project could mitigate those effects, and what impacts could not be mitigated.

"We have a fundamental task," he said Wednesday, "and that is to focus the issues so we're talking about things that are real, and not imagined."

Sinsheimer has said UCSC badly needs the income that a research and development center would provide, and that academic needs could be served as well.

Although no plans have been decided upon, a marketing feasibility study has shown the 60-acre, 550,000 square-foot center must be 60 percent manufacturing and 40 percent pure research to be profitable. The original proposal was for a pure research center.

UCSC would build the center and lease space to clients whose work would dovetail with faculty research — areas such as bioengineering, marine biology, computer software and scientific instrumentation.

Sinsheimer has vowed no weapons research would be allowed.

The go-ahead for the EIR was given early this month.

"We want to report on what the project is at any given time, what kind of changes

are produced and what explicit criteria are used to evaluate it," Pepper said of the report.

"We want to deal with explicit mitigation measures, or modifications to the project to reduce the kinds of environmental changes that may be incurred, and then in all candor lay it out: what can and cannot be mitigated. If these impacts are important, that's the way they will be reported. If they are not significant, then that's the way they'll be reported."

Pepper, a 12-year Santa Cruz resident, prepared the environmental impact study on the Long Coastal Marine Lab at Younger Lagoon and one for a proposed university observatory in the Santa Lucia Mountains. His writings in the early '70s helped shape the way EIRs are now prepared and reviewed. He has been provost of College Eight and chairman of the Environmental Studies Board.

"The work will stand on its own merit," he said. "I'm taking every reasonable and practicable step, and some that are hard to take, to maintain independence. Our assessment is not the assessment of the university administration."

His academic interest is in planning, he said, and in "logical and reasoned decisions."

"I tend to favor the analytic, and don't consider myself a dogmatic environmentalist in any way, shape, or form. Environmental values are critical to any society, but you can't get by on dogma. I think they (the values) need to be negotiated in a reasonable and open fashion."

In making environmental judgements, he said, his team will rely on the "written record." planning and zoning laws, decision made here in the past, and current statements of policy.

"If the regents' guidelines say 'maintain community character,' for example, you're going to get a lot of differing ideas on what that is. . . . We have to rely more on published statements of that reflected by elected officials than on some random sample of opposing point of view."

Community opinion will be solicited, however, during the process. Public workshops to discuss potential impacts of the proposed center are planned. Topics will be growth management and housing, traffic and public services, water use and waste disposal, and impacts and natural systems.

A site workshop on the seven locations now under consideration for the center will be held Jan. 27 at 7:30 in the Nelson Center.

A site workshop for the campus community is set for 7:30 tonight in Classroom Building Unit 1.

When the entire study is complete, a public hearing will be held for community members to speak on the record, and concerned agencies — Department of Fish and Game, CalTrans, the city and county — all will have a chance to review and comment on the findings, Pepper said.

The university is required to respond to all expressed concerns, he said.

There are three major points in deciding to proceed with the center, Pepper said. After the EIR comment, the administration here decides, and sends the decision to the university president. If he approves, the final decision is up to the regents.

At no point does an elected official enter into the process, but Pepper said the body of comment from the public hearing and letters will be considered in the university decisions.