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Faculty and Staff

# UCSC's interim chancellor says he's not a 'caretaker'

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STAFF WRITER

Karl Pister will serve as interim chancellor at UC-Santa Cruz for two years, but he does not see himself as a caretaker.

"I would not come here if I had been asked to be a caretaker," Pister said during a press conference on campus yesterday, his first meeting with local media since his appointment last month.

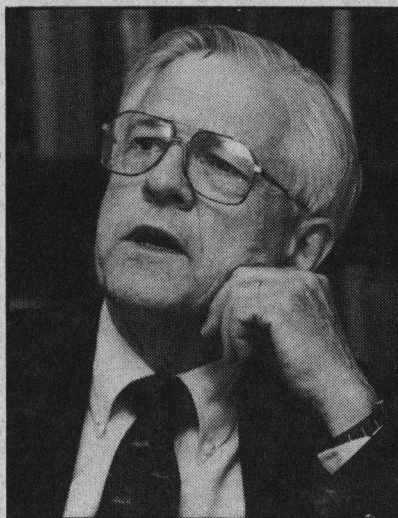
Pister, 65, who has spent 39 years on the faculty at UC-Berkeley, admitted his knowledge of UCSC and its workings is limited.

"I'll become a Banana Slug instead of a Bear," he said, referring to the mascots of the Santa Cruz and Berkeley campuses. Pister said he wants to learn about UCSC: "What is the animation, who are the people, how does it want to continue."

Pister said some "natural anxiety and anticipation" about the new job, and said he was surprised about an item on the Register-Pajaronian editorial page comparing the hot-seat atmosphere of the chancellor's post to the mayor of New York's job.

"I wouldn't have come if I had thought it would be so bad" that the job couldn't be accomplished, he said.

Pister is replacing Robert Stevens, who is leaving after four years at UCSC to practice law in



Kurt Ellison

## Karl Pister

London.

UCSC is a politically active campus, and the chancellor has traditionally had to contend with volatile issues, whether centered on the campus or involving the university's role in the community at large.

"A university is imbedded in society; it's part of it," Pister said. "As much as one would like to be in an ivory tower, one simply cannot be in an ivory tower. The university and the community have to learn to live together."

When a reporter made a reference to Berkeley being the central campus of the UC system, Pister said, "Berkeley is extremely de-

centralized. I want to put to rest the idea that I am a centralist."

Pister said he supports the idea of academic decisions generally being made at the lower levels of administration, rather than having everything come down from the top. He said there appears to be a "moving together" of the teaching and research functions of American universities after a period of emphasis on research.

The research emphasis "had gone a little too far," Pister said.

"We lost touch," he said, adding that UCSC had not gone as far toward research emphasis as other universities.

Pister, who has been with UC-Berkeley's College of Engineering for 10 years, will take office Aug. 1. When Pister was appointed, David Gardner, president of the UC system, said he was appointing an interim chancellor because UCSC is facing a number of decisions for its long-range direction.

Gardner said he wants to develop that plan, then pick a chancellor "whose views and strengths are compatible with those plans."

Pister, 65, said he could have retired this year, gone back to teaching, or found something else to do.

"Neither of the first two were very attractive to me," he said.

Pister's salary will be \$150,000 annually.