

Chancellor submits UCSC growth plan

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SANTA CRUZ — UC Santa Cruz Chancellor Robert Stevens night officially notified Mayor John Laird Thursday night of campus enrollment growth plans for the next 13 years.

But, as the City Council and the public already know, Laird stole the thunder from the message earlier this week when he revealed details of the plan that Stevens had relayed to him in earlier private conversations.

Laird admitted Thursday afternoon that he made a calculated decision to burn the chancellor by revealing the plans in advance of the university's official release. Laird defended his decision, saying that Tuesday's council meeting was the last chance for the city to

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influence Stevens to pursue slower enrollment growth.

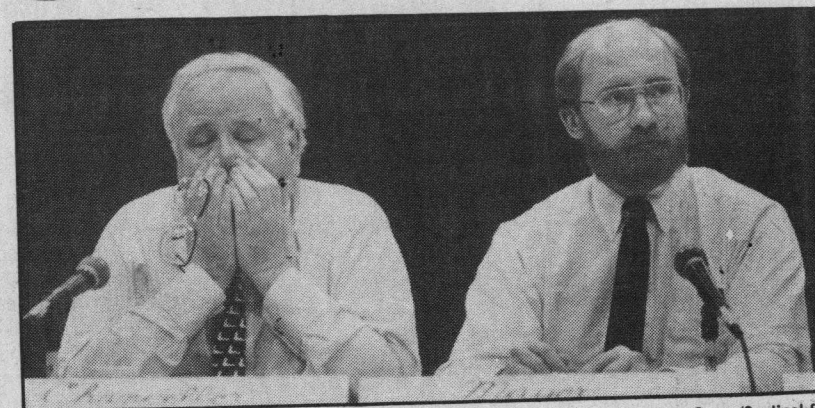
The new plan, which Stevens submitted to the UC system-wide administration Wednesday, abandons the proposal he made in October to restrict growth to 160 more students a year for six years.

Stevens' new plan calls for 'balanced growth' to 15,000 students by the year 2006 — a steady addition of about 400 students a year starting in 1990.

Next year's enrollment will be 185 students more than this year, according to Stevens'

proposal. In 1989-90, it will increase by 300 students, and then will grow by 400 students a year for a decade after that.

University officials had hinted previously at this kind of growth pattern — which is favored by many faculty members and some UC system administrators — but it was not set out as a goal until now. The new plan still faces review and approval by the UC Regents. The regents have gathered similar enrollment plans from all nine campuses. In October, they'll see how the campus proposals match the tide of students expected to wash over the system in coming years. They'll decide how to load existing campuses, and when to start planning additional campuses.



Dan Coyro/Sentinel file

Please see UCSC — A6 Chancellor Stevens, left, and Mayor John Laird.

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For the next two years, UCSC's housing additions will outpace enrollment growth, Stevens pointed out in a prepared statement that accompanied the enrollment plan announcement.

In his letter to UC Senior Vice President William Frazer, who requested the enrollment plan, Stevens emphasized that the campus will need heavy university support for building more housing and classrooms to handle the enrollment increases.

Stevens cited water development as a critical issue between the campus and community — also a top concern of the city's, Laird said. Stevens said he hopes new underground water sources discovered on campus will help ease the campus's impact on city water.

Several campus administration staff members said this week that the chancellor was perplexed and angry about Laird's leak, in advance of the dinner meeting and official release of the growth proposal. But the chancellor's own remarks were restrained.

Stevens said he had understood that his regular conversations with Laird were informal and private, but "these talks were not ultra-confidential."

However, he added, "I do prefer issuing my own press releases."

Laird said he and Stevens had never explicitly agreed that their informal talks would be confidential. "There weren't ground rules, except maybe assumed ones." He added that he knew the chancellor would not be expecting him to toss

the information into the public arena.

Laird said he appreciates the informal talks, and sees them as an "attempt to break down the mistrust of the Sinsheimer era of communicating through the newspapers."

But at the same time, he said, "It puts me in an awkward position with the council. ... When I find out important information the council should know, should I wait three weeks for the council to be officially informed?"

This time, Laird said, the temptation was too much. Besides, he added, he hoped the council reaction would actually factor into Stevens' final proposal.

Before Thursday's dinner, Laird said he was prepared to face an angry chancellor. After the dinner, the two appeared fairly relaxed and each independently remarked that the meeting was congenial.

But they both said they failed to agree on the terms of a planned summit meeting between Stevens and Laird, which is supposed to be a follow-up to the April 5 city-campus public forum.

Council members say the meeting to discuss campus enrollment should be open to the public. Stevens said university officials believe the meeting was intended to be private, although the court-settlement document that called for the meeting doesn't specify. Stevens said the two sides will negotiate further on the point, and may seek an opinion from the judge who oversaw the meeting agreement.