Chancellor to rein in UCSC growth

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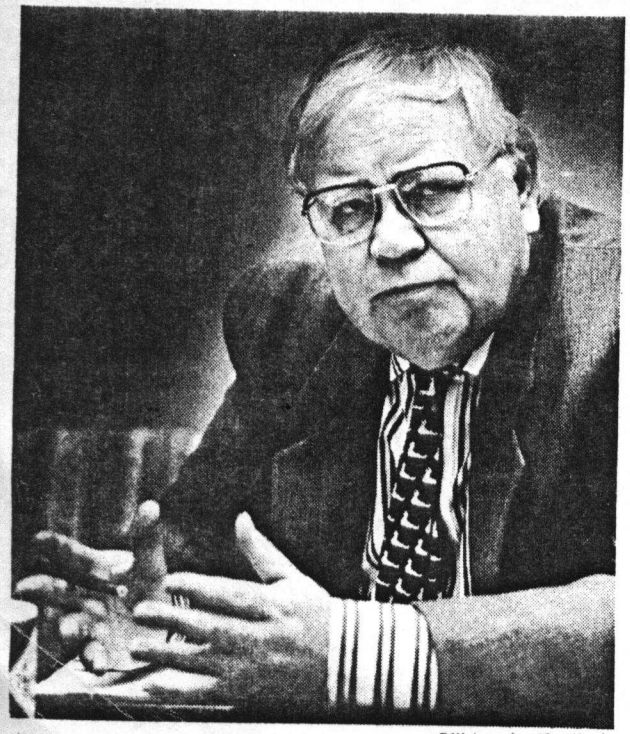
Stevens sees a slow climb to 15,000



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

UCSC Chancellor Robert B. Stevens

By JAMIE S. CACKLER

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SANTA CRUZ — Campus growth at UC Santa Cruz will be slowed immediately and extensively under the guiding hand of its new chancellor, Robert Bocking Stevens.

In his first major address to UCSC faculty, and in an interview prior to it, Stevens on the one hand affirmed plans for a 15,000-student population by 2005, yet on the other vowed a firm grip on the rate of growth.

For the next six years, he said, the university will add an average of 109 more undergraduates and 68 graduate students — far fewer than the nearly 1,000 added last year and about 300 this year.

Further, if the university exceeds its growth goals for this fall, he pledged to "freeze" enrollment for up to two years.

In an interview Wednesday, Stevens outlined his plans for development of the campus, an issue of controversy in recent years, both on campus and at Santa Cruz City Hall.

In fact, he said he has come to realize that rifts among campus factions and between campus and town are so deep that he is discouraged, and wonders if he is capable of healing them.

Repair of relations will be one of his major missions.

Chancellor Stevens' winning, diplomatic manner has already been widely acknowledged on campus and in town. But the man who prefers "consultation to confrontation" made it clear he's not an equivocator.

"As chancellor, I must be conscious not only of what it means to the university during this administration, but what is right for the UCSC chancellor 30 years hence," Stevens said.

For example, he said, a proposed Eastern Access Road connecting Highway 9 and the campus "may not be politically convenient now ... but I have to think about what is right for the year 2030. I cannot necessarily choose the popular thing."

He'll stand his ground when it comes time for him to make a final decision on any issue, he said. The public may not like what he decides and what he says, but he will say it politely.

Tests of his style and resolve will come soon, he said. "I am reaching the point of making many hard decisions."

He must decide in which departments to place new faculty positions, how the campus is to balance its ratio of undergraduate and graduate students as the campus

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grows and how to hold back enrollment while the campus adjusts to the growth shocks of last year and the year before.

Besides limiting growth during the next six years, he pledged to "freeze" enrollment for up to two years if enrollment exceeds expectations this year. Final enrollment figures for the fall quarter will not be known for at least two weeks.

Nevertheless, the campus is aiming for an enrollment of 12,000 to 15,000 students by 2005.

During the period that student population growth is restricted, campus plans include the addition of dorms for more than 400 students each year for three years.

Speaking before the Academic Senate, Stevens urged faculty members "to remember these statistics when you have discussions in boards or conversations with friends downtown who may be concerned with growth."

He later admonished faculty to assume the "responsibilties" that go with free speech. Specifically, he said, "I hope we all will avoid the trap of lobbying for parking and — more importantly — faculty slots while on campus and yet implying when we are downtown that we are against growth and appropriate access."

Faculty members listened intently as Stevens outlined his plans for academic changes.

Last year's enrollment surge entitled the campus to more faculty positions, but Stevens said he intends to allocate them slowly over the next six years, rather than having "a fat year followed by five lean ones."

The slow distribution of faculty to departments and colleges will give the campus time to decide what, if any, new undergraduate and graduate departments should be added, and which existing ones need most to grow, he said.

Stevens said he will seek to add new graduate "professional" programs. However, "we must make certain that the professional schools we develop relate logically to our traditional strength in liberal arts and sciences."

Law, medicine, dentistry, veterinary science and agriculture would not make sense for UCSC because other such programs are offered at other campuses; schools of fine arts, education, and management and policy studies might, he said.

Having admitted earlier his discouragement over the state of university relations, Stevens nevertheless affirmed an optimistic view of his new campus.

"I believe this university is poised to take off in a remarkable way," he said. "The future lies with institutions like ours. As Sen. Joseph Biden might well argue, 'All we have to fear is fear itself.' "