

✓ Catalyzing the campus

Pister seeks UCSC harmony

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SANTA CRUZ — The man who made the "very difficult decision" to leave Berkeley for the UC Santa Cruz chancellor's chair said he envisions himself as a "catalyst" for forming a consensus on campus.

"Being given the opportunity to be a chancellor even for a brief time is extremely exciting," said Karl S. Pister, the 65-year-old engineering professor named interim chancellor at UCSC on Friday.

"In this, perhaps my last (University of California) position, it's a wonderful chance to make a difference," said Pister in a telephone interview shortly after the announcement at the Board of Regents' meeting in Irvine.

The board approved an annual salary of \$150,000 for Pister, who figured he would be on the job by Aug. 1. He will replace Chancellor

Robert Stevens, who announced his resignation in January.

The expectation is that he will serve up to two years, and then a permanent selection will be made.

UC President David Gardner's decision to appoint Pister, whom he has known for 20 years, was greeted with optimism by the chairman of the UCSC Academic Senate.

"I do not know Karl Pister, but people who do know him at Berkeley ... think he is a great person, and I am very pleased with the appointment," said Professor William Domhoff. "I think he'll be a harmonizer and an adjudicator."

Arnold Leiman, a UC Berkeley psychology professor who is chairman of that campus's Academic Senate, called Pister "a model of a good faculty member."

Leiman said Pister gave full attention to research, teaching and

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Karl S. Pister
New UC Santa Cruz chancellor

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Pister

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university service during his nearly 40 years at Berkeley, first as a professor and then as dean of the College of Engineering.

"He's amongst the more respected members of the academic community," said Leiman, who has been at Berkeley for 28 years. "A very important part of his focus of attention are the many aspects of undergraduate education."

More than 90 percent of UCSC's 10,052-member student body are pursuing undergraduate degrees.

Pister said being an interim selection while a permanent person is recruited places a special burden on him.

"I think being interim chancellor creates a sense of urgency that one doesn't take an overly long time getting to know the campus," said Pister. "Santa Cruz is at the stage where a lot of things are happening ... my job is to make sure a suitable discussion takes place."

Pister emphasized, however, that he will take time learning the varying points of view on campus.

"I'm burdened by the fact that I'm an engineer by training, and we like to gather all the facts first," he said.

After spending his entire career at Berkeley, Pister said it was a difficult move to make, but he will enjoy the challenge.

He said he knows some things about UCSC, but, "I only know Santa Cruz from the outside; I need to learn about it from the inside."

He's not coming to campus with a ready-made agenda of what he wants accomplished, said Pister.

"I think it would be very unwise to do that," he said. "University faculty members typically are so busy doing their own things ... frequently one needs a catalyst to ... help form a consensus."

Leiman said in addition to Pister being a cordial man with a "keen analytical sense," he "commands the respect of the President's Office."

In fact, said Pister, when he met Gardner 20 years ago, the now chief of the UC system needed Pister's help getting a program approved.

"He came to me hat in hand ... our roles were certainly reversed," said Pister, adding that it was his relationship with Gardner, plus his ability to build a consensus, that got him the UCSC job.

Gardner, who was traveling on business in Asia when his choice was announced Friday, said earlier that Pister will bring to the job "significant and successful administrative experience and widespread respect for his scholarship achievements and committed interest in students."

Gardner said he appointed an interim chancellor "because a number of important issues are coming to fruition at Santa Cruz, such as a review of UCSC's colleges and an examination of the campus's long-range academic direction."

"I felt it was important for this academic planning to develop fully, to establish a firm direction for UCSC's academic programs, and then to recruit a

permanent chancellor whose views and strengths are compatible with those plans."

Pister has been on a yearlong leave of absence from Berkeley since stepping down as engineering dean in July 1990 after 10 years.

He oversaw a budget of \$75 million in the College of Engineering, with an undergraduate enrollment of 2,300 students and a graduate enrollment of 1,500.

There were 230 full-time faculty members when he left the dean's post.

He has served as chairman and vice chairman of both departmental and faculty senate committees.

In 1979-80, Pister headed the Universitywide Academic Council and Assembly of the Academic Senate — the top academic governance position in the university — and was faculty representative to the Board of Regents.

He was a member of the advisory committee that in 1990 organized the historic All-University Faculty Conference on Faculty and Graduate Student Affirmative Action, and he continues to be involved in follow-up activities.

Stevens, who is stepping down after serving four years as UCSC's chancellor, said Pister has "superb skills which will enable the Santa Cruz campus to consolidate the progress we have made over the past few years."

Stevens will finish a book after leaving UCSC, and then will work in the London office of the Washington, D.C., law firm of Covington & Burling.