

# City OKs letter demanding slow growth at UCSC

UCSC - growth

By JOAN RAYMOND

Sentinel Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ — The town-gown relationship between the City Council and UC Santa Cruz officials is strained again.

City Council members decided Tuesday to send a demand letter to university officials, calling for a slowdown of campus growth until community problems are addressed.

The strongly worded letter to be signed by Mayor Jane Weed demands that the university slow and scale down its plans for increasing enrollment over the next 20 years until the city housing stock, roads and other public services are improved.

Echoing recent demands to retiring Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer

from protesting students, the letter asks Sinsheimer to delay signing a proposed long-range development plan — the blueprint now being drafted for 20-year growth. The chancellor's signature would set in motion the process for environmental impact reports to be prepared this summer on plans to increase enrollment from the current 8500 students to as many as 15,000 within 20 years.

Council members are asking the signing be delayed until after incoming chancellor Robert Stevens takes over from Sinsheimer in June.

The letter — being sent to members of the university's long-range plan development committee — tells university officials to give city concerns an equal footing with statewide concerns for higher education.

The letter says council members and city advisory commissioners are concerned the university will take the attitude "the destruction or impairment of the quality of life here is a small price to pay for benefits to higher education in the state as a whole.

"This is the wrong framework and leads to the wrong questions."

The long-range plans "should address statewide mitigations to your enrollment problems," concludes the letter.

"It's not necessary to destroy or severely damage a community and create a climate of extreme town/gown hostility to fulfill the university's mission."

Councilman Arnold Levine reluctantly agreed to vote with majority members to send the letter, but he

did not like the wording.

Levine said the letter was too harsh and undiplomatic. He said the city had legitimate "serious" concerns, but he likened the letter to hitting the university with a two-by-four to get its attention.

Councilman Michael Rotkin countered that "nobody in the community" had anything positive to say in recent workshops about the increased enrollment plans.

City Council relations with Sinsheimer have been very bumpy. In a major instance, Sinsheimer's proposal to build a research and development center on campus several years ago prompted an outcry from city officials and community residents. The protests ultimately resulted in the passage of a citywide ballot initiative as an attempt give

the city veto power over the project.

Since the project has been put on hold, the legal clout of the ballot measure has never been tested in the courts. As a state agency, the university is considered to be independent from the city's control.

More recently, council majority members were particularly irked with Sinsheimer over a letter sent by Sinsheimer to Paul Hall, president of the UCSC Alumni Association. The letter was brought to their attention by Councilman Michael Rotkin, a campus lecturer.

In the Jan. 12 letter, Sinsheimer asks for Hall's advice on dealing with the Santa Cruz community.

Sinsheimer told Hall the current majorities of the council and the board of supervisors are in office "only because of the student vote."

Since the students are already consulted on campus growth issues, Sinsheimer said he found it "redundant" to also consult with the elected officials.

He added he believed the university must "preserve its legal autonomy" and consider the needs of the people of the state as well as local interests.

Council members made no comments at Tuesday's meeting about Sinsheimer's demeanor, but Mayor Weed did say that she has found Stevens to be "very open and jovial. It bodes well for our relationship." She met with the new chancellor for the first time last week.

Added Councilman John Laird: "The new chancellor has said that he wants to look for our common ground. That's what we want to do."