

UC president won't talk to city about R&D center

By BUD O'BRIEN

When the president of the University of California comes to Santa Cruz later this month, he is not going to discuss the proposed research and development center on the UC-Santa Cruz campus with city or county officials.

UCSC spokesman Tom O'Leary said today that David Gardner, the new president of the university system, will be visiting the Santa Cruz campus for the first time Feb. 22-23 and wants to devote his visit to talks with the Academic Senate and other get-acquainted-with-the-campus activities.

Mayor John Laird of Santa Cruz had requested that Gardner attend a public hearing on the proposed development while he's here. Laird, as does county Supervisor Gary Patton, wants Gardner to hear the city's and county's side of the dispute that has erupted over the proposed R&D center.

UCSC Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer has angered city and county officials with his refusal to submit the proposal to develop the R&D center on 106 acres of campus land to the local planning agencies for approval. Sinsheimer's position is that the state constitution exempts the university from the planning regulations of local governments.

The voters of Santa Cruz last November approved a ballot referendum, Measure A, that calls on the university to adhere to

local planning regulations. But the university is not bound by that vote, and Chancellor Sinsheimer has indicated that it will not abide by it.

O'Leary said today that President Gardner doesn't feel it's appropriate to discuss the R&D proposal with city officials because the proposal has not actually been submitted to him yet. It is in fact still in the conceptual stage.

Gardner has agreed to hold a press conference while he's here, however, and he will no doubt receive questions about the R&D center at that time.

Meanwhile, Chancellor Sinsheimer, who has indicated his willingness to cooperate with local officials short of giving them veto power over the project, has announced the formation of an "expert panel" to provide him with a financial analysis of the proposed project.

A UCSC faculty committee report issued last October questioned estimates of the project's financial return and recommended further financial analysis.

In announcing formation of the panel, Sinsheimer said: "I agree that the center's financial projection is an important question and accept the faculty committee's recommendation to evaluate thoroughly the matter of financial feasibility."

The "expert panel" chosen by Sinsheimer will be chaired by John Petersen, president of Cabrillo College, and will include as members Jack

Baskin, a Santa Cruz developer; A. Reese Davis, president of County Bank; Robert Petersen, county assessor; Edward "Bud" Prindle, vice president of Wilson Bros. real estate firm; Johna Vanderpool, assistant vice president and branch manager, Citicorp Savings; and UCSC economics professors Jack Michaelsen and Ronald Grieson.

Also released over the weekend were two reports having to do with community opinion and traffic impacts of the proposed R&D center.

The Environmental Assessment Group, hired by UCSC to prepare an environmental impact report on the proposed center, released the reports, which have been sent to public libraries in the county as well as to campus libraries.

The traffic report was of particular interest in that it concluded that regardless of whether the R&D center is built, "unacceptable traffic conditions along Mission Street and at the intersection of Highways 1 and 9" would occur by 1993.

To alleviate that, an eastern access road to the campus would be needed.

Under a contract signed when the university came to Santa Cruz, the responsibility for building an eastern access road rests with the county. County supervisors, however, have indicated they are not going to approve the construction of the road to serve a "profit-making" venture such as the R&D center.