

The Regents of the University of California

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON UC MERCED

July 19, 2001

The Special Committee on UC Merced met on the above date at UCSF-Laurel Heights, San Francisco.

Members present: Regents Atkinson, Connerly, O. Johnson, S. Johnson, Kozberg, Lee, and Marcus; Advisory members T. Davis, Morrison, and Faculty Representative Cowan

In attendance: Regents Davies, Hopkinson, Lansing, Montoya, Moores, Parsky, Preuss, Sayles, and Seymour, Regent-designate Sainick, Faculty Representative Viswanathan, Secretary Trivette, General Counsel Holst, Provost King, Senior Vice Presidents Darling and Mullinix, Vice Presidents Broome, Drake, Gómez, and Hershman, Chancellors Cicerone, Dynes, Greenwood, Orbach, Tomlinson-Keasey, Vanderhoef, and Yang, Vice Chancellor Bainton representing Chancellor Bishop, and Recording Secretary Nietfeld

The meeting convened at 10:25 a.m. with Special Committee Chair Lee presiding.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of May 17, 2001 were approved.

2. UPDATE ON CAMPUS PHYSICAL PLANNING, MERCED CAMPUS

Chancellor Tomlinson-Keasey reported that the Merced campus' new Executive Vice Chancellor, Mr. David Ashley, had been in office since July 1 and introduced him to the Special Committee. Due to outreach efforts, in fall 2001 the number of Central Valley students attending a University of California campus will increase by 15 percent over the prior year. She recalled that at the May meeting Committee members had requested a presentation from the project architects for Phase I of construction. Today's remarks will be presented by Vice Chancellor Graves, Mr. John Kriken of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, and Ms. Laura Hartman, architect for the library project. The Chancellor noted that the library was to be named in honor of Dottie and Leo Kolligian.

Chancellor Tomlinson-Keasey recalled that the design of the Merced campus was intended to reflect the academic mission of the University of California. The campus' goals include reflecting the technology of the 21st century; it will reach out to the diverse populations of the Central Valley and provide a welcoming environment. In addition, the campus will have the principle of sustainability at its core, which is in keeping with building a campus in the new century. Much of the growth in the State of California will take place in the Central

Valley, and the Merced campus should serve as a model for this growth. Care must be taken with the environmental and agricultural resources.

Vice Chancellor Graves reported that the campus administration had attempted to assemble the best talent available for the project, noting that it is attractive to planners and designers. The planning team is led by the firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in association with other design and architectural firms.

Mr. Kriken used a series of slides as background for his presentation. He noted that the plan for the Merced campus is defined by basic principles that have been inspired by the special qualities of the site and the requirements of academic life in the new century. The campus will be located near Lake Yosemite, at the edge of the master plan development for Merced County. The lake and its associated park will provide a highly valuable amenity for the campus setting, particularly in the early years before the trees have matured. The campus will be located in the southwest corner of the 7,000 acres that comprise the Virginia Smith Trust land. The campus reserve of 340 acres will be held for undetermined future use, while a green band consisting of 750 acres will establish a permanent perimeter for the campus and the community. In addition to the lake, the property contains a second small lake and two irrigation canals. The canals are intended to become major landscape features of the campus, defining corridors for walking and bicycling. While the campus land is relatively flat, a swale runs through the center of the site and provides for storm drainage. The academic precinct will consist of 150 acres to accommodate 25,000 students at build out. The campus plans to provide housing for 50 percent of the students and faculty. Mr. Kriken described in greater detail plans for facilities such as the student center. Housing will be provided in six distinctive neighborhoods, each convenient to the campus as a whole. A town center will serve both the University and the community. Mr. Kriken expressed his enthusiasm for the design of the Merced campus as a model for growth in the 21st century.

Ms. Hartman, of the architectural firm Fernau-Hartman, discussed guidelines for the design of the Merced campus. With the aid of slides, she presented a vision of how the new campus will appear. The first guideline, technology for the 21st century, calls for buildings that are adaptable over time. In keeping with the goal of outreach to residents of the Central Valley, the campus should attract the larger community. The guidelines have a strong emphasis on developing life in the public realm, with outdoor rooms that extend the classroom into the landscape. Roads and paths will be used to connect buildings rather than to separate them. Ms. Harman noted that the planners and designers are taking seriously the goal of sustainability. Buildings will be designed with Merced's climate in mind. A further guideline is that each new building should attain a LEED (leadership for energy and environment design) certification. The intention will be to learn from the environmental design of the buildings and to use this knowledge for future growth. In compliance with the goal of serving as a model for growth in the Central Valley, the architecture of the buildings will grow from the specifics of the location, with variety nestled in the framework of continuity that the landscape will provide.

Vice Chancellor Graves reported that at the November meeting The Regents will be asked to approve the Long Range Development Plan and the related Environmental Impact Report for the Merced campus. The Regents will also be asked to consider the partnership between the University and the Virginia Smith Trust for the development of the campus community and to approve the design of the Phase I buildings. In January 2002 the initial student housing projects will be presented.

Regent Lee cautioned that the planners should take into account both the water supply at the site and the increased traffic that the campus will create. He was concerned about the campus maintaining a positive relationship with the community.

Vice Chancellor Graves recalled that one of the attractions of the Merced site was the availability of an abundant water supply, which has been confirmed in studies performed since the site was approved. The issue of traffic will be addressed in the campus EIR.

Regent Hopkinson noted that a thorough document must be serving as the foundation of the campus' planning efforts and asked for a copy of a summary of the document. She asked for an overall statement that would communicate the campus administration's enthusiasm for the project. Regent Hopkinson recalled that the University is considering year-round operations and asked how the Merced campus would accommodate summer enrollment, given the nature of the climate. Ms. Hartman acknowledged that the buildings will need to be air conditioned, but the intention is to take advantage of natural ventilation in the spring and the fall. The addition of trees at the site should also provide a cooling element. Mr. Kriken added that the plan has been oriented to afternoon breezes that will cool the air.

Regent Hopkinson asked about the role of the Merced community in the development of the master plan for the campus. Vice Chancellor Graves recalled that the County of Merced and the University had been jointly planning for both the campus and the associated community since 1999. The two relevant EIRs will be considered simultaneously by The Regents and by the County of Merced and the City of Merced. These documents call for an integration of the physical layout and the infrastructure of the campus and the new community. The County and the University have sponsored a series of planning fairs for members of the community. The concept of the town center arose from the community planning process. The campus will hold public workshops on its draft Long Range Development Plan, and the County will hold similar workshops in connection with its planning effort. Mr. Graves reported that the community interest in the campus had been more programmatic than physical.

Regent Montoya noted that concerns had been expressed that the new site for the campus would have a negative effect on agricultural interests in the area. Chancellor Tomlinson-Keasey explained that when the site was moved from its original location to the southwest corner of the Trust land, the community was relocated to a site that is not on the Trust property. This move was made in order to accommodate environmental concerns. She acknowledged that the move would result in an impact on some agricultural lands over a 35-

year period land but that there are ways to ensure that any negative impact does not spill over to prime agricultural land. She noted that the first acres to be developed for the community are not prime agricultural and that the build out will take from ten to fifteen years.

Vice Chancellor Graves continued that both the City and the County of Merced have growth policies which are designed to protect agricultural land. The campus itself will not impose on any agricultural property. The strategy of the County is to contain growth in a specified location, with clear boundaries. The alternative would be to permit individual property owners and developers to present their separate proposals. That approach would have a far more devastating impact on agriculture.

Regent Connerly underscored the need for the campus administration to craft a presentation that conveys its sense of enthusiasm for the development of the new campus and town center.

Regent Marcus requested examples of how the campus will address the teaching, research, and learning continuum in innovative ways, particularly from an environmental standpoint. Ms. Hartman explained that the intention would be for people to be in daily, conscious contact with their surroundings. The buildings will be used to raise issues related to sustainability and use. Regent Marcus stressed the need for input from the scientists who will be teaching and doing research in the facilities.

President Atkinson pointed out that each campus in the University system was moving rapidly to adopt to the digital environment. He suggested that the facilities at UC Merced would not be unique. Regent Marcus observed that the Merced campus provides the opportunity of a clean slate that the other campuses do not have. He believed it was incumbent upon the planners and architects to design research facilities that are truly innovative and supported by the future users of the buildings.

Chancellor Tomlinson-Keasey reported that there had been faculty input on each of the buildings. She focused on the library because it offers a clear example of the changes in information technology. Research librarians will function in a new way, waiting online for electronic queries from users. In the library of the 21st century, the public spaces may incorporate food service in order to facilitate the use of the library as a meeting place. The campus held an all-day workshop for people interested in asynchronous learning environments. Such a learning environment might suggest the need for classrooms of different sizes, with fewer large lecture halls. Because there are no faculty at UC Merced, the campus relies upon advice from faculty from around the system.

Regent Marcus expressed his support for a thematic approach to design rather than the construction of disconnected buildings that play homage to individual architects. Ms. Hartman assured Regent Marcus that the architectural firms that are designing the first three buildings are working together to standardize the palette of the campus.

In response to a question from Regent Kozberg regarding land held by the Cyril Smith Trust, Chancellor Tomlinson-Keasey explained that the Trust property had been found to have a significant array of vernal pools. The Trust will take part in the program funded by the Governor to preserve these habitats.

Regent Kozberg asked about the participation of the Urban Land Institute and asked how that would fit in with the planning process. Vice Chancellor Graves explained that the institute, at the invitation of a project sponsor, assembles a team of experts to test the project for feasibility and come up with new ideas. The administration proposes to bring a panel onto the project to focus on issues such as how the campus fits into the broader community. Numerous questions with regard to infrastructure will come into play concerning the joint development of the campus and the community in the years ahead.

Regent S. Johnson spoke in support of the designs that had been presented by Mr. Kriken and Ms. Hartman. She raised the issue of the canals and any associated drainage problems. Vice Chancellor Graves reported that the campus is in discussion with the Merced Irrigation District, which owns the canals. The district is concerned that the irrigation function of the canals be continued. The district has been open to working with the campus to develop joint-use strategies.

Regent S. Johnson reported that she had received a large number of letters from independent contractors. She stressed that one purpose of the Merced campus was to promote economic development in the Central Valley. The Regents are sympathetic to the concept of open competition for construction contracts in order to provide an opportunity for local companies to participate.

Regent Kozberg asked that the administration consider broadening the scope of the involvement of the Urban Land Institute, particularly with regard to doing things in a new and different way.

Regent O. Johnson spoke of the campus administration's many and varied efforts to involve the people of the Central Valley in the planning process for UC Merced. She appreciated the fact that the campus took community considerations into account.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Attest:

Secretary