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U of I committee starts presidential search

STAFF and WIRE REPORTS

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The retiring president of the University of Illinois got a standing ovation at his final meeting of the school's board of trustees.

Meeting in Springfield, the board also appointed a 19-member committee, including former Springfield Mayor Karen Hasara, to search for a new president.

B. Joseph White is stepping down at the end of the year after a scandal over political influence on university admissions. The board's meeting Thursday in Springfield was White's last as president.

White and U of I chancellor Richard Herman are stepping down following revelations that the Urbana-Champaign campus admitted students with political connections over better-qualified applicants.

White told the trustees Thursday that he regrets the admissions "problems." He called the scandal "a searing experience."

After his statement, the trustees and staff stood to applaud White.

The search committee — aided by search firm Isaacson, Miller — is expected to recommend eight to 10 candidates to the full board of trustees. The schedule calls for the board to choose a president by July.

The committee will be chaired by trustee Pamela Strobel.

Hasara, one of three trustees appointed to the search panel, has two U of I degrees. She was named to the U of I board in September.

Also appointed to the committee from the University of Illinois Springfield were:

* Faculty members Tih-Fen Ting, chair of the campus senate and associate professor of environmental studies, and James Patrick Hall, director of the MBA program and vice chair of the campus senate.

* Student representative Charles Olivier, vice president of the Student Government Association. He is an undergraduate in accountancy and business administration.

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