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Hasara: U of I board may scrutinize future work contracts

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THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER

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A University of Illinois trustee hinted Tuesday that the board in the future might scrutinize more closely employment agreements such as the one that called for University of Illinois Springfield Chancellor Richard Ringeisen to receive a year of paid leave after his retirement as chancellor.

"Given our financial situation, a lot of things will be done differently at the university," said trustee Karen Hasara of Springfield. "That could be one of them."

Ringeisen's hiring deal in 2001 called for him to receive a year of paid administrative leave -- at his current salary of \$273,500 -- when he left the chancellor's office. The agreement did not require Ringeisen to perform any duties.

However, Ringeisen and U of I interim President Stanley Ikenberry agreed that instead of a year's paid leave, Ringeisen will serve as consultant for long-range planning and special assistant to the president for 14 months following his retirement on Oct. 31. He will be paid at the same annual rate, or about \$319,000 for the 14 months.

The U of I board is scheduled to consider that agreement at its meeting in Urbana today.

"We haven't really met as a board and I really can't speak for any changes that might be considered," said Hasara, former Springfield mayor. "We're really careful about the Open Meetings Act, so there hasn't been any discussion about it."

Ringeisen said through a spokesman Tuesday that he would reserve comment on his retirement agreement until after the board takes action.

U of I spokesman Thomas Hardy has said it is common in higher education for someone in Ringeisen's position to take a leave of absence following retirement, then return to a tenured faculty position.

However Ringeisen, 65, will not return to UIS's faculty although he holds the rank of professor in the school's mathematical sciences program.

Hasara said future provisions allowing high-level administrators paid leaves upon retirement could be examined closely by the board.

"But speaking for myself, if it's something that will be a deal-breaker for a president we really wanted...", she said.

Ringeisen and his wife plan to move to Clemson, S.C. after Oct. 31 to be closer to family. He is a former mathematics professor and department head at Clemson University.

Most U of I faculty and staff members, including administrators, have been required to take unpaid furlough days this spring as part of the university system's response to a growing appropriations shortfall from the state.

The furloughs and other cost-cutting measures, including a hiring freeze, were ordered to trim \$82 million from the U of I's operating budget.

Chris Dettro can be reached at 788-1510.

Consultant duties

Proposed duties for outgoing University of Illinois Springfield president Richard Ringeisen if the U of I board agrees today to hire him as a consultant following his retirement in October:

- Making recommendations for UIS development
- Aiding the transition to new leadership
- Promoting UIS.
- Acting as adviser to the next U of I president

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