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Quinn names former Springfield mayor, 4 others to U of I board

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CHAMPAIGN — Gov. Pat Quinn appointed five new members Friday to the University of Illinois board of trustees, including former Springfield Mayor Karen Hasara, who earned two degrees from what is now the University of Illinois Springfield.

Hasara, 68, joins the nine-member board in the wake of an admissions scandal that benefited politically connected applicants to the university.

She said she hopes she and her fellow board members quickly put the matter behind them. How they'll do that, though, remains to be seen.

"I'm totally open. I need a lot more input and information before I would begin to take any kind of a stand," Hasara said.

After news reports surfaced about the admissions scandal and the so-called "clout list," Quinn appointed a special commission that recommended all nine trustees should resign. The governor agreed with the recommendation, and seven trustees eventually turned in letters of resignation. Only Frances Carroll and James Montgomery, both of Chicago, refused to leave their positions.

Hasara said the university's alumni association contacted her a couple of weeks ago to see if she wanted her name included on a list of people to be considered for the board. She said yes. After that, she said, she had a series of conversations with officials from Quinn's office.

She said Friday she looks forward to "helping the University of Illinois maintain its high standards and its good reputation."

Hasara was in the first graduating class of what then was Sangamon State University, earning a bachelor's degree in psychology in 1972 and getting a teaching certificate. She also picked up a master's degree in legal studies in 1993 from SSU.

Hasara served in the Illinois Senate when lawmakers decided in 1995 that Sangamon State should become part of the University of Illinois system, which already included a Chicago campus and the flagship campus in Urbana-Champaign.

"I pushed very hard for that, and it's been a wonderful thing for Springfield," she said.

UIS Chancellor Richard Ringeisen praised Quinn's decision to appoint Hasara.

"It is really an exciting moment for UIS," he said. He said he is almost certain Hasara is the first UIS alumnus on the board of trustees.

The revamping of the university's board of trustees leaves the board with two downstate members — Hasara and Edward McMillan of Greenville, the only previous board member to be reappointed by Quinn. McMillan joined the board in May.

Christopher Kennedy of Kenilworth was named to the board Aug. 26, along with Lawrence Oliver II of Orland Park. Both communities are Chicago suburbs.

Of the remaining new trustees, Timothy Koritz lives in Roscoe, near Rockford; Pamela Strobel lives in Winnetka, a Chicago suburb; and Carlos Tortolero lives in Berwyn, another Chicago suburb.

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