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## Hasara on board as Illinois trustee

By **CHRIS DETTRO**  
**THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER**

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Former Springfield Mayor Karen Hasara is one of six new trustees named to the University of Illinois board by Gov. Pat Quinn in the wake of an admissions scandal.

An Illinois Admissions Commissions report found the previous board members failed to protect the university from admissions abuses that resulted in some applicants getting preferential treatment over the past five years because they had ties to trustees, lawmakers and others.

The scandal also resulted in U of I President B. Joseph White submitting his resignation effective at the end of the year. Hasara is one of 19 people serving on a committee to find his successor.

Hasara last week discussed with The State Journal-Register her role and what she hopes to accomplish.

Q: What does it mean to you to have been appointed to the U of I board of trustees?

A: I think it's still sinking in, exactly what it means.

The thing that means the most is that I'm the first UIS grad to be on the board, and it's been really exciting to people in Springfield and at UIS. We've had board members from Springfield, particularly those who were elected in the past, and they were wonderful board members. I've conferred with them. But they were graduates of Urbana. So that's the most meaningful thing, I think.

But the more I'm learning about the university and its impact, the more important being a trustee has become to me. I think it's much more meaningful than it was when I was appointed.

Q: You're a member of the search committee for the new president. What is the process and how is that going to play out?

A: The search committee is large. It's made of up of most, if not all, of the constituencies of the university.

We've had two meetings mostly going over the process of approving drafts of what we call a white paper. That has made us look at exactly what we're looking for and also will be used as a document for recruiting. It will be giving the best points about the university and the three campuses.

We've approved a list of publications that we'll be advertising in. So now, our next meeting is not until February, and between now and February, the search firm will be making contacts.

Q: What are you looking for in a new president — you personally, as well as the committee?

A: It's interesting that the qualities pretty much have come out at all the campus meetings. Somebody who can walk on water is what we'd like, of course.

But the major themes are ethics, being a great communicator, someone who understands academics and can communicate and get along well with all the different constituencies of the university, which are varied and diverse. And they must be a fundraiser.

Q: When do you hope to have somebody selected and in place?

A: We're hoping by July. So it's going to be a shorter time period than usual for these kinds of searches.

Q: In November, when White announced he was going to retire, the board and staff members who were there gave him a standing ovation. Do you feel that was appropriate given the circumstances?

A: My feeling is if they thought it was appropriate and they wanted to do that, then it was appropriate to them. Actually he's still quite popular, and I think people acknowledge that he has led the university well. People saw that, and they appreciated it.

Q: What are some of the other issues confronting the board and the university?

A: Obviously, funding is a major issue right now, as it is with almost all organizations in Illinois and actually throughout the nation. But it's going to be a major issue and problem for us. Other things are somewhat related to it.

I'm the chair now of the academic student affairs committee, and maintaining our academic excellence that has made the university great has to be a top priority.

Q: Where do you see UIS fitting into the university system down the road and now?

A: There are people there — at UIS and in the community — who feel UIS has been the stepchild. But there are others who think UIS has been treated very well, and that President White was good to the university.

We are very unique. Actually, all three campuses are very different from each other and each has a lot of strengths. But I do think having a trustee who's a graduate of UIS ... obviously I'll be watching and really pushing to make sure that we are included. But I really don't believe its going to be a problem, because with the new president, it's going to be obvious that's the intention.

We have a lot of strengths, particularly our online system which is better than the other two campuses; and also our small class size, the atmosphere, and our students get a lot more one-on-one attention.

Q: Do you see yourself as being an advocate for UIS on the board?

A: I see my main goal as being a representative of the university system. But certainly I will be an advocate because there is no other person on the board who knows UIS the way I do.

Q: What about the new board?

A: We all seem to be on the same wavelength, and I think we have diverse backgrounds. I'm the only government person, which has been helpful in some ways. The corporate people, the private-sector people have been very outstanding. I'm just excited about the makeup of the board. I think it's going to make a difference for the university.

I think people in Illinois don't realize what an economic impact the university has on the state. If you look at the faculty members, and the research projects that go on in the hospitals ... All of those things have a tremendous economic impact on Illinois, and that's something the board would like to get across — what the university really means to the state.

Chris Dettro can be reached at 788-1510.

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We need some young blood in some of these spots. We need tomorrows ideas not yesterdays .

danrichards

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now this is what i call working across party lines,now springfield will have a say in its state university,and the way it is run .good luck mrs hasara

trueconservative

2 hours ago

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I kind of agree with Bounty Hunter but on the other hand I am hoping Mrs. Hasara will push for more growth opportunities at U.I.S. It is a hidden gem and it's best days I think are still ahead.

Conservative Democrat

9 minutes ago

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She is not a UIS grad. UIS is not the same school Sangamon State once was. Do you think Davlin would have graduated (or almost graduated) from a school that had grades?

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