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UIS provost Berman suggested for interim chancellor

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The University of Illinois' president wants Harry Berman, No. 2 administrator at the university's Springfield campus since 2005, to become interim chancellor of UIS after Chancellor Richard Ringeisen retires in October.

"Harry has the respect of the entire campus and is the logical choice to head the Springfield campus while the search for a permanent chancellor proceeds," university President Michael Hogan said in a news release Tuesday announcing his recommendation.

Berman, 63, provost and vice chancellor of academic affairs at the University of Illinois Springfield, said he doesn't plan to apply for the permanent position.

"My commitment is to stay until a new person is in place," said Berman, a Springfield resident and native of Philadelphia.

The university's board of trustees is expected to approve Hogan's recommendation at its Sept. 23 meeting in Urbana. Berman's appointment then would take effect Nov. 1 and last during the six- to nine-month search for Ringeisen's permanent replacement.

Berman said he plans to appoint an interim vice chancellor for academic affairs who would start in January.

Berman holds bachelor's and doctorate degrees in psychology from the University of Chicago and Washington University, respectively. He joined the faculty of what was then Sangamon State University in 1977. Sangamon State became the University of Illinois Springfield in 1995.

Berman taught in the gerontology and human services programs until 1994, when he was named associate vice chancellor for academic affairs. He also oversaw the campus' graduate education and research programs, as well as academic planning.

Ringeisen said in the university news release that Berman's list of accomplishments is "long and impressive" and includes supervising the development of a new general-education curriculum that allowed UIS to expand its freshman class.

Berman has played a role in UIS receiving "very high rankings from U.S. News and World Report," Ringeisen said.

"Much of what Harry had accomplished is 'behind the scenes' to the external community, but the UIS community is well aware of his collaborative style, high energy and ability to lead effectively," Ringeisen said.

Berman has served as the chief budgetary and academic officer of UIS, which hasn't been immune from the state's fiscal crisis.

UIS employees, like those at other U of I campuses, earlier this year were required to take either four or 10 furlough days — depending on their job — or face equivalent salary reductions. The campus also imposed a hiring freeze.

The state hasn't paid \$119 million of the University of Illinois' \$743 million state appropriation for the fiscal year that ended June 30, university spokesman Tom Hardy said.

The state also is \$135 million behind on payments toward the university's \$697 million appropriation for fiscal 2011, for a total of \$254 million in late payments, Hardy said.

A furlough program for U of I employees hasn't been announced for the current fiscal year and would be a "last resort," Hardy said.

Berman said he is concerned that UIS, like the rest of the U of I system, may have to face more cuts.

"We have to do the best job we possibly can to manage our resources," he said.

But he pointed out that the campus' total enrollment this fall stands at 5,174 students — a record high level. And he said enrollment, which includes the 25 percent of students who take only online courses, is about one-third higher than a decade ago, before UIS began to serve freshmen and sophomores.

The upward enrollment trend bodes well for the campus, Berman said.

"There's a lot of momentum here at UIS," he said. "My intention is to keep things moving forward. There's every reason to be optimistic about the future."

Berman's annual salary currently is \$176,054 and would rise to \$211,254 if his appointment to interim chancellor is approved by the university's board.

Ringeisen, 66, is paid an annual salary of \$237,500. Under an agreement with the university, he will receive a year's paid leave worth the same as his current salary as part of his retirement package.

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