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September 23, 2009

B. Joseph White resigns as president of the University of Illinois
Trustees to consider interim appointment, plan search for successor

URBANA, Ill. — University of Illinois President B. Joseph White will resign as the 16th president of the university effective Dec. 31 of this year, but he will remain involved with the University in roles that include fundraising and teaching. The Board of Trustees is expected to consider an interim appointment to lead the University during a search for a new president.

White submitted his letter of resignation Wednesday to Board of Trustees Chair Christopher G. Kennedy, who accepted it for consideration by the full Board. White, 62, has served since January 2005 as president of the University, which educates 70,000 students at campuses in Urbana-Champaign, Chicago and Springfield.

Kennedy said the Board is expected to act on White's resignation and the appointment of an interim president at a special meeting to be scheduled within weeks. The Board's next regular scheduled meeting is Nov. 12 in Springfield. Kennedy said a search committee of trustees, faculty, students, alumni and others will be named soon to recruit the next permanent president of the University of Illinois, with the intention of having a new president in place by the start of the 2010-11 academic year.

"The University of Illinois is a nationally ranked, world-class university. Because of its outstanding reputation and renowned faculty, we anticipate a great deal of interest in the position of president by highly qualified candidates," Kennedy said.

Kennedy became chair of the Board of Trustees earlier this month after he and five other new trustees were named to the Board by Gov. Pat Quinn.

"I take this action to enable you as a newly constituted Board to select University leadership going forward," White said to trustees in his letter to Kennedy. "It has been a privilege for my wife, Mary, and me to serve the University community. We remain highly committed to the University of Illinois."

White, whose current contract as president would have expired June 30, 2011, said he will remain active in the University. His employment agreement as president allows White to resume teaching. Before joining the U of I, White was a long-time faculty member and administrator at the University of Michigan, where he served as dean of the business school for a decade and as interim president in 2002.

White said the effective date of his resignation means he will forgo a \$475,000 retention bonus he earned during the last 4 ½ years and the remaining 18 months of a contract that was extended Nov. 13, 2008, by the Board of Trustees.

“I am sensitive to the University’s difficult financial situation and the sacrifices being made by faculty and staff,” White explained in his letter to Kennedy.

Kennedy responded to White as chair of the Board to accept the resignation. He commended White for acting in the best interests of the University and for providing “exemplary” service as a leader of the \$2.25 billion “Brilliant Futures” fundraising campaign the University and its foundation launched in 2007. White said he will continue to play a role in the capital campaign.

“My colleagues on the Board and I appreciate that your resignation is motivated by serving the University’s best interests and is not intended to create any presumption of wrongdoing by you concerning the subjects investigated by the Governor’s Admissions Review Commission,” Kennedy wrote. “We recognize that you have taken this step to enable the University to move forward with a change of leadership so that the University community may come together to focus on critical issues confronting higher education in this State and in the nation.

“Your work on behalf of the University, including the Brilliant Futures Campaign to raise funds for faculty members and students of the University, has been exemplary, and I hope that you will continue your involvement, as requested, in advancement efforts for the University. I deeply appreciate the work that you and Mary have done for the University and look forward to your future contributions,” Kennedy stated.

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The University of Illinois is a world leader in research and discovery, the largest educational institution in the state with almost 70,000 students, 24,000 faculty and staff, and campuses in Urbana-Champaign, Chicago and Springfield. The U of I awards more than 18,500 undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees annually.