

REPLACING BOB EASTER

Format for presidential search committee is approved

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URBANA — The University of Illinois hopes to choose a new president by next January to allow for a smooth transition before current President Bob Easter retires in June 2015.

The UI Board of Trustees approved Thursday a format for a search committee that will be appointed in May to recruit and review candidates for the university's top executive post.

The 19-member committee will include three trustees, eight faculty members from the three campuses, one student from each campus, one academic professional, one civil service staff member, one administrative officer, one member from the UI Alumni Association and one member from the UI Foundation.

The committee's duties will include developing job qualifications and expectations for the president, and identifying and screening potential candidates.

Trustees will make the final decision, but they will rely much more heavily on faculty input than during the last presidential search that led to the hiring of Michael Hogan, board Chairman Chris Kennedy said.

An executive search firm will also be hired, but its role will be more collaborative with the search committee, he said.

"Outside consultants have a role, but no one can reach deeper inside other institutions as quickly as our own faculty" to

recruit people "not on anyone's radar" and get more immediate feedback from their colleagues, he said.

Easter became the UI's 19th president on July 1, 2012, after 36 years as a faculty member, dean, provost and chancellor on the Urbana campus. He succeeded Hogan, who resigned following a scandal involving his former chief of staff.

Easter and Kennedy said experience as a top executive at a university will be an important requirement for the next president.

"We want someone who's done a job like this before successfully," Kennedy said.

In particular, the job requires experience dealing with outside constituencies, such as legislators and the business community, Easter said. He cited as a model the way university presidents in Boston work with government and the private sector to promote economic opportunity.

Ready to roll

UI trustees also approved:

1. A package of contracts for the State Farm Center renovation worth almost \$87 million. They include \$25 million to Grunloh Construction of Effingham; \$24 million to A&R Mechanical of Urbana; and \$16.2 million to Oberlander Electric of Peoria. With the home basketball season over, major construction on the \$165 million project gets underway shortly.
2. A \$50 million renovation for Everitt Laboratory, former headquarters for the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, which is moving to a new \$90 million building. Everitt will now be used for the Department of Bioengineering.
3. A total of \$41.6 million in contracts for the second phase of the new residence hall at the Ikenberry Commons, the third to be built in that complex. It's scheduled to be completed by May 2016.
4. An honorary degree for Nobel Prize-winning geneticist Phillip Sharp, who received his doctorate in chemistry from the UI.

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