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Finalists for EIU Presidential Post to be Named March 8

Mar-01-2007

The names of the three finalists vying for the position of president at Eastern Illinois University will be made public on March 8.

"All three have been contacted and have accepted the invitation to come to campus for on-site visits," said Robert Webb, vice chair of Eastern's Board of Trustees and chair of the Presidential Search Advisory Committee. "We are now setting up schedules."

The on-site visits, which are to include open interview sessions with the various campus constituencies, as well as the general public, will be scheduled to take place the week of March 19. More precise interview schedules, as well as abbreviated biographies of each finalist, will also be made available March 8.

Those who choose to participate in the on-campus interview sessions will have the opportunity to provide written feedback on each finalist. Comments will be taken into consideration as the committee prepares its final recommendation(s) to the Board of Trustees, which, in turn, will have the ultimate responsibility of naming the new president.

Webb said he believes that final decision will be made in late March/early April.

The on-campus visits come immediately on the heels of a week-long (March 12 through 16) spring break at the university.

The search for a new president resulted in 58 applications, a pool which the committee narrowed to 16 in late January. Subsequently, two of those 16 withdrew themselves from consideration.

Committee members met with the nine semi-finalists in off-campus interviews in Champaign earlier this week, whittling the field down to the three finalists.

"The finalists were selected, in part, on the basis of a match of the candidates' values with the values that underlie the philosophy of teaching and learning that is now in place at Eastern Illinois University," Webb said. "Those values include personal integrity and openness in personal relationships, as well as intellectual and personal honesty."

"All of the finalists also articulated a vision for the future of the university that paralleled the thoughts of the Presidential Search Advisory Committee," he added.

According to Webb, the finalists all have strong academic backgrounds in their chosen fields, and all hold high-ranking positions at institutions of higher education in various parts of the country.

The need for a search began when Louis V. Hencken announced in August 2006 that he planned to retire this year. His current contract expires June 30, 2007; he advised trustees, however, that, if need be, he was willing to remain in office after that date and until a new president can assume the responsibility.

Hencken has been employed with the university for 41 years, the last six as president.