

# News

## from the Illinois Board of Higher Education

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### **CHAIRMAN ROCK, JANE WILLIAMSON STEP DOWN FROM IBHE**

SPRINGFIELD – Philip J. Rock, Chairman of the Board of Higher Education since April 1999, announced his resignation from the Board. Jane Williamson, Vice Chair and a Board member since October 1991, also disclosed she is leaving the Board.

Their announcements came at the Board's regular meeting which was the last for Executive Director Keith R. Sanders, whose retirement takes effect at the end of May.

Chairman Rock, whose tenure as President of the Illinois Senate was the longest in Illinois history, joined the Board in January 1996, appointed to represent independent colleges and universities.

Board members praised his service as Chairman. "His reputation for integrity, for fairness, for standing on principle is universally recognized and widely emulated as a model for public leaders everywhere," stated a resolution adopted by Board members in his honor. "His intimate knowledge of legislative process and politics and the esteem in which he is held by the state's elected officials have well served higher education and the citizens of Illinois."

Rock's chairmanship and Williamson's tenure on the Board have coincided with an active agenda and an impressive record of achievement, including creation of the University Center of Lake County, construction of the Illinois Century Network, passage of strong budgets for colleges and universities, and approval of significant policy recommendations on improving student preparation for and access to college, expanding campus diversity, and bolstering student persistence and degree completion. Their terms also have coincided with positive cooperative ventures with the Illinois Community College Board, the State Board of Education, and workforce programs of the Governor's Office, including recommendations on teacher preparation, technology, and the Prairie State Achievement Exam.

Jane Williamson worked on a broad array of issues and studies during more than 16 years as a member and Vice Chair of the Board, including efforts to improve undergraduate education, to promote accountability through the Priorities, Quality, and Productivity initiative in the mid-

1990s, and to strengthen the quality of educational programs through her work on the Joint Education Committee. She touched many of the most important and sometimes controversial issues to confront the Board through service on the Committee on Affordability, the Committee on Underserved Areas, and the Committee to Study the Educational Needs of Lake County.

The Board adopted a resolution praising its outgoing Vice Chair as a person who always “responded with grace, strength, and a quiet leadership focused on substance.”

Keith Sanders, Executive Director since January 1998, will turn over the reins of the higher education agency to Daniel J. LaVista on May 1. A resolution passed by the Board stated: “Illinois has been fortunate to have a person of Keith’s experience and talent at the helm of the Number One system of higher education in the nation. His knowledge, vision, and leadership in shepherding the Board’s initiatives these past 4½ years, have produced an impressive roster of accomplishments.”

Illinois ranked first in the nation on *Measuring Up 2000*, the National Report Card issued last year by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.

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