

## Idaho ed board isn't daunted in search

Terrell pledges post will be filled at UI by May 15

By Joel Mills of the Tribune

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MOSCOW - State Board of Education President Milford Terrell said Boise State University's rise to greater prominence has not adversely affected the search for a new University of Idaho president.

"People who want to become president want to go to a land-grant institution," Terrell said Thursday. "They (UI) still have that land-grant name."

He declined to say which school he views as Idaho's "flagship" institution. "Each one of the institutions think they're the flagship."

The 10-month-long search for a UI president has been unsuccessful, with the top two candidates and another secondary candidate dropping out earlier this year.

Terrell pledged the position will be filled by the end of the school year on May 15. He declined to answer direct questions about the status of the search, but said the board is engaged in "direct negotiations."

Last week the Idaho Statesman reported that some UI supporters think Terrell's BSU boosterism is scaring away candidates.

Terrell is a BSU graduate and a past president of its athletic association.

He often wears that support on his sleeve at board meetings, but said when it comes to board work, the schools the board oversees are treated the same.

"In my eyes, all four of the institutions will always be equal in what they have to do," regarding student instruction, he said of BSU, the UI, Idaho State University and Lewis-Clark State College.

Terrell said he and other board members have pushed for more equitable per-student funding for those schools. "That mechanism has to be balanced."

The UI has historically taken a larger proportion of state funds than its peers, largely due to its expensive research missions.

He said the board's desire for equity has extended to yearly tuition and fee increases, which have put the annual cost of attending the universities within a couple hundred dollars of each other.

"By keeping that fairly close, we're not playing the institutions against one another," board spokesman Mark Browning said.

The board's top candidate for the UI presidency, Kansas State University Provost Duane Nellis, has publicly stated he dropped out because the job didn't pay enough.

UI alumnus and former U.S. Sen. Steve Symms spearheaded an effort to raise enough money from Vandal boosters to bring the annual salary to \$350,000, an amount Nellis would reportedly take.

Idaho Gov. C.L. (Butch) Otter would have to change state policy to allow that, however. Symms recently asked him to make the change.

But one UI faculty member feared some boosters want Nellis because they believe he would pour money into Vandal athletics to make it competitive.

"I'm sure he's a qualified candidate, but as a faculty member it is very difficult to watch that sacred cow gorge itself while the neighboring academic programs are starving," computer science professor Paul Oman said in an e-mail.

The other top candidate, Montana State University Provost David Dooley, also removed himself from the running. But Dooley cited differences between him and the board in the "role, scope and future" of the UI as his reason, not salary.

Nellis and Dooley have not responded to repeated requests for interviews.

California State University Stanislaus president Ham Shirvani withdrew from the search in February. He told the Statesman salary issues played heavily in his decision.

UI law school Dean Donald Burnett and former Colorado State University President Larry Penley are the only remaining publicly named candidates. Some in the UI community are pushing for interim UI President Steven Daley-Laursen's appointment to the permanent position.

The search started last year when Tim White left to become chancellor at the University of California Riverside.

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