



## SU switches firms in president search

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The Southern University System this week is switching private search firms in its hunt for a new president, a move that Southern officials say would not significantly delay the process.

Thus far, Southern only received a few applications and nominations for the job.

But Southern Board of Supervisors Chairman Tony Clayton said Thursday many interested candidates were encouraged to hold off on applying until the search firm deal is complete.

Citing failed contract negotiations, Southern presidential search firm committee co-chairman Murphy Bell Jr. said the decision was made this week to switch from Chicago-based Heidrick and Struggles executive search firm to the DHR International search firm, which also is headquartered in Chicago.

“The whole negotiation process pushed us back a little,” said Bell, explaining that the search could wrap up by March.

Southern officials had previously hoped the president search could conclude near the end of December.

“Interest has been very strong and there’s been interest for a while,” Bell said.

Southern had previously agreed to pay Heidrick and Struggles \$77,000 for the search — \$49,900 from Southern and the rest from the private Southern University System Foundation and donors.

Bell said DHR International will be paid close to the same once the deal is finalized in the coming days.

DHR is smaller than Heidrick and Struggles. But Bell said DHR still is considered a major executive search firm, touting itself as the fifth-largest such firm in the nation with 50 offices worldwide.

The Southern University System oversees Southern’s three academic campuses, law school and agricultural center.

Earlier this year, the Southern Board opted not to renew the contract of former Southern President Ralph Slaughter, which required him to leave effective July 1.

Kassie Freeman is serving as interim president.

Thus far the nominees for the presidency are Leonard Haynes III, who is a senior adviser in the U.S. Department of Education's office of postsecondary education, and Roosevelt Newson, provost and vice president for academic affairs at Bowie State University in Maryland.

Haynes was nominated by five academics, including the president of American University in Washington, D.C.

Haynes previously was a Southern University System executive vice president in the 1980s. He also served as interim president at Grambling State University in 1997 and 1998. Haynes was a finalist for the Southern presidency in 1985 and 1996.

Haynes said in an e-mail response to questions that he is "truly honored" to be nominated and is consulting his family about whether to formally apply.

Newson is a Southern graduate and professional pianist. He applied last year for the chancellor job at Southern's main Baton Rouge campus. He was one of about 15 candidates brought in for interviews, but was not a finalist for the job.

Newson previously applied for the University of Louisiana at Lafayette presidency in 2007.

The only formal applicant thus far is Martin Shapiro, adjunct professor of marketing and international business at Manhattanville College in New York. Shapiro has applied for president jobs at Nicholls and Grambling in recent years.

"There seems to be some good people who have been nominated," Bell said.

As for the deal with Heidrick and Struggles falling through before the contract was signed, Clayton said the negotiations "were not fair."

"Heidrick and Struggles wanted to guarantee the compensation for the next president," Clayton said.

Heidrick and Struggles originally proposed payment on a retainer basis of one-third of the first-year pay of the person hired. Freeman has a \$323,000 annual pay package, meaning the firm's cost could easily exceed \$100,000.

DHR International made the same initial cost proposal as Heidrick and Struggles. But Bell said DHR is now agreeing to a "flat fee."

With DHR being firmed up, "I think you're going to see a big difference now" in the amount of applications, Clayton said.