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December 06, 2007

Commissioner of Higher Education to Become UL Lafayette's Sixth President

Commissioner of Higher Education to Become UL Lafayette's Sixth President - Dec 6, 2007

BATON ROUGE – E. Joseph Savoie, Louisiana's top higher education leader, was selected today to become the next president of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. The Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System's selection was the result of a seven-month national search. Savoie may assume the presidency as early as June 1.

Speaking before the final vote, UL System Board Member Paul Aucoin said, "Today, we have an opportunity to select a candidate with outstanding credentials that would be the envy of any other state. We cannot pass on this opportunity to select Dr. Savoie."

Savoie was one of three finalists for the position who interviewed publicly with the board earlier today. A total of 38 people applied from across the country.

Addressing the board after its decision, Savoie said, "I will make you proud of your decision, and I look forward to serving the university, the Acadiana area, and the state."

An alumnus of UL Lafayette, Savoie earned both his Bachelor of Arts/Education and Master of Education from the university. He earned his Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Administration from Columbia University Teacher's College in New York, a nationally recognized graduate school of education.

Savoie has served as the Commissioner of Higher Education at the Louisiana Board of Regents since 1996. Prior to that position, he served in numerous roles on the UL Lafayette campus including Vice President for University Advancement, Executive Director of the Alumni Association, Program Director for Union Program Council and Student Government Advisor, as well as an Adjunct Assistant Professor.

"I've been involved with eight searches on this board," said UL System Board Member Andre Coudrain. "We've had strong local candidates in some searches and strong national candidates in others. We have the best of both worlds in Dr. Savoie."

Savoie has held numerous state, regional, and national positions. Governors M.J. "Mike" Foster, Edwin Edwards, and Kathleen Blanco all tapped him during their administrations for top higher education committees and commissions. His regional and national affiliations include the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), the national State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), and the American Association of School Administrators.

His awards and honors include the 2007 CASE District IV Chief Executive Leadership Award, which was renamed the "Dr. E. Joseph Savoie Chief Executive Leadership Award," the 2004 University of Louisiana at Lafayette Outstanding Alumnus Award, and the 2000 Henry Mason Award by the Louisiana Chapter of the American Association of University Professors.

University of Louisiana System President Sally Clausen extended her congratulations to Savoie. "We look forward to your reign. The university will benefit from the leadership and qualities that you bring from many years of service in higher education."

The UL System Board launched a national search after President Ray Authement announced April 17 his plans to retire. The search committee held public hearings in Lafayette on June 14 and Sept. 12. On Oct. 3, the committee selected five candidates to interview out of 38 applicants. Public interviews were conducted on the Lafayette campus on Nov. 12 and 13.

"Dr. Savoie inherits a superb campus. One that is well-managed and strong. We owe current president Authement a tremendous debt of gratitude for a lifetime of service," said Board Member Winfred Sibille.

Founded in 1900 as the Southwestern Louisiana Industrial Institute, UL Lafayette is now an SREB Doctoral II institution designated by the Carnegie Foundation as a research university with high research activity. The University offers 115 undergraduate and 28 master's degree programs, and enrolls over 16,000 students.

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