

News

from the Illinois Board of Higher Education

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FORMER REP. JUDY ERWIN NAMED IBHE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SPRINGFIELD – A former classroom teacher, former college grad assistant, and former state legislator will be the next Executive Director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). The Board voted unanimously October 18 to appoint Judy Erwin to the position, succeeding Thomas R. Lamont, who has been Acting Executive Director since August 2004.

Erwin, who has served as Executive Deputy Director of the agency since August, will assume her new duties November 11.

“We are fortunate to have someone of Judy Erwin’s stature and background in this key leadership position during these challenging times for higher education,” James L. Kaplan, Chairman of the Board, said. “Ms. Erwin brings a depth of knowledge of higher education and extensive experience in the legislative realm that will prove beneficial to our colleges and universities.” Kaplan also hailed Lamont for his dedication and leadership during his interim tenure.

“I am excited about this new opportunity and look forward to working with the higher education community, the General Assembly, and the Governor’s office to address the many challenges that lie ahead for higher education,” Erwin said. “We live in a time when postsecondary education is increasingly an essential experience for the modern workplace.” She has long been an advocate of greater collaboration among the state agencies overseeing different levels of the educational pipeline, and has abiding interest in the use of technology for expanding educational opportunity and in overcoming barriers for students transferring from one college to another.

Erwin served in the General Assembly from 1992 to 2003, representing the 11th District in Chicago. She chaired the House Higher Education Committee and served as vice chair of committees on children and youth, tourism, and higher education appropriations. She was also a member of committees on health care, judiciary, technology, a mental health subcommittee, the Economic and Fiscal Commission, and the Conference of Women Legislators. Major legislative

initiatives included insurance coverage for patient costs in clinical trials, state funding of academic medical centers, and Medicaid funding reforms for Children's Memorial and Northwestern Memorial Hospitals.

Erwin also has extensive experience in public affairs and public relations. She was a senior vice president at Res Publica Group, one of Chicago's largest public affairs firms, and was a vice president for Kemper/Lesnik Communications in Chicago. She also operated her own public affairs/government relations consulting firm. She served as communications director for the Illinois State Senate, and press secretary to former Senate President Philip J. Rock, who also served as Chairman of the Board of Higher Education.

Erwin has a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, and a master's in education from the National College of Education in Evanston. She participated in a Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government seminar for senior executives in state and local governments, and has done graduate study in public policy analysis at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

After earning her bachelor's degree, she was a teacher in the Elgin Public Schools for four years, and she also taught an undergraduate course in political science as a graduate assistant at UIC from 1997-2000.

She has a variety of civic engagement activities. She has served as a member of the executive and education committees of the Chicago Community Trust; the Metropolitan Planning Commission, the Civic Federation Board of Directors; the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy, the Loyola University of Chicago College of Education, and the Chicago Public Schools Working Group on Post-Secondary Education.

Erwin also has an array of awards and honors, including the Illinois Library Association "Intellectual Freedom Award"; the Chicago Peace Museum's "Peacemaker of the Year Award"; the Friends of the Park "Advocacy Award"; the Federation of Women Contractors "President's Award"; and the Independent Voters of Illinois "Best Legislative Voting Record" in 1996 and 1998. In 1998, *Today's Chicago Woman Magazine* named her among the "100 Women Making a Difference."

Her professional affiliations include Women in Government, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Government, the Education Commission of the States, and the Midwest Higher Education Commission.

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