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Submitted by Scott Jaschik on July 16, 2018 - 3:00am

Randy Dunn (right), whose future as president of the Southern Illinois University System has been uncertain for weeks, will agree to step down Monday.



The SIU board has scheduled a meeting to vote on a separation agreement to which he has agreed. He will be on leave for the rest of July and will officially step down at the end of the month, in return for which he will receive \$215,000 over the next six months. The SIU board released [the agreement](#) [1] with Dunn on Friday, as part of the board's notice of a special meeting Monday. In a statement reported by the [Chicago Tribune](#) [2], Dunn said, "In my role, I had become a polarizing figure, so my retirement ... can allow healing to begin across all parts of the organization and advance important decisions that will need to be made for the future."

Some board members tried to remove Dunn last month, but [that plan collapsed](#) [3]. Faculty opposition to Dunn has been particularly intense at the system's largest campus, [Carbondale](#) [4]. Many there have been [outraged by a plan by Dunn](#) [5] and others to shift more than \$5 million from its annual state appropriation to the smaller but growing [Edwardsville](#) [6] campus. The situation worsened when a faculty leader obtained emails from Dunn in which he discussed how it was time to "shut up the bitchers from Carbondale." To many faculty members and others from Carbondale, this email and others suggested not only a disagreement over budget policy but a sense that the president did not respect them.

Southern Illinois hired Dunn in 2014 as he was seven months into the presidency of Youngstown State University.^[7] While there is no consensus on what a minimum time is that a president should stay in a position before considering jobs elsewhere, seven months is almost universally seen as inadequate. Defenders of Dunn's move noted that he is a native of Illinois, taught at SIU early in his career and had served as the state schools superintendent. Critics said that the costs of presidential searches, and the time spent by a new president learning the issues and meeting constituents, made his departure after such a short tenure unprofessional.

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Links

- [1] <http://siusystem.edu/board-of-trustees/meetings/071618agendapackage.pdf>
- [2] <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-met-siu-president-quits-20180713-story.html>
- [3] <https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2018/06/11/siu-board-calls-meeting-president>
- [4] <https://www.insidehighered.com/college/149222/southern-illinois-university-carbondale>
- [5] <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/06/07/southern-illinois-u-appears-prepared-oust-system-president>
- [6] <https://www.insidehighered.com/college/149231/southern-illinois-university-edwardsville>
- [7] <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/02/19/youngstown-state-u-president-gets-poached-headhunters-tangle-over-rules-engagement>