Written by Logan Zimmerman, Daily Vidette News Editor
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After 34 years at Illinois State University and nine years as the University's president, Al Bowman has announced he will retire, effective until the next president is in place, according to an email sent out to the student body.

Despite describing himself as in good physical condition, Bowman cited concerns related to his long-term health involving his age, work-related stress and a prior medical concern.

"Several years ago, I underwent a significant surgical procedure to address a serious medical issue," Bowman explained in his email. "Although my current condition is good, I have been advised that as I approach my 60th birthday, stepping away from a high-pressure, seven-day-a-week position is the best thing I can do for my long-term well-being."

News of Bowman's decision to retire came as a surprise, especially after his recent contract extension in October.

"While I had planned to retire four year from now, I ultimately decided my highest personal priority must be my health and my family," he added.

"I arrived at this very difficult decision after long and emotional discussions with my wife, Linda, my daughters, Laura and Natalie, and a few close colleagues and friends."

Bowman also resolved any suspicions or possibilities of underlying issues regarding his decision to retire.

"I want you to know that I am not leaving Illinois State to take another position, nor are there any underlying University issues set to emerge in newspaper headlines."

Bowman also addressed the positive position the University is currently situated in financially and believes the current faculty and staff will be able to successfully transition after his departure.

"Although serving as president during this chaotic fiscal period has brought with it a great deal of stress, my joys have far exceeded my anxieties, and I look forward to living in this community and staying closely connected to our vibrant campus environment."

Bowman extended his thanks to the University as a whole, the location where he met his wife and raised his two daughters, and called ISU "the center of his life."

"I am grateful for your friendship, counsel and inspiration," he said. "My love and respect for Illinois State and its people is profound … I will continue to be a proud Redbird and hope to make Illinois State University an important part of my life for many years to come."

Board of Trustees Chairperson Michael McCuskey will convene a special meeting of the Board to formally begin the search process for the next university president, according to Bowman's email.