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C of I president Hoover leaves legacy of leadership

Sharon Strauss
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 Updated 11 hours 10 minutes ago

CALDWELL — College of Idaho President Robert Hoover is retiring after six years at the helm of the Caldwell campus.

Saturday's graduation of the Class of 2009 marked Hoover's last ceremony at the liberal arts college before his retirement. Marvin Henberg, former interim president at Linfield College in McMinnville, Ore., will become the 12th president of The C of I in July.

Hoover becomes the Idaho Community Foundation's president and CEO on July 20.



Robert Hoover

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Hoover's accomplishments

During his time at The College of Idaho, Bob Hoover and his administration had many accomplishments including:

- Securing a \$72 million gift from the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation, which kicked off the college's \$175 million Invest in Excellence comprehensive fundraising campaign.
- Changing the college name from Albertson College of Idaho to The College of Idaho, which is the name it was founded under in 1891.
- Increasing enrollment and student retention at the college. This year, the college enrolled 339 freshman students, one of the largest classes in its 117-year history.

C of I gets new president

Marvin Henberg, former interim president at Linfield College in McMinnville, Ore., will become the 12th president of The C of I in July. Henberg has decades of experience in education, including 18 years at the University of Idaho. He chaired the UI philosophy department from 1988 to 1994 and launched the university's Honors Program.

"Marv is going to make an outstanding college president, he's as qualified as you can come...he has a great deal of experience

The former University of Idaho president's colleagues said his presence has enriched the campus culture and helped secure millions of dollars of grants and gifts to aid future generations of C of I students.

"We are going to miss this terribly," Hoover said of the fondness he and his wife, Leslee, share for the C of I campus. "We love this place, she's become terribly fond of it, as well as I have. It's hard to go."

The higher education lifestyle has become second nature to the longtime educational leader.





"My 50th high school reunion is this fall. For 50 years, I've been in higher education," Hoover reflected Friday in an interview with the Idaho Press-Tribune.

"To move into another world, (there's) a little trepidation of what comes next. And there's also the melancholy of leaving higher education and especially this place."

Long education career

Hoover served as president of the University of Idaho from 1996 to 2003 and prior to that served in numerous administrative positions at the University of Nevada, Reno, and Utah State

already. He feels he'll do great things (at The C of I)," said John McGee, a state senator from Caldwell who chaired the presidential search committee. Henberg earned his doctorate in philosophy from the University of Texas in Austin in 1976. He was awarded the UI Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching multiple times and formerly served as that university's Department of Philosophy chairman.

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University. He resigned from the UI presidency amid budget problems facing the institution and criticism surrounding oversight of the troubled University Place expansion in Boise.

Hoover, whose doctorate degree is in political science with an emphasis on American national security policy, began his career in higher education as an instructor at Utah State University and was promoted to assistant professor, associate professor and professor of political science.

"A leader is only as successful as the people who work at the institution," Hoover said. "In the case of The C of I,

between the faculty and staff and the leadership team, I'm pretty excited about what happened this past six years."

College overcomes troubles

Hoover, 67, came to the college in 2003 and saw the campus through a period of financial struggle. Under Hoover's administration, the private liberal arts institution changed names, increased student enrollment and retention, and secured millions in grants and gifts.

"I think that Bob has left his mark on the college as much as any individual since I've been associated with the college. His ability to fundraise and have a vision for the direction that this college needed to take — he's had as much impact on this campus as anyone has had in the last several decades," said Idaho Sen. John McGee, a 1995 graduate of The C of I and current vice president of the Board of Trustees.

"Bob has had a tremendous effect on the culture here at The College of Idaho and will long be remembered as someone who changed this place for the better," said McGee, who also chaired the search committee for the college's new president.

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