

Illinois State University Board Of Trustees Names Aondover Tarhule As 21st President, Approves Four-Year Contract

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NORMAL, Ill. – The Illinois State University Board of Trustees today named Dr. Aondover Tarhule as the University’s 21st president. Trustees also approved a four-year contract for Tarhule that will expire on March 17, 2028. The transition to the new position takes place immediately and follows Tarhule’s year-long interim president appointment and a national search, led by a 29-member search committee composed of trustees, students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

“The national search for the University’s next president was highly recommended through our shared governance partners, and the process was represented with a strong cross-section of stakeholders,” said Dr. Kathy Bohn, Illinois State Board of Trustees chairperson. “The Board of Trustees determined that not only is Dr. Tarhule known to our campus community, but his strategic and visionary perspective helped him stand out in a very competitive field of candidates. He is an approachable leader who brings a high level of integrity, knowledge and thought to conversations that will continue our institution's 167-year legacy well into the future. I’m proud to say he’s earned our trust and the title of president.”

Leaders of the University’s shared governance teams also serving on the presidential search committee echoed confidence in Illinois State’s new president. (shared below)

Tarhule was appointed interim president on February 17, 2023. He joined Illinois State University in 2020 as vice president for academic affairs and provost, also serving as a professor in the Department of Geography, Geology, and the Environment. He previously served as vice provost and dean of the Graduate School at Binghamton University (State University of New York) and was executive associate dean and department chair in the College of Atmospheric and Geographic Sciences at the University of Oklahoma. He is a prolific researcher and widely published scholar.

“I must express my deepest appreciation to the Board of Trustees for entrusting me with this vital leadership role; your confidence in me is both humbling and inspiring.” said Tarhule. “To our community stakeholders, your faith and passion for all things Illinois State makes the Bloomington-Normal, surrounding area, and Illinois State communities unique. From the moment I stepped on campus to interview for the position of provost and vice president for academic affairs, the community’s investment and dedication to the success of Illinois State was clear and heartwarming. Under my leadership, Illinois State will remain visible, engaged, and a collaborative partner committed to improving the quality of life and enhancing the sense of belonging for everyone in our community.”

Born and raised in Nigeria, Tarhule is a first-generation college student, earning a bachelor’s degree in geography and a master’s degree in environmental resources planning from the University of Jos, Plateau State, in Nigeria. He later earned a master’s degree and a doctoral degree in geography from McMaster University in Hamilton (Ontario, Canada), then received a post-doctoral fellowship from the Canadian Science Advisory Council to conduct research at Queens University in Kingston, Ontario. He is married to Dr. Roosmarijn Tarhule-Lips who is a CPA with a Master of Accountancy, and a Ph.D. in geography. They have two adult children, son Sesugh of Boston, and daughter Doobee of Amsterdam.