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Muriel A. Howard has served as president of Buffalo State College since 1996.
File photo

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HIGHER EDUCATION

SUNY reportedly eyes Howard for top spot

By **JAY REY**
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Buffalo State College President Muriel A. Howard is reportedly a candidate for the state's top higher education job.

Howard is one of two candidates being considered for chancellor of the State University of New York system, along with University of Cincinnati President Nancy Zimpher, according to unnamed sources in a story published this week in the Albany Times Union.

Neither Buffalo State nor SUNY officials would confirm the report.

Howard had served on the 18-member committee that's searching for a replacement for John Ryan, who stepped down as chancellor in May 2007. But Howard's name has been rumored as a potential replacement for the past several weeks.

"I do know the search committee asked her to recuse herself from the committee so she could be a candidate," said one source familiar with the situation.

Howard also has been to New York City for interviews, the source said.

Another source acknowledged Howard as a candidate but indicated Zimpher may be the front-runner.

Howard, 60, is the seventh president of Buffalo State, where she has served since 1996.

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Prior to that, Howard was in various leadership roles at the University at Buffalo for 23 years, including vice president for public service and urban affairs. She earned \$210,000 as president last year, according to state payroll records.

Zimpher, in a prepared statement, acknowledged that SUNY "has approached me to discuss their search for a chancellor," but she said any further comment should come from the SUNY system.

Whoever is chosen, the next SUNY chancellor will be guiding the largest university system in the United States, with more than 439,000 students spread across 64 campuses around the state.

But it's also a system reeling from deep budget cuts. A lack of funding, overregulation and the need for a policy that provides small, annual tuition increases to help pay for campus operations are just some of the issues the system's colleges and universities want addressed.

SUNY Chairman Carl Hayden mentioned the search for a chancellor during a board meeting earlier this week but said only that the "field has been narrowed dramatically," and a recommendation would be presented to the SUNY board soon.

As SUNY chancellor, Ryan earned \$340,000.

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