President Mason to retire from the University of Iowa

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Sally Mason has announced she will retire on August 1st after serving as president of the University of Iowa for eight years. Mason will turn 65 in May and says the timing feels right both personally and professionally.

"The holiday break gave me and my husband time to reflect on how we'd like to spend the next few years. When I returned, I approached Board of Regents leadership about retiring."

“It has been an honor and privilege to serve as the president of this great institution. I’m so proud of the progress we’ve made in enrollment, student retention, and our four year graduation rate. When you look at the success of our fundraising campaign and the outstanding advancements in research, scholarship, and creative activity on this campus, it’s clear the university is poised for growth,” said Mason.

“President Mason has been a tremendous advocate for the university and a national leader in the higher education community,” said Board of Regents President Bruce Rastetter. “Thanks to her leadership during the floods and economic downturn, the University of Iowa continued to provide an affordable and high quality education during challenging times.”

Mason became the University of Iowa’s 20th president in August 2007, less than a year before the campus suffered historic flooding during the summer of 2008. Since then she’s overseen unprecedented construction including a state-of-the-art children’s hospital and biomedical research center, a fine arts campus befitting the institution’s worldwide reputation, and the first new residence hall since 1968.

“None of this success would have been possible without the incredibly talented faculty, staff, and students at Iowa, which is why I feel so confident the university will accomplish even bigger and better things in the future.”

As the daughter of an immigrant father and the first in her family to go to college, Mason has worked hard during her tenure to improve access for all students. She expanded partnership agreements with Iowa community colleges, improved distance learning programs, provided free summer classes to help students graduate more quickly, and advocated strongly for back-to-back tuition freezes.
“I know firsthand how a college education can change your life for the better, which is why I’ve focused a lot of time and energy on programs geared to first-generation and under-represented students.”

Mason has also dedicated considerable attention to raising funds to support scholarships, research, and facilities. Since 2008, the university has raised $1.4 billion dollars and is well on its way to reaching its comprehensive campaign goal of $1.7 billion by 2017.

Before coming to the University of Iowa, Mason served as provost of Purdue University. She was trained as a cell and developmental biologist and is married to a fellow biologist, Ken Mason, who is an educator and textbook author.