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Fort Hays State University President Dr. Edward H. Hammond, left, shows data to Leader & Times Managing Editor Larry Phillips explaining how FHSU has kept the cost of a college education lower than almost every four-year-school in the state. Hammond was in Liberal Oct. 17 making his usual trip across the state updating media outlets on current programs and services at FHSU. Hammond announced Thursday he plans to retire as president from FHSU on June 30, 2014. He has served as president of 28 years and is currently the longest-serving president in the Kansas Board of Regents system. L&T courtesy photo

- Special to the Leader & Times

HAYS – Joined by the leadership of the Kansas Board of Regents, Dr. Edward H. Hammond announced during a news conference today on the campus of Fort Hays State University that he would resign effective on June 30, 2014, the end of the current fiscal year.

Dr. Hammond has had an inordinately lengthy tenure as FHSU president. He arrived at FHSU in 1987 and is currently the longest-serving president in the Regents system. With the help of

administrators, faculty and staff, he has been the catalyst for FHSU's remarkable contributions to the betterment of its students and the people of Kansas.

His resignation letter to the Regents follows:

October 25, 2013

To the Kansas Board of Regents:

Fort Hays State University is a different kind of university, unlike any other Regent institution. And there is no other place I would rather be but in May of 2014, I will be 70 years old and in my 28th year as president. I know it is in the university's best interest to begin the transition to new leadership. Therefore, I will retire as president when my contract ends June 30, 2014.

Individual Regents and I have been in discussions about this transition for some time, and I have told the Board of Regents that FHSU is where I wish to conclude my career. Our University deserves the best in a leader and I want to give the board ample time to select the next president. I am also committed to work with the board to ensure a smooth and successful transition.

Leading FHSU has been the most challenging and rewarding work of my 48-year career. It is a tremendous privilege and one that continually energizes me. I am extremely proud of the work we have done together to make Fort Hays more vibrant, more accessible and more global. I fully anticipate the next 8 months will be like my previous 27 years – very busy. I have often said that I have the best job in higher education, and I look forward to continue to work with faculty, students, staff and alumni to continue to make our University great!

When a new president is in place, Mary and I plan to live in Ellis County. We have always lived in college towns and believe there is no place like Hays, America. We did not think twice about where we wanted to call home after the presidency.

Thomas Jefferson said, "If in my retirement to the humble station of private citizen, I am accompanied with esteem and good wishes of my fellow citizens, it will be because of the hard work of many." I know that applies to me as well. Thank you for helping to make the university successful.

Today it's much too soon for goodbyes. Instead let's move forward and continue to advance the excellence of our university. That is my wish, and that is my plan.

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