

**11.3.2. APPROVAL OF EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT: VICE PRESIDENT,
DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

BOARD ACTION

Motion: To approve the contract for Chris Downing, Vice President, Development and Community Engagement, as presented in Board Agenda Item 11.3.2.

Recommendation: To approve the attached contract for Chris Downing, Vice President, Development and Community Engagement, with an annual base compensation of \$145,912.00 effective July 1, 2026, and continuing through the first to occur of separation of service or June 30, 2027.

ISSUE

Included with the agenda item is the proposed contract for Chris Downing, Vice President, Development and Community Engagement. This contract reflects a base compensation that was determined based on a market study of like positions at similar institutions to Heartland from throughout Illinois and Wisconsin.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

Promote Student Access and Success; Serve as a Community Resource; Ensure Resource Stewardship; Model Effective Communication, Collaboration and Transparency

CONTACT

Keith Cornille, President (309) 268-8106

**HEARTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT**

This Employment Contract is made and entered into in Normal, Illinois by and between the **Board of Trustees of Heartland Community College District No. 540, Counties of DeWitt, Ford, Livingston, Logan, McLean, Tazewell, State of Illinois** (“Board”) and **Chris Downing** as Vice President, Development and Community Engagement, of Heartland Community College (“Appointee”).

WITNESSETH, the parties hereto agree that:

**SECTION ONE
TERM**

In consideration of the mutual promises and agreements herein contained, Board hereby appoints and employs, and Chris Downing hereby accepts appointment and employment as Vice President, Development and Community Engagement, of Heartland Community College District No. 540, commencing at 12:01 a.m. on July 1, 2026, and terminating at midnight on June 30, 2027, unless earlier terminated as herein provided.

**SECTION TWO
DUTIES**

This contract is for such services as may be assigned according to the job description. The Appointee agrees that he or she may be reassigned to other positions within his or her professional-educational qualifications. The Appointee hereby agrees to faithfully perform and discharge all duties assigned to the Appointee by the President to the satisfaction of the Board.

**SECTION THREE
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS**

Compensation shall be as follows:

- 1) Salary. For the period of July 1, 2026, through and including June 30, 2027, the Board shall pay the Appointee in bi-weekly installments and on a pro-rata basis an annual base salary of One-Hundred Forty-Five Thousand, Nine Hundred and Twelve Dollars (\$145,912.00).

During the term hereof, the President of Heartland Community College shall evaluate the Appointee considering assigned duties, overall performance, annual goals/objectives, and established expectations. Such evaluation shall be conducted prior to December 31, 2026, at which time the President may recommend an award of additional payment to Appointee for Board approval.

Appointee may undertake related professional duties and obligations with professional organizations which enhance the reputation of the College and do not affect the performance of Appointee's employment obligations and expectations.

- 2) Benefits. Appointee shall be provided all privileges, leaves, and fringe benefits not specifically enumerated herein which are commonly extended to the administrative staff of the College, to the extent such benefits do not conflict with any other terms set forth herein. Benefits shall include:
 - A. Life Insurance. Appointee shall be entitled to term life insurance in a beneficial amount of not less than two times Appointee's base salary.
 - B. Vacation Leave. Appointee shall be entitled to 22 vacation leave days, accumulative to 56 days, vacation leave to be scheduled with approval of the President.
 - C. Sick Leave. Appointee shall be awarded 12 sick leave days during the term hereof, which days shall be subject to unlimited accumulation.
- 3) Vehicle Expense. The Board shall provide Appointee with an automobile/expense reimbursement allowance in the amount of Seven Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$750.00) per month plus use of a College credit card for the purchase of gasoline for college-related purposes.
- 4) Business Expense. The Board shall pay all expenses on behalf of or incurred by the Appointee which are approved as being reasonable and necessary to the business of the College.
- 5) Long Term Health Care Premium. During the term hereof, the Board shall pay up to \$2,700.00 annually towards the cost of long-term care insurance coverage purchased by Chris Downing.
- 6) Comprehensive Physical Examination. During the year hereunder, the Board shall pay up to \$5,000.00 towards Chris Downing's comprehensive physical examination to be performed at the Mayo Clinic, with a copy of the examination report submitted to the Board at their request. Thereafter, the Board may require Downing to verify his fitness to perform essential duties as Vice President.

SECTION FOUR TERMINATION

This Agreement shall be subject to early termination upon any of the following circumstances:

- 1) Mutual written consent of the parties.

- 2) Appointee's disability, as determined by Appointee's eligibility to receive SURS' disability benefits, or Appointee's death.
- 3) Discharge for cause, which shall include, but not be limited to, Appointee's failure to perform in accordance with the terms of this Agreement, illegal or immoral conduct, failure to comply with Board policies applicable to the performance and/or conduct of the position held by the Appointee, or conduct that is detrimental to the best interests of the College. Prior to discharge for just cause Appointee shall have the right to service of written charges, notice of hearing, and a hearing before the Board. Appointee may elect to be accompanied by counsel at any such hearing, in which event counsel expenses shall be paid by Appointee.

It is further understood that this Agreement is being executed to take effect as of July 1, 2026, and when returned with the signature of the Appointee is a binding contract.

Heartland Community College

By:  Date: 6.17.26
Keith Cornille, President

I accept this appointment to the position of Vice President, Development and Community Engagement, of Heartland Community College.

By:  Date: 6-17-26
Chris Downing