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PEER REVIEW

GERHARD CASPER'S announcement last week that he plans to step down as president of Stanford University next year stunned many people in academe, but some of his former colleagues at the University of Chicago had heard as early as this past spring that he was thinking of leaving. Now, the two institutions may find themselves competing for the same candidates as they both search for new leaders.

Mr. Casper, a constitutional-law scholar, served more than a dozen years as Chicago's provost and law-school dean before taking over Stanford's presidency in 1992. He said that after he steps down, he will take a sabbatical and then return to Stanford to teach undergraduates. "I need a season of refreshment and renewal," he said. "And it is high time for me to spend more time with family and friends."

The announcement surprised even the chairman of Stanford's Board of Trustees, **Robert M. Bass**, who said Mr. Casper's resignation "was neither expected nor welcome" among the trustees, who were pleased with his "extraordinary leadership."

Executive-search consultants say the number of top presidencies open now means the competition for candidates may be stiff. Chicago's president, **Hugo F. Sonnenschein**, this summer said that he will step down next year. **Joe B. Wyatt**, chancellor of Vanderbilt University, is retiring next summer. And the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill also is searching for a new chancellor, following the death this summer of **Michael Hooker**.

"Stanford is one of the best opportunities out there, but it will be a competitive market," says **Shelly Weiss Storbeck**, a managing director of college-presidential searches at A. T. Kearney Executive Search.

Chicago is well into its search, a university spokesman said last week. Ms. Storbeck says that the fact that



Gerhard Casper



Leon Shohet

Chicago has a couple of months' lead may be to its advantage. "Chicago has a leg up in terms of timing," she says.

And despite the Stanford allure, whoever is tapped will have to deal with such challenges as the controversial merger of the institution's teaching hospitals with those of the University of California at San Francisco. The new entity, UCSF Stanford Health Care, has lost \$60-million in its second year. Mr. Casper himself has recently joined in criticism of the partnership.

Academic leaders and search experts last week said it was premature to speculate on likely candidates for the Stanford presidency. But **Robert Rosenzweig**, a former head of the Association of American Universities and a former vice-president at Stanford, notes that Stanford's pattern has been to choose a provost or strong academic scholar.

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FALSIFYING information on federal grant applications and serving three months in jail need not cost you your tenure at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

At least, not if you're **Leon Shohet**. And not if administrators bungled by signing a legal deal some years ago that makes you untouchable.

A professor of electrical engineering, Mr. Shohet was jailed in February after he pleaded guilty to a federal misdemeanor charge. He admitted to listing more cor-

porate sponsors than he had actually attracted when he applied for millions in grant money from the National Science Foundation.

This month, having served his term, Mr. Shohet was back on the campus teaching. He hasn't received a warm reception from officials. In a letter to Mr. Shohet, the chancellor, **David Ward**, told the professor that dismissing him "remains my decided preference." But, Mr. Ward said he was "acceding to your return to the faculty," because he was bound by the legal agreement.

The legal deal was struck in 1996, when Wisconsin decided to oust Mr. Shohet from the directorship of its Engineering Research Center. The university said his management and budgeting practices were creating turmoil in the center and began investigating the center's activities. But to oust him without going through lengthy due-process proceedings, Madison struck a deal—saying that stripping him of his directorship would resolve the matter. When the investigation ended, concluding that Mr. Shohet had lied on grant applications, Madison was stuck with the professor.

Mr. Shohet's lawyer, **Lester A. Pines**—who says his client committed no crime and entered a guilty plea only to avoid prolonged legal battles—said Madison shouldn't be surprised that it can't fire Mr. Shohet. After all, Mr. Pines says, he made administrators sign another agreement reiterating the first deal in 1998.

He dismissed the chancellor's "public-relations-oriented letter," saying that Mr. Ward had written it to appease "certain blowhard legislators" who were threatening to hold the university's budget hostage because they were angry about Mr. Shohet's return to the campus.

As for his client, "He's very happy to be back in the classroom," noting that Mr. Shohet has a few grant proposals out for new projects.

—JULIANNE BASINGER AND COURTNEY LEATHERMAN