

Roger Williams University

DOCS@RWU

Life of the Law School (1993-)

Archives & Law School History

4-13-2020

Law School News: RWU Law Announces Sixth Dean 04-13-2020

Michael M. Bowden

Roger Williams University School of Law

Follow this and additional works at: https://docs.rwu.edu/law_archives_life



Part of the [Legal Education Commons](#), and the [Legal Profession Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Bowden, Michael M., "Law School News: RWU Law Announces Sixth Dean 04-13-2020" (2020). *Life of the Law School (1993-)*. 708.

https://docs.rwu.edu/law_archives_life/708

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Archives & Law School History at DOCS@RWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Life of the Law School (1993-) by an authorized administrator of DOCS@RWU. For more information, please contact mwu@rwu.edu.

April 13, 2020

Law School News

RWU Law Announces Sixth Dean

A nationally recognized scholar and educational leader, Dean-Designate Gregory W. Bowman vows to “build an even brighter future for legal education in Rhode Island.”

April 13, 2020

Michael M. Bowden



RWU Law Dean-Designate Gregory W. Bowman

BRISTOL, R.I., April 13, 2020 – The Roger Williams University School of Law Board of Directors on Monday announced that Gregory W. Bowman, a nationally recognized scholar who has been serving as dean of the highly regarded West Virginia University College of Law, will become RWU Law’s sixth dean, effective July 1, 2020.

“On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am thrilled to have Dean Bowman joining the law school,” said the Honorable William E. Smith, chairman of the board. “Dean Bowman brings broad experience as a successful law school dean at West Virginia University as well as a solid reputation as a national leader in legal education that will serve us well as we enter our next 25

years. I have no doubt that Dean Bowman will be a terrific asset to the law school, the University, and to the entire Rhode Island legal community.”

Bowman expressed enthusiasm about the appointment. “I am really excited and honored to be joining the RWU community,” he said. “RWU Law does a wonderful job of serving the public and training the lawyers and leaders of tomorrow, and it makes such a difference in people’s lives. I’m looking forward to working with everyone at RWU to build an even brighter future for legal education in Rhode Island.”

“Not adapting puts the entire enterprise of legal education at risk – and thus places our democratic society and ideals at risk. And so we must innovate in the face of uncertainty.”

~ RWU Law Dean-Designate Gregory W. Bowman

Roger Williams University President Ioannis Miaoulis said Bowman is an excellent fit to lead Rhode Island’s only law school. “Gregory Bowman exemplifies the innovation and vision necessary to adapt to the changing legal landscape that are the hallmarks of RWU Law,” Miaoulis said. “As the next dean, Greg will continue to advance the law school’s mission of educating practice-ready lawyers and serving the area’s neediest populations, strengthening its reputation regionally and nationally.”

Current RWU Law Dean Michael J. Yelnosky, who will return to teaching at the law school at the end of this academic year, agreed that Bowman’s impressive track record demonstrates tremendous potential to carry the institution forward.

“I am delighted that Dean Bowman has chosen to bring his considerable talents to help us write the next chapter of the RWU Law story,” Yelnosky said. “He is a proven leader, teacher, and scholar, and he is well-acquainted with the challenges and opportunities of the current legal education landscape, and with the rapid changes taking place in law practice.”

Yelnosky added that Bowman’s past experience will serve him well in the Ocean State. “He knows what it is like to be the leader of a state’s only law school,” Yelnosky said. “During his time at WVU, he helped launch new programs and expanded the law school’s reach into Switzerland, Russia, Uganda, and Mexico. Frankly, it is hard to imagine a more qualified candidate to become our next dean. I welcome him and look forward to assisting him in any way I can.”

A native of West Virginia, Bowman became the William J. Maier, Jr. Dean of the WVU College of Law in 2015 after serving for a year as Interim Dean at the school. Prior to that he served as the college’s Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. A widely published, nationally recognized scholar on international trade law and legal education, he first joined the faculty in 2009. Earlier, he taught at Mississippi College School of Law and the University of Mississippi School of Law.

In a 2019 article in the *Toledo Law Review*, titled, “The Rise of the Creative Law School,” Bowman set out an ambitious vision to help ensure that legal education – and the legal profession – remains relevant and responsive in the 21st century.

Bowman wrote: “If the practice of law is changing rapidly (it is), and the perspective of prospective students on the value of law school is changing (it is), and career prospects are no longer automatically seen as a safe return on investment for the cost of law school (they are not), and the market place of the future needs lawyers who have greater career flexibility and stronger soft skills (it will, and in fact already does), then law schools need to adapt to these changes, and they need to adapt *now*.”

Bowman concluded: “Not adapting puts the entire enterprise of legal education at risk – and thus places our democratic society and ideals at risk. And so we must innovate in the face of uncertainty.” Yet, “if we can dare to be aspirational, even in an age of financial challenges – then the future of American legal education will be bright.”

Bowman is a graduate of WVU, where he earned his B.A. in International Studies and Economics, *summa cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa. He also studied in Denmark as a Rotary Exchange Student and received his master’s degree in Economics with distinction from the University of Exeter, England, before receiving his J.D. *cum laude* from the Northwestern University School of Law.

Bowman received the Award for Outstanding Teaching from the WVU Foundation in 2014, and he was named “Professor of the Year” in 2011 by WVU Law students. He is the founding director of the College of Law’s Geneva Study Abroad Program. Prior to his teaching career, Bowman practiced law in Chicago and Washington, D.C. with the international law firm of Baker McKenzie.

Dean Bowman was selected after a national search led by Storbeck Search & Associates, a national search firm focused on higher education and nonprofit organizations.