Andrew Perlman Named Dean of Suffolk Law School
Suffolk Law's new dean abandoned Google Glass, but he still loves innovation

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With all the gloomy news for law schools in recent years, it’s a relief to write about a possible bright spot: Andrew Perlman’s appointment as the dean of Suffolk University Law School.

Bright is a good word for Perlman’s outlook on the future of legal education and the legal profession. His upbeat attitude may be explained by his expertise: the intersection of innovation, technology and the law. Prior to his new gig, Perlman was the director of Suffolk Law’s Institute on Law Practice Technology and Innovation.

For a time, Perlman wore Google Glass while teaching, giving students who generally didn’t participate in class an opportunity to text him with comments and questions. He later dropped Google Glass because he said it became too much of a distraction.

“Technology is not the solution to every problem,” he said.

That may be true, but by appointing Perlman to lead Suffolk Law, which has seen enrollment tumble in recent years, the university has made a bold move in highlighting what may be an emerging competitive edge.

“I don’t want us to be thought of as only that way. But I’d like to think that, if anyone is interested in pursuing the intersection of technology and law, that Suffolk (Law) will come to the top of the list,” Perlman told me.

Innovation and technology matters enough to David Rosenblatt, managing partner at Burns & Levinson, that he invited Perlman in to meet with the firm’s attorneys. Rosenblatt described Perlman as “dynamic” and contrasted him with Prof. Charles Kingsfield, the character played by actor John Hauseman in the "Paper Chase."

“Are they even in the same profession?” Rosenblatt quipped.
Rosenblatt said Burns & Levinson is attempting to integrate more technology into its processes and Perlman’s presentation reinforced some of the efforts that are underway at the firm.

Perlman’s plans as law school dean are broader than technology. He also predicts greater collaboration with Suffolk’s Sawyer Business School as another way to create career-ready law graduates. Although Perlman needs buy-in from the law school’s faculty, he will be encouraging professors to support more collaboration.

Some of that collaboration could happen organically because Suffolk Law will be giving over some of the space in its building to the Sawyer Business School. Perlman did not have any details on square footage, but said Suffolk Law's smaller size leaves space available in the law school building for business school students.

Meanwhile, Perlman already sees improvements at Suffolk Law. The school’s employment rates for 2014 graduates had improved over the previous year, and there has been an increase in LSAT scores among students who have put down deposits for the incoming first-year class compared to the students who enrolled at Suffolk Law last fall.

Comparing the number of applications Suffolk Law has at this point in the year compared to last year, the numbers are up.

Talk about bright spots in the world of legal education.

“The ship or tide is starting to turn and to rise and that bodes well for Suffolk and law schools generally,” Perlman said. “Things for the first time in a few years are starting to look brighter.”

Non-Profits, Philanthropy, Higher Education
New Cardozo, Suffolk Law Deans Plan Smaller Classes

Karen Sloan, The National Law Journal

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Two law schools have tapped faculty members as top administrators.

Vice dean Melanie Leslie will become dean of the Yeshiva University Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law on July 1 as the school’s first female leader. And Suffolk University Law School has selected professor Andrew Perlman as its dean, effective on Aug. 1. Perlman will replace Camille Nelson, who has led the school for five years.

“Andy Perlman brings top-level leadership to the Suffolk deanship,” said American Bar Association President William Hubbard, who has worked with Perlman on bar initiatives.

“He is both creative and practical,” Hubbard said. “He has a vision for the future of legal services; he executes with clarity and precision; and he will lead Suffolk Law in a way that prepares its graduates to be innovative and highly successful and valued counselors to their clients.”

Perlman joined Suffolk’s faculty in 2001 and founded its Institute on Law Practice Technology and Innovation, which focuses on how technology can change legal practice. The school also offers students a concentration in technology.

In an interview Thursday, Perlman said he wants to collaborate further with the university’s business school, to ensure law students graduate with some of the business and financial knowledge clients clamor for.

And he wants to deepen the emphasis on technology and legal project management.

“I want students to have a better awareness of how technology can be leveraged to deliver legal services more effectively and efficiently,” Perlman said. “It kills me when I hear lawyers say, ‘I went to law school because I hate math, science and the STEM [science, technology, engineering and mathematics] disciplines.’ I think that’s unfortunate.”

Perlman will also have to shepherd the Boston law school through turbulent times as interest in law degrees wanes nationwide. The number of incoming students at Suffolk fell by more than 21 percent between 2011 and 2014, according to ABA figures. The school in September offered buyouts to all faculty members, and Perlman said full-time faculty strength has declined
by one-third during the past five years.

Incoming students’ academic credentials have also declined. The school’s 25th percentile Law School Admission Test score dropped from 151 in 2011 to 143 in 2014.

“I do believe the numbers the past were concerning, but we’re seeing an increase in the number of applications and in applicant credentials, which is encouraging,” Perlman said. “I feel that we’ve turned a corner, not just at my school but nationally.”

Suffolk plans to reduce its incoming class to 300 next fall, from more than 400 at present, becoming more selective and admitting students with higher LSAT scores, he said. Reducing the class size will help the school remain financially sustainable and likely improve employment outcomes and bar passage rates, he added.

At Cardozo, Leslie will replace Matthew Diller, who has been dean since 2009. She’s no stranger to the New York school, having taught there since 1995. She helped introduce professional concentrations to the curriculum including family law, tax law and constitutional law and government.

Leslie became vice dean in 2014 and helped expand intellectual property programing and launch of the Fashion, Arts, Media, and Entertainment Law Center, also known as FAME.

“This is an exciting new chapter for Cardozo Law,” said university president Richard Joel. “As a premier law school in New York City, Cardozo produces leaders for the modern legal world, and Melanie Leslie is a great leader.”

Leslie said in an interview that she wants the school to continue to harness New York’s growing reputation as a hub for technology and innovation.

“We need to think about how the job market has changed and respond to that,” she said. “We want to create students who can walk into nontraditional legal jobs and who can help fledgling entrepreneurs create their businesses.”

She hopes to expand FAME in the coming year; the program pairs designers with law students who help them bring products to market.

Cardozo faces some of the same enrollment pressures as Suffolk, although to a lesser degree. New student enrollment fell by nearly 12 percent between 2011 and 2014, and its 25th and 75th LSAT percentiles dropped three points in that time.

Leslie expects next year’s incoming class to be slightly smaller, but did not provide a target class size.

“I think the market was telling us that we had too many lawyers,” she said. “The good news is that we’re no longer getting students who don’t really want to be lawyers. Our students are here because they want to be, and I think its OK that we have to downsize.”

Contact Karen Sloan at ksloan@alm.com. For more of The National Law Journal's law school coverage, visit: http://www.facebook.com/NLJLawSchools.
Dean Watch: Legal innovator to head Suffolk, first woman to lead Cardozo

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BY MARTHA NEIL (HTTP://WWW.ABAJOURNAL.COM/AUTHORS/5/)

Suffolk University didn’t have to look far to find a new dean for its law school.

Already a law professor there and known for his innovative approach to technology, Andrew Perlman (https://www.suffolk.edu/law/faculty/26811.php) was announced this week as the law school’s new leader. He will take office Aug. 1.

Perlman is the founding director of the law school’s Institute on Law Practice Technology and Innovation and vice chair of the new ABA Commission on the Future of Legal Services, a Suffolk University press release (http://www.suffolk.edu/news/59606.php?v=1) notes. As chief reporter of ABA Commission on Ethics 20/20, he helped draft amendments to the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct to address the globalization and increased use of technology in law practice.

“Andy Perlman brings top-level leadership to the Suffolk deanship,” ABA President William C. Hubbard told the National Law Journal (http://www.nationallawjournal.com/home/id=1202726487811/New-Cardozo-Suffolk-Law-Deans-Plan-Smaller-Classes?mcode=120261542217&curindex=10) (sub. req.). “He is both creative and practical. He has a vision for the future of legal services; he executes with clarity and precision; and he will lead Suffolk Law in a way that prepares its graduates to be innovative and highly successful and valued counselors to their clients.”

Meanwhile, Yeshiva University also didn’t have to range far afield to find a new chief for its Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law. Vice dean Melanie Leslie (http://www.cardozo.yu.edu/directory/melanie­leslie) will take the helm there July 1, becoming the first female dean in the school’s history, the NLJ reports.

A national search was conducted, and “the committee was truly impressed with the candidates and the high level of interest from across the country,” said university provost Selma Botman, who chaired the group, in a Cardozo press release (http://www.cardozo.yu.edu/news/cardozo­law­release).
Suffolk University’s board of trustees has approved Margaret A. McKenna as president and Andrew M. Perlman as dean of Suffolk University Law School.

McKenna, the first female president in the history of the school, began her career as a civil rights attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice and later worked as deputy White House counsel to President Jimmy Carter. She helped establish the U.S. Department of Education in the 1970s, when she served as deputy undersecretary.

She became vice president of Radcliffe College in 1981, leaving four years later for Lesley College, where she was president for 22 years. She went on to serve as president of the Walmart Foundation for four years. She comes to Suffolk from the Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy at Brandeis University.

Perlman has been on the Suffolk faculty for 14 years and is the founding director of the Institute on Law Practice Technology and Innovation and the related Legal Technology and Innovation Concentration. He was the chief reporter of the American Bar Association’s Commission on Ethics 20/20 and was recently was appointed vice chair of the new ABA Commission on the Future of Legal Services.

He succeeds Dean Camille Nelson, who joined Suffolk Law in 2010.
The *Boston Business Journal* article “Suffolk Law's new dean abandoned Google Glass, but he still loves innovation” also appeared in the following publications:

Big News Network – Global Conglomerate of News Distribution

EIN News Publications – Washington, DC

Wopular – An aggregation of the top news websites and newspapers

Cambodian News – Cambodia

Dublin Times - Dublin, Ireland