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Daniel Filler Tapped for Dean's Job at Drexel Law

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Of the Legal staff

Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law's next dean knows the institution well—he's a member of the inaugural faculty that opened the Philadelphia school in 2006.

Daniel Filler will assume the law school's deanship in January, university leaders announced Tuesday. In addition to a decade of teaching at Drexel, Filler has served as the school's senior associate dean of academic and faculty affairs since 2007. In that capacity, Filler helped build the law school's faculty and expand its programming to include a variety of master's degree options.

Filler will replace outgoing dean Roger Dennis, who has been with the school since its founding.

"Dan enjoys the highest respect from colleagues in the legal community," said Drexel University president John Fry in an announcement of the appointment. "They view him as someone who builds networks, encourages collegiality and brings out the best in new scholars and teachers."

Professor Karl Okamoto applauded Filler's appointment.

"It is so great when you realize things worked out the way they should have," Okamoto said. "Dan is a great scholar, an academic innovator, a kind leader and a really good person. We could not have done better."

In an interview Tuesday, Filler said he was excited about the deanship because unlike many other schools, Drexel has managed to prioritize both experiential education and faculty scholarship. Moreover, the school's relatively high bar passage and graduate employment rates means it's already headed down the right path, he said.

"We're a young school. I think we have a really good idea. The idea is to enhance all the things we're already doing," Filler said. "I really want to focus on bringing more of an awareness of what is essential to a lawyer and legal practitioner today. I'm keen on keeping a dialogue with the practicing bar and emphasizing the knowledge of technology, and marrying that with all the basic skills that we love preparing people for here."

Dennis announced in the spring that he would retire at the end of the 2016-17 academic year, but Filler instead will step in halfway through the school year. University

leaders have credited Dennis with shepherding the school through the American Bar Association accreditation process and establishing an accelerated, two-year Juris Doctor program. Dennis was also at the helm when the school secured a \$50 million donation from trial attorney **Thomas R. Kline**, for whom the school was renamed in 2014.

The university conducted a national search for Dennis' replacement before settling on Filler, an expert in criminal law and the death penalty. Prior to Drexel, he taught at the University of Alabama School for Law for eight years where he established the school's Capital Defense Clinic. He worked as an associate at Debevoise & Plimpton for several years after law school before becoming a public defender and later an academic.

"Dan is extremely invested in the law school," said Drexel law professor Lisa McElroy. "He really cares about taking us forward into the future."

Filler is also a prolific blogger at The Faculty Lounge, where he posts on topics ranging from law graduate job statistics to notable personnel moves within the academy.