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Introducing Law School Dean, Peter Keane

By Anne W. Smith

Beginning on January 1, 1999, Peter G. Keane assumed duties as new Dean of the Law School at Golden Gate University. Former Dean Tony Pagano returned (as is typical of the law school's tradition of dean service) to a full-time faculty position.

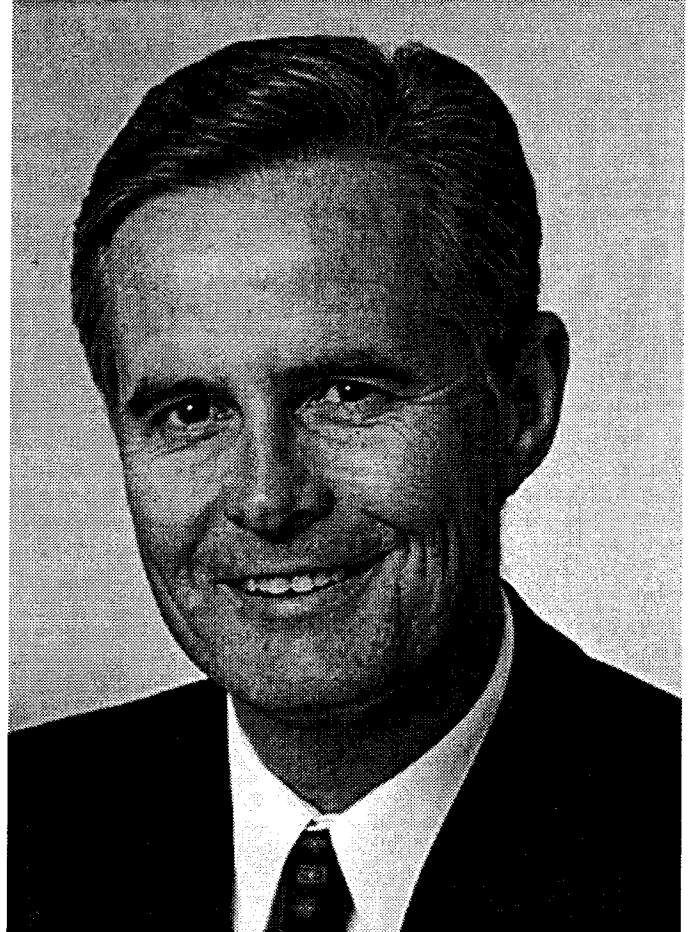
Although the various schools' curricula don't really connect on a day-to-day basis, Dean Keane looks forward to a collegial relationship with the University's other deans and non-law faculty. He attributes the traditional lack of interplay to the "all encompassing narrow focus" of law study, "a tunnel vision about what we're doing with our discipline" and he's not so sure that's good. In fact during our interview he expressed a desire for a lessening of the parochial character of the law school and importance of the school playing a greater role in the university community. He suggested that all schools determine some common interests and examine the potential to learn from each other and engage across disciplinary lines.

A common reason cited about the legendary Law School splendid isolation is the rigidity of its accrediting body which is not WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) but the American Bar Association. However, Keane notes, "accreditation is not a Berlin Wall." He spoke candidly of there being no reason to prevent faculty from joint professional projects which enrich the university and the communities served.

Last year when the Faculty Senate was asked to recommend and adopt a University-wide Sexual Harassment Policy, we adapted the model guidelines used by the Law School. This year in a reverse pattern, after the Senate's adoption of the sabbatical leave policy, described elsewhere in this issue, law faculty leaders are examining the viability of that policy for their body. Keane was positive about potential for shared governance issues such as these, mentioning that similar institutions might provide guidelines for common policies in other shared governance areas.

Soon to be a very visible topic, the elements of GGU's future physical plant such as the Monterey Campus, or property development at 512 Mission Street in San Francisco are largely unknown to faculty. Keane thinks that one of the most likely motivators for interfaculty alliances is the University's upcoming and ongoing capital campaign. "There must be alliances to meet all our needs," he noted, "with dialogue about differences negotiated satisfactorily." As to any faculty role in the campaign, Keane agrees with Larry Lollar, Vice-President for Academic Advancement, that Faculty are a network to reach others in raising capital. Certainly, since new Law School quarters are an integral part of the building plans, the Dean will spend lots of time and energy to get the building built.

Since Keane had taught for the University prior to becoming Dean, he is very knowledgeable about GGU's place in the community and society. He offered praise for



the Law school curriculum approach that offers a professional education that allows flexibility for other people's lives, particularly those who are changing careers.

But, also like many on his faculty, Keane thinks the potential for law and cyberlearning must be approached with caution. Many non law faculty sympathize with this perspective.

As a full-time academic dean, life will be very different from Keane's twenty years of service as the high-profile Chief Deputy Public Defender for San Francisco from 1979 through 1998. A practicing attorney for more than thirty years, he also was an assistant professor at Hastings College of the Law and included adjunct appointment at Golden Gate University for the past ten years. He has done extensive television and radio work as a legal analyst for news programs and has written at length on the law, even to authoring initiatives.

So it seems that with the hiring of Peter G. Keane, GGU has been very successful in its search for a Law School Dean whose experiences and viewpoints are compatible with the University's mission. He promises to be an enthusiastic and collegial leader. Welcome and good luck!