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Golden Gate Names Interim Dean

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Rachel Van Cleave,
Golden Gate University
School of Law interim
dean
Image: courtesy photo

SAN FRANCISCO — Golden Gate University School of Law is set to install a new interim dean at the start of the 2012-13 school year, school officials announced Thursday. The administration's pick, Rachel Van Cleave, previously served as an associate dean at the school.

Golden Gate University President Dan Angel said in an email that the appointment of an interim dean is the "usual process" for a changing of the guard. Current Dean Drucilla Ramey's term expires on Tuesday, and Angel said a search committee is conducting a nationwide search for permanent dean candidates, with the expectation that the new dean will take over in August 2013.

School officials said Van Cleave's work in assessing core curricula and new "experiential courses" makes her an ideal choice for the job of interim dean and point to her Hurricane Katrina and disaster law seminar as an example of her innovative work in the classroom.

In an interview Thursday, Van Cleave said she looks forward to the opportunity to expand on the school's growing experiential curricula. She cited her work as associate dean in developing elective courses for first-year students in subject matter they "aren't otherwise exposed to," like client counseling, as an example of the kind of vision she'll bring to the post. Van Cleave said she also plans to work with members of the local bar, including GGU alumni, to assess the strengths and weaknesses of new lawyers in areas like leadership and professionalism.

Van Cleave said she's thinking about applying for the permanent deanship at the school, but that it's a little early to say for sure.

Van Cleave has worked at GGU, a private university in San Francisco, since 2004. Initially a professor, she was promoted to associate dean of academic affairs in 2008. Prior to joining the school, Van Cleave taught at Santa Clara University, Stanford University, University of Richmond and UC-Hastings law school. She also was a clerk for Judge Sam Johnson of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

In its February announcement that Ramey would be stepping down as dean, the school said she'd stay on as a faculty member.

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