

Berkeley Law Lands New Dean



Summary: *Berkeley Law has hired a new dean from UC Irvine School of Law to begin July 1.*

Berkeley Law is in need a fresh start after the scandal involving former dean, Sujit Choudhry, who took over the headlines. The law school will have a new dean starting July 1 to relieve interim dean Melissa Murray. Erwin Chemerinsky will be the new leader of Berkeley Law.

The educator, litigator, and legal scholar had been with UC Irvine School of Law for the last nine years as its founding dean. He will begin a five-year term at Berkeley starting in a few months. He was selected after an open, national search that looked at internal and external candidates concluded. UC Berkeley Interim Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Carol Christ said of the hire that he is an “acclaimed researcher, gifted teacher and accomplished administrator. I believe he will be a phenomenal leader for our law school, someone who will ensure that Berkeley Law remains not only a powerhouse of legal scholarship and training, but also a community built on mutual respect and inclusion.”

Chemerinsky also served as the Raymond Pryke Professor of First Amendment Law while at Irvine. This means he taught classes on appellate litigation, free speech rights, constitutional analysis and more. Member of the search committee and law professor Sonia Katyal said Chemerinsky is a “living legend – a person who exemplifies the very best that the field of law has to offer: brilliant, warm-hearted, thoughtful, open-minded, and deeply engaged in the culture of public service.”

Chemerinsky, at 64-years-old, brings experience and leadership that the school needs. He received his J.D. from Harvard Law School and his undergraduate degree from Northwestern University. He said, “I care deeply about the public mission of the law school and the public service it provides through its clinical and pro bono programs. My goal as dean is to maintain the school’s excellence – be it in intellectual property, social justice or business law – and look for every opportunity I can to enhance it.”

He has worked at four law schools during his career, including Duke and USC. He has been awarded three outstanding teacher awards during that time. He is considered to be one of the leading experts in constitutional law, civil rights, civil liberties, and federal practice. Chemerinsky is also a writer, authoring 10 books, including one of the most widely read legal textbooks in the country called “Constitutional Law.” He has also written hundreds of law review articles for the country’s top journals.

Chemerinsky already has plans on how to start at Berkeley. He wants to “listen and learn” from the community to find out what is going well and what needs improvement. When he founded Irvine Law, Chemerinsky offered free tuition to the first entering class for all three years of their education. The school was highly-ranked even though it was not yet accredited. He had top law professors, clinical programs, and curriculum to propel the school forward into what it is today. He said, “I think one of the responsibilities of a dean is to create a warm and inclusive community, where all members feel welcome and can thrive. I think Interim Dean Murray has done an outstanding job in the most difficult circumstances. I need to build on that.”

He continued, “We must do all we can to serve our students and prepare them to practice law at the highest level of the profession. Berkeley should aspire to be one of the top five law schools in the country, by any and every measure.”

Do you think he will be able to turn Berkeley Law around? Tell us your thoughts on the comments below.

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- [Berkeley Law Dean Resigns](#)
- [Berkeley Law Dean Accused of Sexual Harassment](#)
- [UC Berkeley Law School Dean on Medical Leave](#)

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