

Fordham Law School Dean Matthew Diller Announces Resignation



Fordham Law School Dean Matthew Diller has announced his decision to step down from his position at the conclusion of the 2023-24 academic year. This news was communicated to the Fordham community in an email sent by Dennis C. Jacobs, the provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, on June 7.

Diller, who has been serving as the dean of Fordham Law School since 2015, expressed his eagerness to return to the faculty and resume his role as a professor and researcher. Despite stepping down as dean, he will continue to contribute to the mission of Fordham Law in a different capacity.

Having graduated from Harvard University's Class of 1981, Diller pursued his juris doctorate degree at Harvard Law School, which he obtained in 1985. He then served as a judicial law clerk to Walter Mansfield at the United States Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit. Following this experience, he joined The Legal Aid Society as a staff attorney at the civil appeals and law reform unit.

Diller's affiliation with Fordham Law School began in 1993 when he joined as a professor. Over the years, he assumed various positions at the university, including serving as associate dean of the Law School from 2003 to 2008. In 2009, he briefly departed from Fordham Law to become the dean of Cardozo Law at Yeshiva University. However, he returned to Fordham Law in 2015 to serve as the law school's dean and Paul Fuller professor of law.

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During Diller's tenure as dean, Fordham Law School grew to become the sixth-largest law school in the United States. The law school's specialty area programs achieved recognition, with ten of them ranking among the top 25 in the nation out of 200 law schools. Additionally, Fordham Law's reputation as a research institution improved, with faculty articles receiving significant downloads and the school securing the 15th position in the nation for such achievements.

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Diller prioritized student support and introduced initiatives like the Peer Mentorship Program, the House System, and the Office of Professionalism. He also played a crucial role in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within the law school. Under his leadership, programs such as the REAL and IDEAL pipeline leadership programs, the Center on Race, Law and Justice, and the Center on Asian Americans and the Law were established. Moreover, efforts were made to enhance diversity among the student body and improve graduate employment rates.

In line with Fordham Law's commitment to addressing access to justice issues, Diller spearheaded the A2J Initiative, aiming to combat the crisis in our society. As he steps down from his deanship, Diller will continue his involvement with Fordham Law in various capacities. He will remain a professor, conduct research, and contribute to the fundraising campaign "Fordham Law Forward," which aligns Fordham lawyers with the university's Jesuit values.

As of now, no interim dean has been appointed to fill Diller's position upon his departure. However, Jacobs assured the community that a national search for the next dean of Fordham Law will be conducted. He plans to assemble a search committee consisting of law faculty, students, administrators, and alumni to facilitate the process. With Diller providing ample notice of his transition plans, an interim dean is not expected to be necessary.

The resignation of Dean Matthew Diller marks the end of an impactful era at Fordham Law School. As the community prepares for this transition, the university looks forward to selecting a new dean who will continue to advance the institution's mission and uphold its commitment to excellence in legal education.