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Law school appoints interim dean for 2002-03

Josh Sanburn

Indiana Daily Student

Lauren Robel clearly loves this university.

Robel, who received her law degree from IU in 1983, was invited back to her alma mater two years later as a faculty member and then later became associate dean of the law school, has now been appointed as interim dean of the School of Law for the 2002-03 academic year. And she couldn't be happier.

"It's something that I am honored to be able to do," Robel said.

Appointed by Chancellor Sharon Brehm, Robel will become interim dean effective July 1. She will replace Alfred Aman, the current dean of the law school.

Robel began her education at Auburn University, where she took classes with her own father.

"My father retired and decided to go to college, so we both went to college together at Auburn," Robel said.

After graduating from Auburn, she came to IU to study law, thinking all along she would someday become a lawyer.

"I really came to law school thinking I'd be practicing law and had every intention of doing that," Robel said.

After graduating from the School of Law in 1983, some

of the professors wanted her back as part of the faculty, which made her think twice about her career.

"I just had some wonderful teachers and some of them invited me to come back and interview for a position here," Robel said.

One of those teachers was James Tanford, professor of litigation in the law school.

"She was originally a student here, one of the most outstanding students we've ever had," Tanford said. "It is unusual for an academic unit to hire one of their own graduates back as a faculty member. We did it in part because she was such an outstanding student."

For the past 11 years, Professor Robel has served as associate dean of academic affairs for the law school and says she probably would not have stayed as long as she did if it had not been for the outgoing dean, Dean Aman.

"I've been very lucky to work with Dean Aman very closely," Robel said. "He does everything that faculty members do." This includes writing and publishing books, teaching law classes and even working the clubs as a local jazz drummer in Bloomington.

"He's an all-around guy," Robel said. "He's an inspiration for all of us in terms of what an academic leader should be. He inspires faculty to be the very best they

can be at their job."

Aman, who was replaced once before by Robel when he was on a semester-long sabbatical, believes Robel will do an excellent job as interim dean.

"She will be superb," Aman said. "Lauren knows the school extremely well. She knows all the programs. She is extremely well-versed in the budget and she is highly respected by her colleagues. She is an excellent teacher, a superb scholar and a gifted administrator."

Aman is leaving for Princeton University for a year, but plans on coming back to IU.

"I have a book contract with NYU press," Aman said. "When I come back, I will look forward to teaching again."

During Robel's one-year term as dean, the law school will be searching for a permanent dean to replace Aman, as he will return to teach, not to continue on as dean.

While Robel prepares to help lead the law school for the next year, she never thought she would end up in this position.

"It never occurred to me that I would ever be serving as dean at my alma mater, that's for sure," Robel said.

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