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Dean Rifkin steps down after academic year

Matt Rocheleau

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"There are always more needs that can be filled," she said. "For everything you can do there are things you can't do, and that can be frustrating."

Though she is also a legal studies professor, Rifkin said she has felt somewhat removed from the day-to-day contact with students as dean.

"I've always liked to teach, and I've always loved the interaction with students," said Rifkin, who now has lunch with students once a month.

Rifkin said she has made no decision to leave the Legal Studies Department but has not decided what she will do once her role as dean ends after graduation.

Fellow colleagues expressed their appreciation of Rifkin's work.

"She has been a really good leader at the college," said Robert Feldman, now in his third year as associate dean of SBS.

"I hope the next dean can build on the work Dean Rifkin has done," he said, citing her understanding of the needs of the faculty.

In an e-mail to faculty, provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Charlena Seymour called Rifkin "an outstanding leader, administrator and colleague who has advocated for her faculty, staff and students effectively. She has promoted the activities of the College to internal and external audiences alike and has successfully raised the profile of the College."

Seymour continued, "She has been a consummate citizen of this campus and we are indebted to her. Dean Rifkin will leave the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences in a strong position, and we thank her for her dedication, loyalty and leadership."

On Oct. 1, Seymour announced she too will resign from her post at the end of the academic year.

"It is a time of change in leadership," said Rifkin.

Rifkin was appointed dean of SBS in 2005 after serving as interim dean since 2002. She chaired the Legal Studies Department from 1997-to-2002 and has been a member of the department since 1974. She was the as associate dean of the College of Social and Behavior Sciences from 1995 to 1997.

Rifkin has co-directed the Center for Information Technology and Dispute Resolution within the Legal Studies Department since 1997. She served as ombudsperson from 1991-to-1995 and has directed the University Mediation Project since 1980.

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POLL

This month, UMass Chaplain Kent Higgins was reprimanded by the University for offering credits to students for their participation in the Obama campaign. Should a state university offer credits to students for partisan campaigning?

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Joe Stahl

posted 10/06/08 @ 12:37 PM EST

Great quotes. Solid article!

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