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### 2014 Year in Review: 2 Law Schools Welcome New Deans While a Third Experiences Abrupt Departure

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INDIANA UNIVERSITY  
Maurer School of Law  
Bloomington

## 2 law schools welcome new deans while a third experiences abrupt departure

### Parrish

Indiana's law schools saw new leadership this year when Austen Parrish joined Indiana University Maurer School of Law in January and Andrea Lyon joined Valparaiso University Law School in July. Parrish came to Bloomington from Southwestern Law School in Los Angeles, where he served as the school's interim dean for 16 months.

John Applegate, IU executive vice president for University Academic Affairs and chair of the dean search committee, said Parrish will fit in well at IU Maurer.

### Lyon

"He is enthusiastic about looking change in the face and figuring out a way that we can still provide a superb education in a new environment," Applegate said. In his first year on the job, Parrish has created partnerships with several schools – both in Indiana and out-of-state – to encourage students to attend IU Maurer for their legal education.

Just a month into her tenure as dean at Valparaiso Law, Lyon told alumni in Indianapolis about her nontraditional plan to improve the institution's national ranking in US News & World Report. She wants to emphasize the school's focus on training people to be lawyers and wants to get a national reputation for its clinical programs and legal writing courses that give students hands-on experience.



Alexander

Valparaiso Law is annually classified in the “rank not published” category of the magazine, a designation given to schools that have a ranking below US News’ cutoff point of roughly 150.



And sandwiched in between Parrish’s and Lyon’s first days on the job was the sudden departure of Indiana Tech Law School Dean Peter Alexander in May. Indiana Tech announced May 23 without any explanation that Alexander – the school’s first and only dean – stepped down days earlier. Alexander said in a statement that he had achieved the goals he established for the institution and has a desire to pursue other employment opportunities. At the time, the school said Alexander would remain with the school in a consulting role but did not detail what his duties would be going forward.

Alexander came to Fort Wayne in January 2012 from Southern Illinois University School of Law to help launch Indiana Tech’s law school, which opened to its first class in the fall of 2013. Associate Dean for Academic Affairs andre douglas pond cummings was named interim dean.

“While Peter is and was a dynamic and charismatic leader, the vision is completely shared by me and the folks we hired,” cummings said shortly after Alexander’s departure. “I think we’re totally and completely on track as far as what we set to do in the very beginning.”

cummings

At the time Alexander left, Indiana Tech was in the process of seeking provisional accreditation from the American Bar Association. An ABA site team visited the school in September and submitted its report to the bar association’s Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar’s accreditation committee, which will decide whether the school qualifies for provisional approval. Without approval, Indiana Tech graduates would not be eligible to sit for most states’ bar exams.



The school announced in late November that Charles Cercone, currently dean of faculty at Western Michigan’s Thomas M. Cooley Law School, has been selected as Indiana Tech’s new dean. He begins at the school Jan. 5, 2015.