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Dean Anthony W. Crowell



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Message From Dean Anthony W. Crowell • Published May 31, 2023

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Heidi K. Brown as Associate Dean for Upper Level Writing and Professor of Legal Writing. Dean Brown will advance New York Law School's institutional commitment to the creation of a holistic, 21st century, approach to research and writing instruction. She will focus on helping students meet the new writing demands that the NextGen Bar Exam will place on graduates, as well as the modern writing demands placed on new lawyers by the profession. This is a return to the NYLS community for Dean Brown, who was a full-time faculty member as an Associate Professor of Law from 2011 to 2014 before joining the faculty at Brooklyn Law School. We are very excited to welcome her back.

Working with Dean of Faculty William LaPiana, Academic Dean Matt Gewolb, and Dean for Clinical and Experiential Learning Dean Kim Hawkins, Dean Brown will develop a new and best-in-class center for Thinking, Researching, and Writing for all students, 1L to 4L Evening, and coordinate faculty in the development of a re-invigorated upper-level writing curriculum that ties to NYLS's deep commitment to legal research. The center will also aid students as they prepare for entry into a profession quickly being influenced and changed by the evolution of technology, particularly artificial intelligence. The goal of these efforts is to link first-year basic instruction to enhanced and coordinated writing opportunities in the second, third, and fourth years. Doing so will allow NYLS students to connect their development and transfer of knowledge, as well as professional development and professional identity formation, with excellence in writing.

Dean Brown comes to this role with exceptional qualifications. She is currently the Director of Legal Writing and Professor of Law at Brooklyn Law School, which she joined in 2016 after her time at NYLS. A prolific scholar and author on the art and science of legal writing, she has published four books on predictive and persuasive legal writing and federal litigation, as well as numerous scholarly articles for law journals. She has written three books about well-being and thriving in the legal profession. Inspired by her own experience untangling fear of public speaking during her litigation career, she is passionate about helping law students and lawyers

"find their authentic lawyer voices" and overcome anxiety about Socratic legal discourse and performance-based lawyering tasks. Before coming to NYLS, she was an Associate Professor of Legal Research and Writing at the Chapman University Dale E. Fowler School of Law in Orange, California. She is the 2023 Recipient of the Award for Outstanding Contributions to Well-Being in Legal Education from the Association of American Law Schools' Section on Balance and Well-Being in Legal Education.

Dean Brown has more than two decades of experience in law practice. She served as Of Counsel with Moore & Lee, LLP, a boutique litigation firm with offices in the Washington, D.C., area and New York City, where she handled all aspects of litigation and arbitration of complex construction contract and building development disputes. She specialized in brief writing for state and federal cases throughout the United States, and mentored the firm's junior associates in civil procedure, litigation strategy, and legal writing. Before that, she was an associate at the Manhattan firm of Thacher, Proffitt & Wood and at the Washington, D.C., area firm Watt, Tieder, Hoffar & Fitzgerald, LLP.

She studies Italian and has taught legal writing at the University of Trento in Trento, Italy and at Tuscia University in Viterbo, Italy. Dean Brown received her bachelor's degree in foreign affairs and French language/literature from the University of Virginia, and her J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law. In 2021, she received a Master in Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

We are tremendously excited to welcome Dean Brown back to the NYLS family and she is thrilled to come back to our school community that has always been special to her. I am confident with Dean Brown's leadership and vision, NYLS will continue to stand out as a model for training law students in legal writing at a time when legal education and practice, and the world, are rapidly transforming. I thank Deans LaPiana, Gewolb, Hawkins, and the Ad Hoc Task Force on Upper Level Writing for their leadership in designing this new position and reviewing this appointment. Please join me in congratulating Dean Brown.