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TO: Boston University Faculty and Staff

FROM: Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer 

DATE: October 23, 2017

SUBJECT: Professor Maureen O'Rourke to Step Down as Dean of the School of Law;
Formation of the Dean Search Advisory Committee

Professor Maureen O'Rourke, who has served with distinction as Dean of the School of Law (LAW) since 2004, has announced that she plans to step down from her administrative role in June 2018 and return to the faculty, following a sabbatical leave.

Dean O'Rourke has been an exceptional leader at LAW since her appointment, first in an interim role for two years and then as permanent Dean beginning in 2006. She has led advances in the quality, relevance, and accessibility of the School's academic programs, as well as in its national reputation among top law schools. She spearheaded the launch of several innovative new programs – including the Executive LLM in International Business Law, Legal English Certificate Program, and an online version of the LLM in Taxation. Among Dean O'Rourke's most notable recent accomplishments was overseeing the successful completion of a state of the art law school complex, including the Sumner M. Redstone Building, a nearly 100,000-square-foot, five-story classroom building that opened in 2014, and the 17-story LAW tower, which reopened in 2015 after a complete renovation.

Dean O'Rourke has earned national recognition for her leadership in making legal education at BU both responsive to the needs of the marketplace and a mechanism for accomplishing public good. She has advanced these goals through a wide range of timely and important new dual degree programs; collaborative academic partnerships among BU's schools and colleges and with other universities; pioneering civil and criminal law clinics that explore such pressing issues as human trafficking and intellectual property rights; dozens of national and international externships; the creation of a *pro bono* program; and increased financial aid and career development support for students. As a result of her efforts, 80% of LAW students participate in a clinic, externship, or semester-in-practice, and LAW's stature continues to climb as an international destination for intellectual property and health law.

Dean O'Rourke is recognized among the nation's top scholars in intellectual property law. She has been a member of the BU faculty since 1993, following a role as a member of IBM's in-house counsel. She became a full professor in 1998, associate dean of administration in 2001, and associate dean for academic affairs in 2003 before assuming the interim deanship a year

later. In 2000, she received the Metcalf Award for Excellence in Teaching, the University's highest teaching honor. Dean O'Rourke has published extensively, co-authoring one of the leading copyright casebooks in the nation, *Copyright in a Global Information Economy*, and authoring dozens of articles for the law reviews of Columbia, Duke, Iowa, and Minnesota and technology journals of Berkeley, Harvard, and BU, as well as the *Journal of the Copyright Society*. Her research explores intellectual property law's intersection with a variety of fields, including contract and antitrust law, particularly in the context of software and high technology.

Dean O'Rourke's excellence in research and scholarship and advocacy for accessible, effective legal education have resulted in numerous national distinctions and leadership roles. This past summer, she assumed the role of chair of the council for the American Bar Association's Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. She has been recognized by *The National Jurist* on its list of the most influential people in legal education for the last three years. She additionally serves on board of directors of AccessLex Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to making legal education more accessible. We will honor and celebrate Dean O'Rourke's many contributions to Boston University and to the School of Law at an event in the spring semester.

We will launch a national search to identify the next Dean of the School of Law. Given the many advancements under Dean O'Rourke, this search presents an important opportunity for the University to reflect on the skills and qualities necessary to effectively lead the School to even greater levels of impact in the next decade.

The process for constituting a Dean Search Advisory Committee, outlined in the [BU Faculty Handbook](#), specifies that: *"the advisory committee shall consist of three faculty members elected by the faculty of the School for which a dean is to be selected, two faculty members elected by the Faculty Council from other Schools, and as many as three members designated by the provost."*

The faculty members who are appointed to serve on the Advisory Committee will have responsibility for directing the search effort and should be among our most thoughtful, engaged, and committed scholars, teachers, and leaders. Potential committee members should demonstrate the capacity to proactively attract and recruit outstanding candidates for the Law School deanship; the faculty most well positioned to carry out this work will be actively engaged in significant ways in their professional communities and within their academic disciplines. Please note that no member of the Advisory Committee may be considered for the position of dean.

I am requesting that the faculty in the School of Law organize internally to solicit nominations and to elect three faculty representatives to the Search Advisory Committee. Any individual who would have a role in overseeing the election within LAW should neither wish to serve on the Dean Search Advisory Committee nor want to be a candidate for the Dean's position him or herself. Accordingly, I have asked Associate Dean Elizabeth Cerrato to organize the election to identify the LAW representatives. I will hold a special meeting for the LAW faculty on November 7 to discuss the search effort.

Boston University's Faculty Council will also be sending an email communication to all members of the faculty on both campuses requesting nominations of candidates external to LAW

to fill the two elected seats on the Dean's Search Advisory Committee. Nominations or expressions of interest can be sent to the Faculty Council (fafc@bu.edu). Please note that membership on the Faculty Council itself is not an eligibility requirement for election to the Search Advisory Committee by the Faculty Council. I request submission of the results of both of these elections by **Monday, November 20, 2017**. Following receipt, I will appoint additional members so that the Committee will be assembled and prepared to begin its work by the beginning of December.

The LAW Dean Search Advisory Committee will be charged with responsibility for:

- Proposing refinements to the initial position description;
- Actively soliciting nominations for candidates from appropriate sources within the University and nationally;
- Actively recruiting outstanding candidates who have a record of administrative leadership and achievement and an academic profile suitable for appointment at the level of Professor at Boston University;
- Evaluating the qualifications and assessing the strength of nominees and applicants;
- Consulting with the faculty of LAW and other School and University stakeholders on finalists; and
- Recommending the names of 3-5 qualified candidates to me, outlining the strengths and limitations of each, for final selection by the President and me, with approval by the Board of Trustees.

The members of the LAW Dean Search Advisory Committee should not vote as part of its process and deliberations. Rather, the work should be accomplished by discussion and consensus. Ideally, the committee will conclude its work and submit its recommendations no later than **Friday, May 11, 2018**.

Please join me in thanking Maureen O'Rourke for her outstanding service as Dean of the School of Law over the past 13 years. I will keep you apprised of the formal appointment of the Dean Search Advisory Committee for the School of Law and appreciate your contributions to and support of the search effort.

cc: Robert A. Brown, President
J. Robb Dixon, Chair, Faculty Council
Provost's Cabinet