



New Texas A&M Law School Dean Named, University Commits \$25 Million to School in AUF Funds

COLLEGE STATION, TX, May 1, 2014 -- A nationally prominent legal scholar known for his work in a variety of regulatory issues, as well as for his teaching background, **Andrew Morriss**, Ph.D., J.D., is the new dean of the Texas A&M University School of Law, effective July 1.

Prof. Morriss' selection to lead the Fort Worth-based law school that Texas A&M acquired last year was approved Thursday (May 1) by The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents upon the unanimous recommendation of Chancellor John Sharp, interim President Mark Hussey and Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Karan Watson.

Prof. Morriss, who holds a Ph.D. degree in economics from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in addition to his J.D. earned at The University of Texas at Austin, is currently the D. Paul Jones, Jr. & Charlene A. Jones Chairholder of Law at the University of Alabama School of Law. He is an acknowledged leader regarding regulatory issues involving environmental, energy and offshore financial centers.

He was the successful candidate in a national search that produced more than 60 nominations.

“Carol and I are thrilled to get to be part of the team at Texas A&M,” Morriss said. “This is a unique opportunity in American legal education, combining the excellent faculty, staff and students at the law school with one of America’s premier research universities.” His wife, Dr. Carol Akers, is a graduate of Texas A&M University’s College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences.

Chancellor Sharp underscored his commitment to move the new school into the top ranks.

“I have said since the beginning, we are committed to seeing the Texas A&M School of Law quickly become acknowledged as a leader in legal education,” he said. “Our unique commitment to teaching and service to the state of Texas will be our hallmark in this endeavor just as it has been over the 137-year history of Texas A&M University. These strategic investments and the appointment of Dr. Morriss as the inaugural Anthony G. Buzbee Dean only accelerate our efforts in this regard.”

Texas A&M pledges \$5 million now in addition to \$20 million in matching funds to the Law School

In separate action taken by the regents, Chancellor Sharp received authority to provide \$5 million from the Available University Fund (AUF) for the law school now and up to \$20 million over the next five years on a dollar-for-dollar basis regarding funds raised in the private sector. The AUF represents proceeds from the Permanent University Fund to enhance excellence in teaching, research and related initiatives. Fundraising and donor engagement activities are already under way.

Additionally, the chancellor cited the recent million-dollar donation by Regent Anthony Buzbee and his wife, Zoe, to establish an endowment for the sitting dean of the law school. The Anthony G. Buzbee Dean's Endowed Chair is the first-ever endowment gift of its kind dedicated to law school faculty, specifically the dean.

“We are poised to make tremendous strides in a very short period of time for not only the long-awaited law school at Texas A&M, but on the profession of law in our state,” noted Regent Buzbee, himself an attorney. “My family and I are proud to play a small part in helping this school of law advance these efforts.” He is the founding partner of the firm that bears his name and has offices in Houston, Galveston and Edinburg.

Support for Andrew Morriss

In joining in the recommendation to the board, interim President Hussey noted: “Prof. Morriss has not only distinguished himself in his field of scholarship, but comes to us with unique perspective as a faculty member who was integrally involved in enhancing two previous schools of law. Serving at the University of Illinois as it advanced from the Top 100 to No. 23 and at the University of Alabama, which advanced from Top 80 to No. 23.”

Provost Watson, to whom Morriss will report, emphasized the broad-based support for his selection. “The search committee, faculty and university leadership who interacted with Prof. Morriss during this process were complimentary of his accomplishments, experience and demeanor towards the unique opportunity our law school presents,” she noted. “His scholarship and exceptional record of teaching focuses on key regulatory issues facing our state and nation, and his vision for legal education will serve us well in enhancing our newly acquired law school.”

In addition to his law and Ph.D. degrees, Prof. Morriss holds a bachelor of arts degree from Princeton University and a master of public affairs degree from UT-Austin.

Following law school, he clerked for U. S. District Judge Barefoot Sanders in the Northern District of Texas and worked two years at Texas Rural Legal Aid in Hereford and Plainview.

He is considered by colleagues and students —present and past— an exceptionally accomplished teacher, and they point to numerous courses that include international experiences for students, a high-impact learning focus of Texas A&M. He has taught and lectured in the Cayman Islands, China, Greece, Guatemala, Hong Kong, Nepal and other locations around the world.

His scholarship includes being author and coauthor of more than 60 articles, chapters and books. He is a Research Fellow at the New York University (NYU) Center for Labor and Employment Law, Chair of the editorial board for the *Cayman Financial Review* and enjoys affiliation with numerous think tanks on public policy, including the Property & Environment Research Center in Bozeman, Montana, the Regulatory Studies Center at George Washington University, the Institute for Energy Research in Washington, D. C., and the Mercatus Center at George Mason University.

Prior to joining the University of Alabama, Morriss was the H. Ross & Helen Workman Professor of Law and Professor of Business at the University of Illinois College of Law and the Galen J. Roush Professor of Business Law & Regulation at Case Western Reserve University.

Outstanding Leadership of Interim Dean Aric Short

The law school is currently headed by **Aric Short**, who was serving in an interim capacity when Texas A&M acquired it from Texas Wesleyan University.

“We want to acknowledge the outstanding service of Aric Short during this interim and unprecedented transition period,” Hussey and Watson said in a joint statement. “His leadership throughout the transition and this first year has established a great foundation from which we all can build.”