
A Texas university dean is leaving over the state's new law allowing guns in classrooms

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Fritz Steiner, longtime dean of the University of Texas at Austin's renowned architecture school, is leaving his post, spurred by the arrival of something else on the university's sprawling campus: guns.

News of Steiner's resignation was announced by UT-Austin today (Feb. 25). In an interview with the Texas Tribune, Steiner said he "would have never applied for another job" if Texas's governor hadn't signed a law last year that will soon allow people to carry concealed handguns inside college classrooms all over the state. While private universities can opt out of the new rule—which goes into effect this August—public universities like the UT system cannot. So, in a few months, any licensed gun holder who is 21 or older will be able to carry concealed firearms into these schools' buildings.

"I felt that I was going to be responsible for managing a law I didn't believe in," Steiner told the Tribune.

Steiner will join the University of Pennsylvania's School of Design as its dean this summer. He declined to apply for the position at Penn the last time it was open, he said, but Texas's new campus carry law pushed him to say yes this time around.

With Steiner at the helm since 2001, UT-Austin's architecture school regularly ranked among the top in the nation.

Steiner isn't the only faculty member uncomfortable over the campus carry law. UT-Austin president Gregory L. Fennesz strongly opposes it—but is enforcing it out of public obligation to the state, he has said. Over at the University of Houston, also a public university subject to the new law, a controversy is stirring over a slideshow presentation given to faculty members advising them how to deal with "dangers" presented by armed students. Said Jonathan Snow, the president of the school's faculty senate, "It's a terrible state of affairs...We are horrified that we have to change how we teach. No one in higher ed wants this."

Nine states across the US now allow guns on campus. On the flip side, 21 states have laws expressly prohibiting

guns on campus; but eight of these have exceptions for guns stored in locked vehicles. The increased prevalence of gun allowance on American college campuses is a reality that, for faculty and students (not least those from outside the US), will require some adjustments.
