



STETSON LAW

Dean of the College of Law



THE SEARCH

Located in the scenic Tampa Bay area, Stetson University College of Law, Florida's oldest law school, seeks an engaged and energetic leader to serve as its dean, commencing in the summer of 2023. Reporting to the executive vice president and provost, the dean is the chief academic and administrative leader of the College of Law and serves as an inspirational and cohesive leader for the tight-knit Stetson Law community comprised of students, staff, faculty, and loyal alumni, some of whom serve on the Law School's Board of Overseers and the University's Board of Trustees. The dean will be an exceptional relationship-builder who leads with a collaborative attitude, exercising sound judgment and constructive discretion in decision-making for the long-term future of this distinctive law school.

As the chief academic leader of the College of Law, the dean ensures the promise that Stetson Law students will receive an academically rigorous legal education that reflects its commitment to an inclusive, professional, and collaborative community that supports dialogue and partnerships among all its constituencies. The dean must be energized by the challenge to lead an extraordinary law school and to realize the law school's mission and aspirations using principles of shared governance with its engaged and productive faculty and staff, thriving alumni base, enthusiastic Board of Overseers, and welcoming and diverse student body. The dean will provide leadership to the College of Law's nationally and internationally recognized programs in advocacy, elder law, legal writing, Caribbean law, veterans law, and higher education, as well as its growing concentrations in business law, biodiversity, international law, and social justice advocacy.

With a comprehensive understanding of the issues facing legal education and the leadership skills to guide a close community in achieving continued success, the dean will collaborate with the faculty to amplify its strengths and support its students, faculty, and staff. The dean will apply financial management skills and sound, informed judgment to set budgetary priorities to reach Stetson Law's financial goals, including enhancing its core J.D. tuition revenue with sustainable earned income from new programs, grants that support its public service activities, and investments from individual and corporate donors. As a collaborative and inspiring relationship-builder, the dean will form long-term partnerships with Stetson Law's dedicated alumni and other prospective donors to increase annual giving and stewardship for the College of Law.



THE SEARCH Continued.

The dean will treat others with respect and kindness in seeking to understand the needs of the Stetson Law community through transparent, inclusive, and compassionate conversations. With an eye for improvement, the dean will establish priorities to increase student, faculty, and staff engagement, focusing on the well-being and professional development of Stetson Law community members. The dean will also work to recruit and retain the best faculty and staff to support Stetson Law's mission and objectives.

Stetson Law is distinctive in its focus on student success and supporting professional careers that have impact whether in private practice, in business, in government, or in the civic sector. Students, staff, faculty, and alumni share a tremendous pride in Stetson Law, and they encourage and assist each other in pursuing their diverse interests and ambitions. The dean should be eager to harness this positive passion for the law school, join the engaged community, and commit to serving Stetson's long-term goals. That Stetson Law pride, passion, and promise are evidenced in this [brief video](#) welcoming your candidacy as Dean of Stetson Law.

Stetson University has appointed a 14-member search committee comprised of faculty, staff, students, and alumni and co-chaired by the Gary R. Trombley Family White Collar Crime Research Professor of Law, Ellen S. Podgor and Gregory W. Coleman, Chair of the Board of Overseers and former President of the Florida Bar. The University has retained Isaacson, Miller to assist with this search. All inquiries, nominations, and applications may be submitted confidentially per the instructions at the end of this document.

ABOUT STETSON UNIVERSITY

Located in the heart of Central Florida, Stetson University embraces a student population of 3,939, comprised of 2,572 undergraduates and 1,367 graduate and professional degree students from 45 states and 54 countries, enrolled in its four major academic units: the College of Arts & Sciences; the College of Law; the School of Music; and the School of Business Administration. Leadership at Stetson University is notably provided by its president, Christopher Roellke, PhD, and its executive vice president and provost, Noel Painter, PhD.

ABOUT THE COLLEGE OF LAW

Founded in 1900, Stetson University College of Law was the first law school in the state and one of the first schools established at Stetson University in DeLand, Florida. In 1954, the College of Law moved from DeLand to its present-day location in scenic Gulfport, Florida. Its historic and beautiful campus, formerly the Hotel Rolyat, is a Spanish-inspired structure with distinctive fountains throughout the campus that today includes both a gym and swimming pool. A school of firsts, Stetson Law became the first law school in Florida to establish a clinical program in 1963 and has since established itself as a leader in advocacy, legal writing, elder law, Caribbean law, higher education law and policy, business law, social justice advocacy, biodiversity law and various areas of law and policy through its many Centers and Institutes. (For more information about Stetson Law's Centers and Institutes, please see the addendum at the end of this document.) Stetson Law's educational mission is student-focused, training students with important skills and values to be a successful Stetson Lawyer.

Today, Stetson Law boasts a student census of 926 JD students, including a part-time evening program, and 47 full-time faculty members. Faculty are invested in scholarship, teaching, and service and participate in their role of shared governance with the dean. Stetson Law's faculty and their impactful scholarship and contribution to legal education are widely known in many noteworthy areas, as are the successes of its extensive and loyal alumni base. In addition to producing top scholarship in law reviews and leading casebooks, faculty serve in leadership positions in many prominent legal organizations. Stetson Law is nationally ranked third among all law schools in the country for both its legal writing program and its trial advocacy program, and its record of success in dispute resolution, trial advocacy, and moot court competitions is unmatched. Since 1980, Stetson Law has won six World Championships, 87 National Championships, 100 Regional Championships, and 54 State Championships, as well as many other competitive awards. It has four academic law journals: Stetson Law Review, Stetson Business Law Review, Journal of International Aging Law and Policy, and Stetson Journal of Advocacy and the Law.

Stetson Law has also been recognized for three years in a row by *INSIGHT into Diversity* magazine with the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award, which honors U.S. colleges, universities, and professional schools for an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion.

MISSION AND STRATEGIC PLAN

Stetson University College of Law strives to be a diverse and selective law school whose faculty and students will have a meaningful and far-reaching impact on the law, the profession, and society. In alignment with Stetson University's mission, the College of Law seeks to increase law students' self-knowledge, personal growth, and intellectual development through academic exploration, enabling students to be informed and engaged global citizens. In recent years, the College of Law has increased its focus on crafting a legal curriculum that prepares students for the quickly evolving modern world. Central to both its mission and strategic plan is Stetson Law's goal to prepare students for lives of leadership and advocacy, so they can lead local, national, and global conversations with civility and compassion.

The College of Law's current [strategic plan](#) centers on its best asset – its people. The plan is designed to empower students, faculty, staff, and alumni in their professional journeys, and it focuses on ensuring the College of Law's continued success by growing its financial stability and reputation. In the coming years, the College of Law plans to decrease its financial dependence on J.D. tuition by increasing fundraising. Relatedly, the College of Law will enhance its reputational standing by leveraging the strengths of its faculty, increasing the national standing of its Centers and Institutes, increasing its connections through the Tampa Law Center, and forging meaningful partnerships with its loyal and successful alumni. The strategic plan also commits to enhancing the internal supports that attract, develop, and retain the best faculty and staff, including increased administrative transparency and support for employee well-being.

Student success is mission-critical to the College of Law. This goal is shared by all community members and is at the forefront of its strategic plan. Students help each other succeed; faculty not only convey legal knowledge and skills, but also mentor and counsel students; the staff encourages and supports students throughout their time at the law school; and alumni are eager to advise and guide students as they launch their careers. All financial and reputational goals are meant to support Stetson Law students and graduates and ensure the longevity of the law school. The plan ensures that Stetson Law graduates are successful immediately after graduation by aiming to increase the student bar passage rate, providing need-based financial support for bar courses, and enhancing services provided by the Office of Career and Professional Development. In terms of career placements, 90% of Stetson Law graduates in the Class of 2021 secured meaningful, relevant employment (Bar passage required or JD-advantage) at 10 months after graduation.

Stetson Law promises an academically rigorous legal education, preparing students and alumni to clearly articulate a position and rationally consider differing points of view. Stetson Law aims to lead legal education in fostering inclusive excellence, comprehensive advocacy, and professionalism, with financial consciousness for students, faculty, and staff.



STETSON LAW CAMPUS

Situated on 21 acres of lush tropical landscape and a short drive from Florida's Gulf Coast beaches, the College of Law [campus](#) in Gulfport is stunning. Central to the campus and Stetson Law's tight-knit community is the Plaza Mayor courtyard, which serves as the site for graduations and other key events. Much like the rest of the campus, Plaza Mayor is surrounded by historic fountains as well as palms, bamboo, hibiscus, and other natural features unique to the region. Students, faculty, and staff are often seen sitting outside in the Crummer Courtyard, a central meeting location on campus.

Inside, the Great Hall and Mann Lounge serve as the law school's main event spaces, where the community comes together for special events, guest speakers, and private functions. The Banyan Courtyard, adjacent to the Mann Lounge is a place for many faculty, student, staff, and alumni events. Students and faculty also make use of the many courtrooms on campus, including the Eleazer Courtroom, the first courtroom in the nation designed to improve physical accessibility for people who are elderly or have disabilities. A new Advocacy Institute has an anticipated completion date of 2023. True to its student-centered mission, the College of Law maintains a two-story Student Center, which houses student-facing administrative offices including student life and career development, as well as exercise facilities and lounges. The building is adjacent to a swimming pool that serves as a location for occasional functions such as events between students and members of the local bar.

ABOUT TAMPA BAY

The Gulfport campus is a half-hour drive from downtown Tampa, where the law school maintains the Tampa Law Center, which houses some evening classes and a state appellate court. Tampa Bay is the 18th-largest metropolitan area in the United States and the second-most populated region in Florida. Stetson Law students, faculty, and staff members can access both the scenic and community-centered Gulfport campus and the rich and diverse culture of the [Tampa Bay metropolitan area](#), along with the beautiful natural surroundings that allow for outdoor activities and eco-tourism.



THE DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF LAW

The dean is the chief academic and administrative leader of the College of Law and reports to the executive vice president and provost of the University. The dean works with other deans from across the University to contribute to decisions affecting Stetson University. As a university leader, the dean must actively seek to connect and improve university outcomes on broad initiatives such as interdisciplinary learning, diversity and inclusion, retention, and strategic planning. As the leader of a separate campus in Gulfport/Tampa, the dean at times will need to travel to DeLand to attend leadership meetings and events.

Within the College of Law, the dean is responsible for strategic planning and plan implementation, and budget management; supporting faculty through curricular evolution and program development; hiring and retaining exceptional faculty and staff; development and fundraising activities; and supporting a climate of excellence at the College of Law that extends across the university community.

In addition to the faculty, who all report to the dean, several faculty and staff members with additional administrative responsibilities report directly to the dean in their administrative roles, sometimes in conjunction with a university counterpart.

The dean also works closely and collaboratively with the College of Law's Board of Overseers, which is made up of the university's distinguished alumni and trustees and community leaders who provide strategic advice and support for the various initiatives and programs at the law school. Board members counsel, advise, and assist the dean and the university president in developing a comprehensive legal education program and ensuring Stetson Law's financial and reputational success. In addition, the dean of Stetson Law has a notable role in the Tampa Bay region, as the leader of a prominent institution and as a legal professional and educator.



KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN

The dean will have the experience, skills, judgment, and integrity to lead the Stetson Law community as it meets its future challenges and seeks to convert the following opportunities into lasting assets for the school.

Amplify Stetson Law’s well-established strengths and implement plans to boost its brand and reputational standing

Stetson Law is known nationally as a pioneer in trial advocacy, legal writing, elder law, higher education law and policy, veterans law, and experiential learning. It is nationally ranked third for both its legal writing program and its trial advocacy program. Its three Centers for Excellence promote teaching, scholarship, and skill development in Advocacy, Elder Law, and Higher Education Law and Policy. Stetson Law’s Institutes include the Institute for the Advancement of Legal Communication, the Institute for Biodiversity Law and Policy, the Institute for Caribbean Law and Policy, and the Veterans Law Institute. Areas of growing interest at the law school include academic concentrations like Social Justice Advocacy and Business Law. In addition, the law school may have opportunities to expand its reach in the Tampa Bay area through its Tampa Law Center, with the forthcoming departure of the Appellate Court, and its many connections to attorneys in the region.

The dean will assess Stetson Law’s brand, amplify its well-known strengths, and create and implement strategic plans to expand its reputation in modern and innovative ways. The dean will support faculty, staff, and student professional development in these areas and will leverage relationships in legal academia and in the local, regional, state, and national bar communities to support growth in these areas.

Assess the Stetson Law’s current financial plan and collaboratively develop a strategic direction that ensures stability and long-term success

Aligned with Stetson Law’s strategic plan, the dean will lead the College of Law in improving its financial position and decreasing its dependence on J.D. tuition revenue.

The dean will need to exercise creativity, ingenuity, and financial acuity to lead fundraising efforts for the College of Law, working collaboratively with alumni, faculty, and staff.

Working closely with leaders from development and alumni affairs, the dean will proactively identify resource needs and will communicate these needs transparently and persuasively to appropriate stakeholders. The dean will form partnerships with Stetson Law’s alumni and other prospective donors to increase annual giving and stewardship for the College of Law. With an enduring commitment to student success, the dean will also seek out long-term relationships with alumni and donors to increase the scholarship budget for admitted students. The dean will understand the financial burden of a modern legal education and will support initiatives that seek to lower student debt, including financial literacy programs, on-campus jobs and work-study, and scholarship programs for bar-study courses.

Sustain the tight-knit Stetson Law community with a foundational commitment to student, faculty, and staff professional success

Stetson Law is a vibrant community of dedicated faculty and staff who are attracted to the highly collegial and student-centered environment. The dean will serve as an inspirational and motivating leader and will engage across the College to foster and enhance academic excellence. They will promote and support professional development across the College and will engage with faculty in shared governance and problem-solving. The dean will also endeavor to attract and retain the best faculty and staff to support Stetson Law’s mission and will support initiatives that enhance student well-being and professional success, including programs related to mental health, professional development, and career placement.

Forge strong partnerships with Stetson Law’s loyal alumni, local businesses, and legal professionals

The Stetson Law community thrives because of its people. The dean will realize the many strengths of the Stetson Law community by forging relationships with all its constituents.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN Continued.

Working closely with the Board of Overseers, the dean will develop partnerships with alumni, gaining comprehensive knowledge of alumni affinity groups and welcoming alumni to serve as thought leaders supporting the College of Law's continued success. Through these partnerships, the dean will endeavor to increase alumni annual giving and alumni partnerships, especially those that support student professional development and amplify Stetson's national reputation.

The dean will also be prepared to seek out new relationships and partnerships with legal and business professionals in the Tampa Bay area and beyond, focusing on partnerships that will sustain the College of Law's financial success and reputation. The dean will think creatively about prospective partnerships and will build relationships that model inclusive excellence, professionalism, civility, and compassion.

Represent Stetson University's core values through mission-centered leadership and collaboration, with a steadfast commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion

Under the dean's leadership, Stetson University aims to lead legal education in fostering inclusive excellence and teaching comprehensive advocacy and professionalism skills. The dean must understand and embrace the value of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and be prepared to build on the current momentum within the Stetson Law community connected to these values.

Working collaboratively with faculty, student organizations, the Executive Officer for Diversity, Collaboration & Inclusion, and others, the dean will endeavor to build Stetson Law's reputation for inclusive excellence. The dean will facilitate challenging conversations and guide decisions related to increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion at the College of Law, including in faculty and staff hiring and student admissions. The dean will be open-minded and willing to analyze constituent feedback and make sound leadership decisions based on the law school's overarching mission and goals.

Collaborate with University leadership and the College of Law's many constituents, using discretion to address the specific needs of the College of Law

The dean will work collaboratively with University leadership, including the president, the executive vice president and provost, university vice presidents, and other deans, to help the University meet its overarching goals. The dean will balance commitments to the College of Law's constituents with the goals of the University, communicating transparently to all stakeholders to minimize conflict and prioritize community cohesion.



QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate should possess the following characteristics:

- J.D. degree or its equivalent.
- Record of university teaching, scholarship, and service sufficient to merit a faculty appointment at the level of professor with tenure.
- Commitment to Stetson University's values, including an understanding of the educational value of a diverse community, with a record of achievement in advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion in an academic or other institutional setting.
- Commitment to join the Stetson Law community to achieve its long-term goals.
- Capacity to advocate for the College of Law and promote its value to the larger university community, in the state of Florida, and across the globe.
- Fundraising experience and/or an understanding of the responsibility of institutional fundraising, along with a capacity for relationship-building across diverse constituencies.
- Understanding of issues facing legal education today and an energized vision for enhancing Stetson Law's reputational standing.
- Experience managing financial and human resources, with knowledge of higher education finances, budgets, and revenue streams.
- Excellent communication skills.
- A leader who is authentic, respectful, engaged, accessible, non-divisive, and open-minded.

TO APPLY

Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications that include CVs with letters of interest should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: www.imsearch.com/8787. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

For timely and comprehensive consideration, applicant materials should be received no later than **February 1, 2023**. Application reviews will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process.

Tim McFeeley, Partner
Pam Pezzoli, Partner
Corinne Crews, Associate
Melissa Barravecchio, Search Coordinator

Isaacson, Miller
www.imsearch.com/8787

Stetson University is an Equal Opportunity Employer that affirms cultural diversity and inclusion as a core value of academic excellence at Stetson University. We are committed to achieving equal access in education, employment, and participation through the recruitment and retention of outstanding faculty, staff, and students from diverse backgrounds, and to meaningful academic and intellectual transformation in curriculum, research and service. We are dedicated to actions and policies that foster a community in which individuals with various identities, cultures, backgrounds, and viewpoints work together to create opportunities for engagement through rewarding and fulfilling careers and personal experiences in a culturally and racially diverse society and a globalized world. We strongly encourage members of historically under-represented and economically-disadvantaged groups and women to apply for employment. Stetson University is an EEO, ADA, ADEA, and GINA employer.

Please see the Law School's Non-Discrimination Policy [here](#).

ADDENDUM

Please visit the following webpages to learn more about Stetson Law's Centers and Institutes:

[Center for Excellence in Advocacy](#)

[Center for Excellence in Elder Law](#)

[Center for Excellence in Higher Education Law and Policy](#)

[Institute for the Advancement of Legal Communication](#)

[Institute for Biodiversity Law and Policy](#)

[Institute for Caribbean Law and Policy](#)

[Veterans Law Institute](#)



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