

Leadership Profile



DEAN | DALE E. FOWLER SCHOOL OF LAW, CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

This Leadership Profile is intended to provide information and assist qualified individuals in assessing their interest in Chapman University and the position of Dean at the Dale E. Fowler School of Law.



Dean

DALE E. FOWLER SCHOOL OF LAW, CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

Chapman University seeks a visionary, collaborative, and student-centered leader to serve as dean of the Dale E. Fowler School of Law. The dean will leverage the distinctive strengths of this practice-focused, forward-looking law school, including its nationally recognized bar preparation program, dedicated faculty, and deep ties to the Orange County legal community, to guide Fowler into its next chapter as a law school of the future.

The next dean of the Fowler School of Law will articulate a clear strategy for the school's next chapter. Fowler seeks a dean who values student success, embraces practice-ready education, and champions faculty excellence, while also serving as a strong ambassador to alumni, donors, and the legal community. The ideal candidate will bring a steady and transparent leadership style, a commitment to a collegial culture, and the ability to strengthen partnerships across the university and beyond, positioning the school for continued impact in the legal profession.

Located in Orange, California, Fowler benefits from its position within one of the nation's most dynamic legal markets and from its integration into Chapman University, a growing institution with strong academic programs across disciplines. These connections provide rich opportunities for collaboration and for students to gain practical experience that complements their legal training. Fowler's 41-member full-time faculty are respected scholars and dedicated teachers, and they, along with over 50 highly skilled adjunct faculty, deliver a curriculum that emphasizes practice-ready skills for the school's approximately 400 JD students. The school's supportive culture and close-knit community ensure that students are guided not only toward professional achievement but also toward becoming engaged members of the legal profession and society.



Dale E. Fowler School of Law

Chapman University's Dale E. Fowler School of Law (Fowler), located in the heart of Orange County, California, offers students a dynamic and personalized legal education just 35 miles from downtown Los Angeles. Founded in 1995 as Orange County's first law school on a university campus, the school gained provisional accreditation from the American Bar Association (ABA) in 1998 and full accreditation in 2002. In 2013, the school was named in honor of Dale and Ann Fowler after a generous \$55 million gift from the Fowlers. Accredited by the ABA, a member of the Association of American Law Schools (AALS), and included in the "Top Schools" category of *U.S. News & World Report's* annual rankings, Fowler continues to build on its strong reputation.

Fowler is consistently recognized as one of the top law schools in the nation for practical training. Students benefit from small class sizes, one of the best student-to-faculty ratios (8:1) among ABA-approved law schools, and a collaborative learning environment that emphasizes rigorous academics, hands-on practice, and ethical professionalism.



About Dale E. Fowler School of Law

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Fowler's academic programs provide foundational legal instruction coupled with a wide selection of certificate programs and joint degrees. Fowler also provides students with numerous academic resources that offer real-world legal experience, ensuring that their education is enriched with hands-on, practical skills and application.

The school offers a full-time JD program, as well as joint degrees that expand students' professional opportunities. The JD/MFA in Film & Producing, offered in conjunction with Chapman's Dodge College of Film and Media Arts, is the only degree of its type in the nation. The JD/MBA program allows students to study under the exceptional faculties of the Argyros College of Business and Economics and the Fowler School of Law. In addition, Fowler offers specialized certificate programs earned concurrently with the JD degree, including Advocacy and Dispute Resolution; Business Law; Criminal Law; Entertainment Law; Entrepreneurship; Environmental, Land Use, and Real Estate; International Law; and Tax Law.

Students gain practical experience through a thriving tradition of advocacy, with three competition boards (Moot Court, Mock Trial, and Alternative Dispute Resolution) where they test their skills against other schools. Fowler

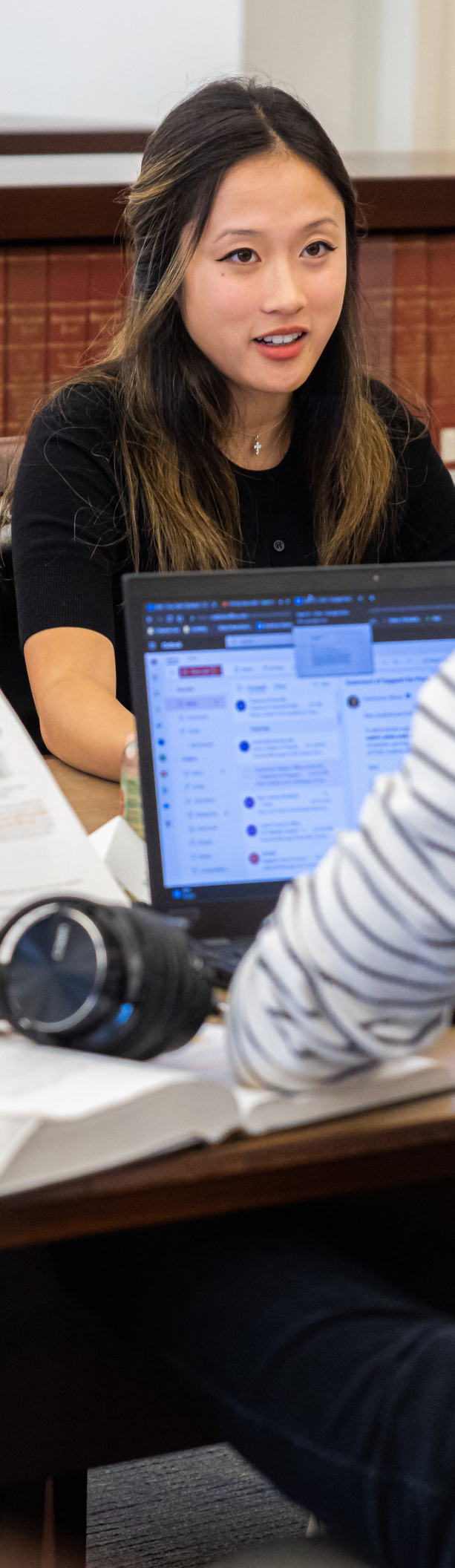


is home to several legal clinics, including the Criminal Defense Clinic, Criminal Prosecution Clinic, Entertainment Contracts Law Clinic, and Tax Law Clinic, all of which provide specialized, practical experience.

Externships further enrich the curriculum, allowing students to work in courts, government agencies, corporations, public interest organizations, and law firms, with the option to design their own placements.

Named a top-three law school for practical training by *preLaw Magazine* in 2025, Fowler provides a rigorous legal education rooted in experiential learning. A distinctive feature of the school is its bar preparation program, which includes for-credit courses, supplemental summer programming, mock bar exams, and individualized feedback. This comprehensive approach prepares students for all three parts of the bar examination and has resulted in one of the highest bar passage rates in California.





About Dale E. Fowler School of Law

STUDENTS AND ALUMNI

The entering class of Fall 2025 included 153 students, admitted through a highly selective 21% acceptance rate. The class profile featured a median GPA of 3.70 and a median LSAT of 163. Notably, 28% of students are first-generation, and 88% are from California.

Fowler students are active in more than 30 student organizations, including the Student Bar Association (SBA), which serves as the official student organization of the law school. Graduates of the Class of 2024 achieved a 60.7% employment rate at graduation and 83.4% employment within 10 months, joining a growing alumni network that contributes across law firms, businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, and the judiciary.

FACULTY AND RESEARCH

Fowler's faculty includes three former U.S. Supreme Court clerks, a Nobel laureate, three members of the American Law Institute, and a former five-term U.S. congressman. With 41 full-time faculty members, students benefit from close mentorship and access to leading legal scholars, former law partners, and clinical practitioners. Faculty provide a supportive and personalized educational experience in classrooms characterized by encouragement. Faculty are deeply engaged in both scholarship and practice, ensuring that students learn from professionals who are shaping the law while also preparing them for the realities of practice.



About Chapman University

Chapman University, located in the heart of Orange County, California, is an exciting and ever-evolving hub of science, technology, business, and the arts. The university embraces an interdisciplinary approach to teaching, learning, performance, scholarship, and research in its undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs.

Founded in 1861, Chapman serves nearly 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students, with a 12:1 student-to-faculty ratio. Students can choose from over 100 areas of study within 11 colleges for a personalized education. Chapman is categorized by the Carnegie Classification as an R2 "high research activity" institution. Students at Chapman learn directly from distinguished world-class faculty including Nobel Prize winners, MacArthur fellows, published authors and Academy Award winners. The university has produced a Rhodes Scholar, been named a top producer of Fulbright Scholars, and hosts a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most prestigious honor society.

To learn more, visit:
chapman.edu/about



Leadership



Matt Parlow has served as Chapman University's 14th president since September 2, 2025, and holds the Donald Bren Presidential Chair in Law. Over his 12 years at Chapman, Parlow has played a pivotal role in propelling the institution toward national prominence as both an administrator and a scholar. As Executive Vice President, Chief Advancement Officer (EVP/CAO), and Parker S. Kennedy Chair in Law, he drove transformational growth while leading the historic fundraising initiative *Inspire: The Campaign for Chapman University*. This campaign seeks to raise \$500 million by 2028

and grow the university's endowment to \$2 billion by 2037. Under his leadership, Chapman surpassed \$400 million—well ahead of schedule—providing resources that strengthen academic excellence, support student success, and deepen community engagement.

An innovative leader with a strong sense of community, Parlow brings an ambitious vision for Chapman's future. Under his direction, the university is poised to reach new academic heights by fostering expansive interdisciplinary collaborations that push the boundaries of knowledge and innovation, while preparing students for success in a rapidly evolving workforce.

Deeply committed to the student experience, he will promote robust engagement between students, faculty, and the broader community, ensuring Chapman continues to provide the distinctive, hands-on learning opportunities that set the university apart. As the need for civil discourse grows nationwide, Parlow is also dedicated to making Chapman a

place where challenging conversations are embraced and free expression is protected. This commitment to free speech, academic excellence, and community is emblematic of Parlow's strong belief in the power of education as a force for good.

Before serving as EVP/CAO, Parlow was the Dean and Donald P. Kennedy Chair in Law at the Dale E. Fowler School of Law. As the school's second longest-serving dean, he achieved financial stability, welcomed some of the strongest incoming classes in its history, and oversaw three consecutive years of record graduate employment. His leadership elevated the school's *U.S. News & World Report* ranking by more than 20 spots, while his fundraising established new professorships and expanded key curricular areas that foster innovation and student achievement.

Parlow's career in higher education also includes serving as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor of Law at Marquette University Law School, where he taught Property, Land Use, and Professional Sports Law (with Major League Baseball Commissioner Emeritus Bud Selig). He also taught in Chapman's Fowler School of Law from 2005 to 2008 and has twice been recognized as Professor of the Year, at Chapman and at Marquette.

Prior to his academic career, Parlow was an associate with the Los Angeles firm of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP and served as a law clerk for the Honorable Pamela Ann Rymmer of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Parlow holds a J.D. from Yale Law School and a B.A., magna cum laude, in History from Loyola Marymount University.



Leadership



Michael Ibba was appointed executive vice president, provost, and chief academic officer of Chapman University in October 2025. He earned his undergraduate degree in biochemistry from Imperial College London and completed his doctorate in microbial biochemistry at the University of Manchester. Following postdoctoral work in Switzerland at Novartis and ETH Zürich, and in the United States at Yale University, Dr. Ibba established his own research group at the University of Copenhagen before joining The Ohio State University in 2001. Over 19 years at Ohio State, he held key

leadership roles including chair of the department of microbiology, associate director of the Infectious Disease Institute, and co-director of an NIH-funded graduate training program.

In 2020, he came to Chapman University as dean of the Schmid College of Science and Technology, a position he held until 2025. An internationally recognized scholar, Dr. Ibba has published more than 200 research articles, secured over

\$15 million in extramural funding, and served as editor for leading scientific journals. His honors include the Distinguished Scholar Award at Ohio State and election as a fellow of both the American Academy of Microbiology and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He has also chaired the National Science Foundation's Federal Advisory Committee for Biological Sciences and currently leads the American Society for Microbiology Committee on Graduate and Postdoctoral Education. As provost, Dr. Ibba brings a distinguished record of research, teaching, and leadership, guiding Chapman's academic mission with a focus on interdisciplinary excellence, innovation, and student success.



Role of the Dean

Reporting to the Chapman University provost, the dean of the Fowler School of Law will serve as the academic, strategic, and visionary leader of the law school, in alignment with Chapman University's strategic plan. In addition, the dean is accountable for the administration and operations of the law school.

Working within the mission and priorities of the institution, the dean provides leadership to ensure the school's academic, research, and service goals align with institutional objectives and respond to evolving disciplinary, societal, and workforce needs. The dean leads the development, implementation, and assessment of the school's strategic plans, translating vision into actionable priorities, policies, and initiatives. This includes guiding academic program development through shared governance, fostering innovation in teaching and scholarship, and promoting interdisciplinary and external partnerships that strengthen the school's impact and reputation.

Within the law school, the dean will work with faculty in shared governance on academic matters, including curriculum development, faculty recruitment and retention, promotion and tenure, and the support of centers, clinics, and experiential programs. The dean will also oversee the organization of staff, administer the law school's budget, and establish policies and protocols consistent with Chapman University.

The dean serves as a key leader within Chapman University, supporting university initiatives and ensuring that the law school is integrated into the academic and administrative priorities of the larger institution. The dean will foster collaboration across schools and departments, embracing interdisciplinary opportunities that align with the law school's mission and vision.

Externally, the dean of Fowler will promote the law school to alumni, the broader Chapman community, the Orange County legal community, and beyond. Fundraising and advancement are central to this role, as is building connections between external partners and Fowler's students and faculty. The dean will play a critical role in continuing to strengthen ties with Fowler alumni and the Orange County legal community.

Finally, and most importantly, the dean of Fowler serves as a leader, role model, mentor, advocate, and enthusiastic motivator for Fowler students, with student success, both in law school and in their subsequent careers, being at the core of the law school's mission.

REPORTING TO THE DEAN:

- Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development
- Assistant Dean for Academic Services and Registration
- Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
- Associate Dean for Governance and Strategic Initiatives
- Associate Dean for Bar Preparation and Academic Standards
- Associate Dean of Admission and Diversity Initiatives
- Assistant Dean for Academic Achievement
- Assistant Dean of Career Services
- Assistant Dean for Student Affairs
- Assistant Dean for Administration



Strategic Priorities

ENSURE STUDENT SUCCESS: FOCUS ON BAR PASSAGE, EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES, AND PRACTICE-READY EDUCATION

Students choose Fowler to become successful, practice-ready lawyers. Fowler has built a reputation for strong bar passage support, with a nationally recognized bar preparation program that has narrowed disparities in pass rates and given graduates a competitive edge in California's challenging licensing environment. The next dean will be expected to sustain and strengthen this success, ensuring that students continue to thrive on the bar exam.

Employment outcomes remain a critical priority. While recent gains have been made, the dean must expand opportunities for students to secure meaningful employment in Orange County's fertile legal market and beyond. This includes cultivating relationships with alumni, employers, and the bench and bar, and positioning Fowler graduates as highly competitive in a rapidly evolving profession.

Equally important will be expanding experiential learning opportunities. Clinics, journals, and competitions are central to Fowler's practice-ready mission. The dean will be expected to expand these opportunities, broaden access to all students, and leverage Orange County's robust legal community to provide externships and hands-on experiences.

DEFINE AND DISTINGUISH FOWLER'S IDENTITY

Since its accreditation, Fowler has built a strong foundation, and the next chapter requires a bold vision that further distinguishes the school. The next dean will articulate a strategy that leverages Fowler's strengths and leans into the school's identity as a place where students gain practical skills and are prepared for practice.



As part of this, the dean will need to embrace innovation, including the implications of artificial intelligence and other technological shifts, and ensure the curriculum prepares students for the realities of modern practice. At the same time, the dean will harness Chapman University's interdisciplinary strengths, including business, engineering, health sciences, and more, to create distinctive opportunities for students to combine legal training with technical expertise. This positioning will allow Fowler to stand out as a law school of the future, deeply connected to Chapman University and responsive to the needs of the profession, ensuring that Fowler's reputation continues to rise.

STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Fowler has made important investments in scholarships and student support to attract high-achieving students and strengthen outcomes. At the same time, rising tuition costs and new federal loan limits create an opportunity for the next dean to think creatively about affordability and sustainability.

The dean will play a key role in ensuring that resources are managed strategically and transparently, while also leading efforts to expand fundraising and external support. Building strong relationships with alumni, donors, and the Orange County legal community will be essential to securing targeted investments in scholarships, clinics, bar preparation, and faculty lines. By serving as a compelling ambassador and steward of the school's mission and resources, the dean can position Fowler for continued growth and long-term stability.





Strategic Priorities

RECRUIT, RETAIN, AND SUPPORT FACULTY

Fowler's faculty are dedicated teachers and scholars, deeply committed to student success and to the collegial, collaborative culture that defines the school. As the law school looks to the future, retirements and transitions create an exciting opportunity to bring in new faculty who will add fresh perspectives and expertise. The next dean will recruit talented new faculty members who can strengthen core courses and expand into emerging areas such as artificial intelligence, technology, and interdisciplinary practice.

Supporting non-tenure track faculty and preserving faculty lines will be essential to maintaining curricular breadth and stability, and equally important will be continuing to foster an environment where all faculty feel valued and empowered. By building on Fowler's strong tradition of collaboration, inclusion, and respect, the dean can inspire faculty to thrive in their teaching, scholarship, and service, and ensure that Fowler continues to be a place where faculty are proud to build their careers and contribute to the school's long-term trajectory.

STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION ACROSS CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

Fowler benefits from being part of Chapman University, a dynamic institution with a new president committed to growth. The next dean will strengthen collaboration across the university, building bridges with central departments such as disability services and advancement, and expanding joint programs with other schools.

By positioning Fowler as a collaborative partner within Chapman, the dean will unlock opportunities for students to combine legal training with technical and professional expertise, enhancing their readiness for interdisciplinary practice. The dean will provide strong, stable leadership to ensure that these partnerships endure and that Fowler is seen as a trusted contributor to Chapman's broader mission.





Qualifications and Characteristics

The successful candidate will present the following qualifications and experiences, or a substantial portion thereof:

- An earned JD degree from an ABA-accredited program or its equivalent.
- Achievements in teaching, scholarship, and service in higher education that merit appointment at the rank of full professor with tenure, or, alternatively, distinguished experience in the practice of law or other professional settings that demonstrate equivalent accomplishment.
- Leadership experience that includes management of professional staff and administration of complex budgets.
- A deep understanding of the current and evolving landscape of legal education, the practice of law, and higher education, including the challenges and opportunities presented by technology and artificial intelligence.
- Experience in developing and implementing strategic plans that require collaboration with diverse stakeholders and balancing competing priorities.
- Experience supporting and expanding experiential learning, bar preparation, and career development opportunities.
- A commitment to high-quality teaching and excellent scholarship.
- A commitment to student success.
- Demonstrated fundraising success or the ability to cultivate relationships that lead to philanthropic support and external partnerships.
- Exceptional communication skills, with the ability to inspire confidence among students, faculty, alumni, and external stakeholders.
- A leadership style that incorporates transparency, empathy, and collegiality, and that builds trust and stability across the law school community.





Nominations & Applications

Chapman University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment.

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. For full consideration, please apply by February 10, 2026. The anticipated salary range for this position is \$375,000-\$450,000 reflecting both academic and administrative compensation.

Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent in confidence via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/chapman-university-fowler-school-law/dean>

ISAACSON, MILLER

- Tim McFeeley, Partner
- Kelly McLaughlin, Managing Associate
- Henry Nickerson, Search Coordinator

Chapman University is an equal opportunity employer that provides equal employment opportunities to all individuals, regardless of their protected characteristics. All qualified applicants and employees are encouraged to apply and will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, military and veteran status, marital status, pregnancy, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by state or federal law.

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