



School of Law

Dean, UNC School of Law
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

The mission of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is to serve as a center for research, scholarship, and creativity and to teach a diverse community of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students to become the next generation of leaders.

THE SEARCH

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (the University of UNC), an academic powerhouse among public research universities in the United States and an intellectual force of global significance, seeks a collaborative and visionary leader to serve as the next dean of the University of North Carolina School of Law (UNC Law or the School). The next dean of UNC Law will join an aspiring and collegial community of top-ranked faculty, diligent staff, and talented students who support each other and contribute mutually in achieving excellence in legal education and enviable reputation, the next dean will lead this high achieving community of scholars in shaping the future of UNC Law and influencing legal education in the United States and beyond.

As one of the oldest law schools in the nation, UNC Law features prominently in the University's overall success and reputation for excellence. UNC Law consistently ranks among the nation's leading law schools—clinching a historic No. 18 in the 2025 *U.S. News & World Report* rankings, with top-10 standings in bar passage, employment success, and legal writing. Today, UNC Law is home to a sizeable and diverse faculty of scholars and experiential educators, many of whom are preeminent in their fields. They produce groundbreaking scholarship; prepare students for successful careers in litigation and business transactions; and enrich local communities by training the next generation of competent and ethical lawyer-leaders. The dean will direct and lead 65 full-time faculty members and administer an annual operating budget of approximately \$32.5 million. UNC Law currently enrolls around 600 students and its more than 11,000 alumni pursue careers in all fields and all corners of the globe.

Leading UNC Law offers an outstanding opportunity for a highly collegial, deeply intellectual, and forward-thinking leader to inspire a diverse community of faculty, staff, students, and alumni. The dean will collaborate with faculty to respond to emerging challenges and changes in the practice of law and thereby to define the next era of UNC Law. The next dean will address several key priorities, including: maintaining

and strengthening the School's commitment to excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service as well as its strong culture of collegiality and community; representing and advocating for the Law School locally, nationally, and globally; ensuring the Law School has the resources to fully achieve its aspirations; recruiting, retaining, and supporting world class faculty and staff; and meeting the challenges and changes facing legal education and the profession.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. A list of the qualifications and characteristics desired, as well as instructions for submitting applications and inquiries, can be found at the conclusion of this document.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

The [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#) is nation's first public university to open its doors and the only public university to award degrees in the 18th century. For over 230 years, UNC-Chapel Hill has built upon that historic legacy with innovative teaching, groundbreaking research, and dedication to public service. The University serves its home state and beyond through an unwavering commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and public service. UNC-Chapel Hill consistently ranks among the world's best institutions in academic quality, research, access, engagement, and global presence. Through the efforts of its exceptional faculty and staff, and with generous support from North Carolina's citizens, the University invests its knowledge and resources to enhance access to learning and to foster the success and prosperity of each rising generation. With *lux, libertas* (light and liberty) as its founding principles, the University has charted a bold course to improve society and solve the world's greatest problems.

Today, UNC-Chapel Hill consists of 15 schools and one college. UNC-Chapel Hill is home to more than 20,000 undergraduate and 11,000 graduate and professional students. The University offers 79 bachelors, 159 masters, 85 doctoral, and seven professional degree programs. The University employs over 4,000 faculty and 10,000 staff members. UNC-Chapel Hill's faculty are leaders in some of the world's most prestigious academies and professional organizations, including Nobel Laureates, MacArthur Genius Grant honorees, and Fulbright Scholars. UNC-Chapel Hill also maintains an exceptional record in federally funded research, ranking 9th among research universities and attracting over \$1.5 billion in globally focused research funding annually. UNC-Chapel Hill is ranked 5th among U.S. public universities by *U.S. News and World Report 2025*.

In October 2017, Carolina kicked off [For All Kind: The Campaign for Carolina](#), the University's most ambitious fundraising campaign to date, with a goal to raise an unprecedented \$4.25 billion by December 31, 2022. The campaign ultimately surpassed \$5 billion — including raising more than \$1 billion for scholarships and fellowships. Carolina is one of just six public universities in the country to surpass \$5 billion in a completed campaign. This historic moment and resounding success was made possible by the more than 230,000 donors who believed in the University's public spirit, who rose to the challenge to not only meet but surpass that original goal.

In December 2020, UNC-Chapel Hill launched their [“Carolina Next: Innovations for Public Good” strategic plan](#), identifying key priorities that will guide the institution’s investments and decision-making over the next few years. These choices reflect the University’s existing strengths, while holding fast to its commitment to the public and deepening the campus culture of innovation and creativity. The plan identifies eight strategic initiatives: build our community together; strengthen student success; enable career development; discover; promote democracy; serve to benefit society; globalize; and optimize operations.

Leadership

In August 2024, Lee H. Roberts was appointed as the 13th chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, after having served as interim chancellor since January 2024. As Chancellor, Roberts is the chief executive of the first public university in the United States, overseeing a \$4.5 billion budget and leading a global R1 research university generating \$1.55 billion in annual research funding. Chancellor Roberts has placed priorities on initiatives that will help graduating Tar Heels find success and support researchers, faculty, and staff in the areas of generative AI, applied sciences, enrollment growth, and campus master planning, among others. Prior to his time at UNC, he was the co-founder and managing partner of SharpVue Capital, a North Carolina investment firm that specializes in stewarding institutional funds and growing local economies. A dedicated public servant, Roberts was state budget director under Gov. Pat McCrory from 2014 to 2016. He has also served North Carolina through his positions on the State Board of Community Colleges, North Carolina’s Banking Commission, the Board of Visitors at the Sanford School and the Golden LEAF Foundation.

UNC-Chapel Hill has recently appointed Magnus Egerstedt as executive vice chancellor and provost, effective March 2, 2026. Egerstedt, currently dean of the Henry Samueli School of Engineering and a professor in the electrical engineering and computer science department at the University of California, Irvine, will succeed Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost James W. Dean Jr., who has been serving in an interim role since May 2025. Prior to joining UC Irvine, Egerstedt was the Julian T. Hightower Chair at Georgia Tech, where he co-founded the Institute for Robotics and Intelligent Machines. He received a master’s in engineering physics and a doctorate in applied mathematics from the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm, Sweden, a bachelor’s in philosophy from Stockholm University, and was a Postdoctoral Scholar at Harvard University.

The Board of Trustees at UNC-Chapel Hill is a 13-person board that advises the UNC Board of Governors on behalf of Carolina and advises the Chancellor on issues of campus management and development, advancing excellence that will benefit Carolina’s students, the state, and all UNC System institutions.

Location

The University is located in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, a sophisticated college town that is part of a triangle of cities and is easily accessible to the Raleigh-Durham airport and the metropolitan area. The community offers a range of collegiate activities, professional opportunities, neighborhoods, cultural events, and more. Chapel Hill is perched on a rise in the middle of the North Carolina Piedmont, with the cool Blue Ridge Mountains to the west and the stunningly beautiful coastline. Chapel Hill joins with Raleigh and Durham to form the Research Triangle—a growing metropolitan area of more than two million residents. The area is home to the Research Triangle Park (RTP), boasting Fortune companies and innovative start-ups in the areas of technology, biotech, health and pharmaceuticals and banking. More information about Chapel Hill can be found [here](#).

THE UNC SCHOOL OF LAW

The University of North Carolina School of Law was founded in 1845 and is part of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the oldest public university in the nation. Over the past 180 years, UNC Law has become one of the premiere law schools in the country, preparing outstanding lawyers and leaders to serve the people and institutions of North Carolina, the nation, and the world. The Law School offers a comprehensive curriculum with a robust experiential program. It is home to numerous clinics, centers, and initiatives that prepare graduates for all areas of practice, while also giving back to the community through representing those in need, conducting research, and preparing policy proposals. The School continues in its commitment to access by charging the lowest tuition among the top 20 law schools.

Academics

UNC School of Law delivers a comprehensive legal education built around its full-time [J.D. program](#). The program emphasizes skills development through required experiential credits and rigorous writing experiences, alongside more than [100 externships](#) and [ten in-house clinics](#)—such as the Civil Legal Assistance, Military and Veterans Law, Youth Justice, and Startup NC Law Clinics—that offer hands-on practice. Students may pursue dual degrees in fields including business (MBA), public health (MPH), public policy, social work, and even Ph.D. programs, enhancing interdisciplinary expertise. Additional academic offerings include over 100 study abroad programs across the globe, along with 11 international exchange programs. Overall, UNC Law integrates rigorous academics with experiential and global learning to prepare practice-ready, versatile legal professionals.

Faculty

Carolina Law's faculty members are world-renowned scholars, teachers and researchers, who make up the 26th strongest faculty in America, according to the U.S. News & World Report ranking. Faculty outreach is formalized through the School's established academic clinics, centers and institutes. They not

only publish scholarship that advances the academic conversation in their respective disciplines, but their research also has real-world impact. Frequently cited by courts (including the U.S. Supreme Court), our faculty's research has also prompted policymakers to propose legislative reforms, and it has helped shape the public debate about the law and its place in our society. With over 140 faculty and an 11:1 student to faculty ratio, our faculty actively engage students who contribute to research, shaping legislation, advising government officials and collaborating with other groups on campus and at other universities and organizations nationwide.

Alumni

UNC Law boasts a robust alumni base of over 11,000 graduates spread across all 50 states and at least 15 countries. This influential network includes Members of Congress, federal and state judges, agency counsel, and hundreds of local and state-elected officials. Impressively, 12 of the past 25 North Carolina governors are Carolina Law alumni, and four of the seven current justices on the North Carolina Supreme Court hailed from the school. Notable government alumni include John Edwards, a former U.S. Senator and Vice Presidential nominee; Henry E. Frye '59, the first African-American Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court; and David B. Sentelle '68, former Chief Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. Additionally, up to 40 percent of attorneys practicing in North Carolina are graduates of UNC Law, and countless other alumni have held positions with the U.S. Departments of Commerce, Defense, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, Labor, State, Transportation and Treasury.

Centers and Initiatives

UNC School of Law hosts several internationally recognized [research and policy centers](#) that are leaders in their fields. The Center for Banking and Finance, founded in 2000 and directed by Burton Craige Distinguished Professor Lissa Lamkin Broome, is a national hub for scholarship and professional development in financial services law—organizing notable events like the annual Banking Institute and generating industry-influencing white papers and conferences. The recently established Human Rights Law Program serves as UNC Law's central platform for global human rights scholarship, advocacy, and experiential learning—supporting international legal engagements such as UN submissions and high-profile symposia. Complementing this are clinic-led research efforts like the Immigration Clinic and Criminalized Survivor, Detention, and Justice Clinic, which engage in cross-border legal representation and collaboration while advancing practice-based scholarship on asylum, detention, and human rights.

ROLE OF THE DEAN

Reporting to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, the dean of the Law School is the School's Chief Academic Officer and will provide academic, intellectual, and administrative leadership for the school. They will increase the strength and vitality of the school's educational and scholarly mission by promoting

the recruitment and retention of creative and distinguished faculty, while developing resources to support their teaching, research, and scholarly activities. The dean is also responsible for leading the recruitment and retention efforts for attracting high caliber law and graduate students, providing them with superior academic and professional experience. The dean advances legal scholarship and education by promoting initiatives within and outside of the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and by linking the work of law faculty and students to other disciplines, communities, and interests within and outside the academy. Building upon the University's history of engaging with issues of great societal importance, the dean must be eager to cultivate a scholarly community that promotes learning and intellectual inquiry, embraces the value of diversity of thought, and celebrates the vigorous and unfettered exchange of ideas. Finally, the dean will serve as the Law School's advocate, pursuing an aggressive development program to build the school's resources and articulating its contributions to local, state, regional, national, and international communities.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN

To promote a successful future for the UNC School of Law and prepare its students for successful careers in the practice of law and as leaders in their communities, the next dean will address the following key opportunities and challenges:

Maintain and strengthen the School's commitment to excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service as well as its strong culture of collegiality and community

UNC Law is an academic powerhouse that is committed to providing the finest education to the legal profession's next generation of practitioners and leaders—and to producing excellent scholarship that advances knowledge and understanding of the law and legal institutions from a range of different perspectives. The dean must be prepared to embrace and sustain these commitments and support ambitious efforts by the faculty to advance them. The next dean must continue to celebrate and protect UNC Law's vigorous culture of open inquiry—a culture that cherishes academic freedom, welcomes diversity of thought, and prizes the unencumbered exchange of ideas, both at the Law School and throughout the academy.

In an increasingly polarized political environment, the dean must model and reinforce norms of informed and respectful discourse. UNC Law maintains foundational commitments to open inquiry and diversity of thought. The faculty aspires to teach students to engage in reasoned and empathetic arguments about divisive issues. The School is likewise committed to helping students develop skills needed to lead successful careers in law and service. The dean will be a crucial player in ensuring the overall success and well-being of UNC students and alumni for years to come.

Represent and advocate for the Law School locally, nationally, and globally, with a particular focus on the school's commitment to serving the state of North Carolina

As North Carolina's flagship public law school, UNC Law has been, and will continue to be, deeply committed to serving the state through its mission of providing a superior legal education to graduates who will become highly skilled practitioners populating the bench and bar in all corners of the state. In addition, through its clinical programs and other public engagements UNC Law provides direct public service initiatives that enrich local communities, the state, and the nation. It has long served as a foundational institution for North Carolina's legal landscape, educating future leaders for the state's unique needs.

The dean will be a powerful advocate for UNC Law and a collaborative leader able to effectively engage a diverse group of stakeholders and partners on and beyond the campus. The next dean will have experience navigating complex political landscapes, the capacity to understand the current political context in North Carolina, and a commitment to foster key relationships with state officials and community leaders as well as current and potential partners locally, nationally, and internationally.

Ensure the Law School has the resources to fully achieve its aspirations

A skilled communicator and fundraiser, the dean will be a strategic steward and generator of resources. The dean will be responsible for attracting the next generation of donors while nurturing already established relationships, largely through communicating an exciting vision for the future of the school. Success in this arena will sustain the Law School's competitive edge in the areas of faculty research; student support (including merit awards); and clinical programs. Increased resources will also allow the school to remain competitive in hiring world-class faculty and investing in the physical and technological infrastructure necessary to bolster the Law School's strength and trajectory as one of the nation's eminent public law schools.

The dean will engage with the School's alumni, whose work spans public and private legal fields across the state and country, and offer opportunities for alumni to deepen and sustain their ongoing connection to the School. A visible and engaged leader, the dean will spend much of their time on the road forging connections with both alumni and donors from across the country and the world.

Recruit, retain, and support world class faculty and staff

The presence of intellectually ambitious scholars and experiential educators of the highest caliber on the faculty is crucial to the School's teaching and scholarly missions. In collaboration with Law School leadership, the dean will lead efforts for the recruitment and professional development of an exceptional faculty. The dean must foster a work environment that encourages collaboration and recognizes and celebrates the contributions that all faculty and staff, regardless of classification, make to the Law School. Under the dean's leadership, engagement and participation across groups will increase, resulting in an

even more collaborative and integrated environment. The dean will similarly need to support frontline staff, particularly those responsible for increasingly complex student needs and expectations.

Meet the challenges and changes facing legal education and the profession

Like all law schools, UNC Law must adapt to changes and innovations in the delivery of legal education and the practice of law, including the evolving tools lawyers will utilize to be successful and relevant. From online learning and artificial intelligence to the need for more nimble and adaptive legal practice, the experiences and expectations for all Law School graduates will be quite different from previous generations.

Given its history of preparing its graduates for successful careers, UNC Law is well-positioned to address the challenges and changes facing legal education and the legal profession. The Dean will work with relevant internal and external stakeholders to think strategically about how to tailor the School's curriculum and other programs to best navigate a fast-changing landscape.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The search advisory committee strongly welcomes applicants from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. It will consider the factors below when evaluating candidates for this important leadership role. It is required that the next dean possess a JD or an equivalent degree in law, along with evidence of scholarly, professional, or creative achievement. In addition, a successful candidate should possess many of the following characteristics:

- A distinguished record of academic achievement and outstanding professional accomplishment;
- Ability to foster an intellectual environment where diverse points of view and approaches to legal problems are valued;
- Engaged, collegial, and accessible leadership style that values collaboration and seeks input from stakeholders;
- Ability to think strategically and build effective institutional partnerships;
- Demonstrated administrative experience, a high standard of professional integrity, and strong team-building skill;
- Ability to articulate effectively the School's vision and mission to the students, faculty, alumni, practitioners, external funding agencies, and other decision-making bodies.
- Capacity to navigate a large public university and to build and maintain cross-school partnerships;
- Proven success in — or aptitude for — external and alumni relations and development;
- Nuanced understanding of the current challenges facing legal education and higher education.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of applications (CV and cover letter) will begin immediately and continue until **February 25, 2026**. Inquiries, nominations, and referrals should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-north-carolina-chapel-hill-eshelman-school-pharmacy/dean>

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The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to age, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, race, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or status as a protected veteran.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill would supersede any conflicting information in this document.