



Search for the Associate Vice President and Chief Compliance Officer
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota

THE SEARCH

The University of Minnesota, one of the most prestigious comprehensive, public land-grant research universities in the nation, seeks a visionary and collaborative leader to serve as its next Associate Vice President and Chief Compliance Officer (CCO). As a senior leader within one of the nation's premier public research universities, the CCO will drive the strategic evolution of a modern, University-wide compliance and privacy framework.

In 2025, the University strategically transitioned and elevated the Office of Institutional Compliance into the portfolio of the Executive Vice President for Finance and Operations. This structural realignment positions the incoming CCO with the administrative scaffolding, resources, and operational mandate necessary to build a premier, data-informed enterprise compliance function. Reporting directly to the Executive Vice President for Finance and Operations, the CCO serves in an advisory role to senior leadership and the Board of Regents. This position calls for a visionary strategist capable of coordinating complex compliance requirements across academic, research, clinical, and administrative operations.

Guided by information and recommendations of a recent landscape analysis of the University of Minnesota's compliance environment, the new CCO will lead the implementation of a modern, data-informed compliance model that enhances institutional alignment and accountability while leveraging deep expertise across all University campuses. Partnering closely with senior leadership across the university, the CCO will build a culture of proactive risk management and accountability. The CCO will develop and distribute tools, structures, and mechanisms that enable early identification, coordinated response, clear governance, transparent communication, and effective reporting and monitoring regarding potential risks. In addition to serving the Board of Regents and providing regular reports to the Audit and Compliance Committee, the CCO will also lead the Office of Institutional Compliance and provide oversight for core compliance programs and activities. The successful candidate will be a collaborative relationship builder who can lead through influence across a complex decentralized environment and bring best practices and fresh perspectives to the university's compliance function.

The University of Minnesota has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national search firm, to assist in this important search. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed in confidence to the University or search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The University of Minnesota is a comprehensive, land-grant public research university ranked among the world's most respected institutions of higher learning. The university has scholars of national and international reputation and a strong tradition of education and public engagement. With 70,000 students enrolled across five campuses located throughout Minnesota—the Twin Cities, Duluth, Morris, Crookston, and Rochester—the University of Minnesota advances discovery and innovation to improve society for all. The University is a proud member of the Association of American Universities and has the special distinction of being both a globally engaged R1 research institution and Minnesota's land-grant university, creating a unique capacity and responsibility to improve the lives of Minnesotans and drive the state forward.

The University's [five distinct campuses](#) serve all regions of the state. Each campus has [unique strengths](#), enriched by its surrounding communities. The Chancellors of the greater Minnesota campuses report directly to the President and work in close collaboration with Cabinet members to achieve systemwide goals. University of Minnesota staff and faculty focus on meeting the needs of each student, supporting them through world-class programming, academics, and hands-on experiences. As community engagement is a vital part of the University of Minnesota's mission, work extends beyond the campuses. From community-partnered research and outreach centers and extension offices to community-based field projects, health clinics, and environmental and agricultural projects, University of Minnesota faculty, students, and staff work together with communities throughout Minnesota and the globe.

Research & Innovation

In the 2023 NSF HERD rankings, the University reported over \$1.35 billion in research expenditures annually, ranking 12th nationally among public universities in the United States. University of Minnesota's technology transfer work has been recognized for its excellence in several national and global rankings, including *World's Most Innovative Universities* (Reuters) where the University ranked 22nd globally and 2nd among Big Ten public institutions; and *Universities Granted U.S. Utility Patents* (National Academy of Inventors) where the University ranked 16th in the world and 4th among Big Ten public institutions.

Health Sciences

The University of Minnesota trains over 70 percent of Minnesota's health professionals, and health sciences and medical research accounts for over \$570 million in externally funded research annually. [University of Minnesota Health Sciences](#) unites education and research across six schools and [patient care](#) across the state.

Budget and Economic Impact

The University of Minnesota's FY2027 annual operating budget is \$5.4 billion structured in a Responsibility-Center Management (RCM) budget model. The University generates an estimated

economic impact of \$11.5 billion for the Minnesota economy. The University of Minnesota is the state's seventh-largest employer and encompasses regional [extension](#) offices, research and outreach centers, clinics, labs, professional education outreach, and K-12 educational engagement programs throughout the state, as well as world-class performing arts facilities, museums, and galleries.

University Leadership

President Rebecca Cunningham

[Dr. Rebecca Cunningham](#) began her appointment as the 18th President of the University of Minnesota on July 1, 2024.

As President, Dr. Cunningham leads the University of Minnesota's mission to educate the next generation of leaders, strengthen communities across the state and generate discoveries that improve lives. President Cunningham is focused on prioritizing an accessible, world-class education for students and advancing the University's powerful mission to enhance the health, safety and prosperity of people across the state, nation and world.

President Cunningham maintains a faculty appointment in the School of Public Health's Division of Epidemiology & Community Health.

Before joining the University of Minnesota, she served as the Vice President for Research and Innovation at the University of Michigan, where she was responsible for expanding its annual research portfolio to a record \$2 billion. At Michigan, Dr. Cunningham led a university-wide strategy that bolstered discovery and impact, accelerated knowledge translation, supported entrepreneurial activity, expanded statewide economic development, advanced undergraduate student success, and strengthened diversity, equity, and inclusion.

She holds a bachelor's degree from Fairfield University and a medical doctorate from Jefferson Medical College. President Cunningham completed her residency in emergency medicine at the University of Michigan.

Michael Volna, Interim Executive Vice President for Finance and Operations

The executive vice president for finance and operations oversees critical functions that ensure the University of Minnesota's excellence in education, research, and community engagement. This leader serves as the University's chief financial officer, chief operations officer, and treasurer, providing systemwide leadership across University Budget, Investments and Banking, University Finance, Information Technology, University Services, Compliance, Public Safety, and Health, Safety, and Risk Management. Responsible for a \$5.4 billion operating budget and a team of over 2,700 employees, the EVPFO manages the University's financial and operational strategy across its five campuses and medical center.

Effective August 1, Michael Volna will serve as interim executive vice president for finance and operations, and chief financial officer, providing University-wide leadership with oversight of the EVPFO offices. Mike is the University's Vice President, Finance & Assistant CFO. With more than three decades serving in financial roles at the University, Mike is intimately familiar with the institution, its operations and strategic priorities. He brings national perspective as the incoming board chair of the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO). A nationwide search for a new EVPFO is in process, with the goal to have a new EVPFO in place by early 2027.

Board of Regents

Established in 1851 at the founding of the University of Minnesota, the [Board of Regents](#) is the University's governing board. Regents articulate a vision for the University and work to ensure the University of Minnesota fulfills its mission of education, research, and outreach for the benefit of the people of Minnesota, the nation, and the world. There are 12 Regents who each serve six-year terms and are elected by the Minnesota legislature. There is one Regent from each of the state's eight congressional districts as well as four additional Regents from the state at large.

Minneapolis and St. Paul

The University of Minnesota's flagship Twin Cities campus is in the heart of a dynamic metro area that is a global economic leader, a hub for education and culture, and renowned for its abundant cultural and natural resources. The Minneapolis-St. Paul metro is home to the 4th-largest concentration of Fortune 500 companies in the country, as well as thriving entrepreneurial and small-business sectors. Ranked as one of the country's leading "creative economy" communities, the Twin Cities is renowned for its arts and nonprofit sectors, as well as its many lakes, parks, recreational and entertainment opportunities.

Spanning locations in both Minneapolis and St. Paul, the Twin Cities Campus is part of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. It is a place that offers strong work-life balance, low cost of living compared to similarly sized metro areas, and high rates of health coverage—in short, a place that ranks highly in quality-of-life surveys.

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE

The [Office of Institutional Compliance](#) (OIC) helps the University and its community comply with applicable laws, regulations, and University policies, while strengthening awareness of the role compliance and integrity play in advancing the University's mission. OIC's ethics work complements this effort by fostering a culture in which members of the University community act in alignment with University values.

OIC includes five major program areas: Privacy, [Compliance](#) Operations, [Conflict of Interest](#), [Administrative Policy](#), and [Delegations of Authority](#).

ROLE OF THE ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER

Reporting directly to the Executive Vice President for Finance and Operations, the CCO leads the Office of Institutional Compliance, and serves in an advisory role to senior leadership and the Board of Regents. The CCO will be a trusted partner to campus and unit leaders, providing consultation and judgment on complex or cross-functional compliance issues. The CCO will oversee compliance activities, aligning policy and prioritizing risks across the University. The CCO will establish a central function to assess new laws and regulations, determine impact and resource needs, and guide implementation. The CCO will oversee a newly consolidated Privacy Office within the OIC. As part of this strategic reorganization, the University's Health Information Privacy & Compliance Office (HIPCO) will transition from the Office of Academic Clinical Affairs into this unified Privacy Office. The CCO will recruit and onboard a dedicated Chief Privacy Officer to manage this comprehensive portfolio, ensuring seamless compliance with HIPAA, FERPA, and evolving global data privacy standards.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER

Strategic Leadership & Compliance Infrastructure Modernization

The CCO will provide strategic leadership to advance a modern, enterprise-wide compliance function that reflects and supports the scale and complexity of the University. The CCO will serve as the key architect and leader of the University of Minnesota's institutional compliance framework across the highly decentralized, five-campus system, partnering closely with Chancellors, Vice Presidents, and senior leaders to align compliance strategy with institutional priorities and best practices. They will champion a proactive approach to compliance and risk management that emphasizes early identification, coordinated response, clarity of responsibility, and continuous improvement. This individual must uphold a culture of integrity, accountability, and ethical decision-making across the University to undergird the institutional compliance framework and ensure its ongoing effectiveness and success.

To modernize the University of Minnesota's compliance infrastructure, the CCO will strategically develop systems, tools, and technologies that support training, reporting, policy management, and overall coordination. Beginning with a comprehensive review of existing structures across the University, the CCO will identify gaps, redundancies, and opportunities for greater alignment and use these findings to develop a prioritized multi-year compliance investment roadmap. Additionally, the CCO will establish a data framework that ensures the protection, integrity, and accessibility of compliance-related data to support units with timely execution of compliance and reporting functions.

Governance & Institutional Coordination

The CCO will play a central role in reestablishing and reinvigorating University compliance governing bodies, providing renewed formal oversight with defined charters, cadence, reporting, and system representation.

- **Leadership:** The CCO will serve as a liaison to the Board of Regents Audit and Compliance Committee. The CCO will participate directly in the newly re-chartered leadership governance committee and the President's Policy Committee.
- **Operational Architecture:** The CCO will formally lead and chair the Institutional Strategic Risk and Compliance Group, coordinating legal, risk, audit, and information security leaders to address emerging enterprise risks.
- **Distributed Accountability:** The CCO will guide the systemwide Compliance Partner network, leveraging a decentralized, collaborative model to share information and scale best practices across all five campuses. The CCO will formalize cross-functional affinity groups organized around key areas of risk and compliance, such as international activities, research, clinical care, student services, athletics, and data/privacy.

Enterprise Integration & Network Leadership

The CCO will lead and strengthen the University's Compliance Partner network, modeled on a distributed accountability framework with clear institutional alignment. Leveraging University of Minnesota's institutional culture that values communication and relationships, the CCO will establish mechanisms for information sharing, escalation, and coordination across compliance areas. Across these efforts, the CCO will ensure that compliance risks are identified and addressed collaboratively across organizational boundaries.

Privacy & Regulatory Oversight

The CCO will recruit and onboard a Chief Privacy Officer (CPO) to oversee a newly established Privacy Office within OIC. In close partnership with the CPO, the CCO will guide a unified privacy governance framework that defines principles, assigns decision-making authority, and coordinates privacy-related efforts across IT, research, healthcare, and administrative units. Moreover, the CCO, in collaboration with the CPO, will strengthen the University's approach to privacy and data protection, ensuring compliance with HIPAA, FERPA, GDPR, and other privacy laws and regulations. The University's Health Information Privacy & Compliance Office (HIPCO) will transition from the Office of Academic Clinical Affairs to the Privacy Office within OIC. The CCO will hire a Chief Privacy Officer who will oversee the HIPCO.

Core Compliance Program Leadership

The CCO will provide oversight and strategic direction for OIC's core compliance programs, including institutional compliance coordination, conflict of interest, University policy, delegations of authority, and suspected misconduct reporting and investigations through the University's confidential UReport system. They will continuously review and strengthen these programs to reflect constantly evolving best practices and regulatory requirements.

Training, Onboarding & Role Clarity

The CCO will review and strengthen a comprehensive, role-based compliance education framework to enhance awareness and accountability across the University. In partnership with Human Resources and University compliance leaders, the CCO will implement a curriculum tailored by job function and a corresponding tracking system that ensures completion and identifies areas of non-compliance. To support training efforts, the CCO will create a comprehensive inventory of compliance responsibilities, mapping roles across academic, administrative, research, and operational units to clarify ownership, reduce duplication, and strengthen coordination across the University's decentralized environment.

Risk Identification, Reporting & Communication

In close collaboration with Internal Audit, Office of the General Counsel, Enterprise Risk Management, and other key partners, the CCO will participate in the University's enterprise-wide approach to identifying, assessing, and managing compliance risks. They will enhance institutional visibility into compliance trends and emerging areas of concern by harnessing data, reporting, and analytics. To promote awareness and accountability regarding risk, the CCO will develop and implement a comprehensive communication and training strategy that reaches constituents across the University community.

Leadership & Team Management

The incoming CCO will inherit a dedicated, collaborative, and stable team within the Office of Institutional Compliance. Backed by seasoned professionals who possess deep institutional knowledge, the office has maintained high performance and strong operational continuity throughout this transition period. The CCO will lead the Office of Institutional Compliance, providing direction for staff, resources, and program priorities, while developing and supporting this team to drive the University's mission. The CCO will need to hire a Chief Privacy Officer to oversee HIPCO and other privacy programs. The CCO will build a high-performing and collaborative culture that strives for continuous improvement and operational effectiveness and efficiency. The CCO will also cultivate a culture of mutual respect, integrity, and shared accountability, motivating OIC to develop strong partnerships and provide a high level of support and service across the University.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no one candidate will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal attributes:

Required Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree and at least 15 years of progressively responsible experience, including a minimum of five years in compliance, privacy, risk, legal, audit, regulatory, or a closely related function
- Demonstrated success leading, designing, and implementing enterprise compliance or risk management programs in complex organizations
- Exceptional leadership, communication, and relationship-building skills
- Strong analytical and strategic thinking capabilities

Preferred Qualifications

- Advanced degree (e.g., JD, Master's)
- Experience in higher education or other large, decentralized organization
- Experience working with governing boards and senior leadership
- Experience leading an institutional compliance, enterprise risk, privacy, regulatory, legal, audit, or related function in a complex organization
- Experience managing privacy regulations at a complex institution that includes healthcare operations

Key Leadership Competencies

- Strong collaboration and relationship-building skills
- Strategic and enterprise mindset
- Integrity and sound judgment
- Ability to lead through influence in a decentralized environment
- Capacity to translate complex risks into clear, actionable insights
- Commitment to continuous improvement and institutional excellence

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The Associate Vice President and Chief Compliance Officer position is a 100-percent time, 12-month, professional and administrative (P&A) appointment based in Minneapolis. Salary is commensurate with education and experience, with an anticipated salary range of \$273,395 to \$325,545.

The University of Minnesota offers excellent benefits. Please visit the [Office of Human Resources](#) website for more information regarding benefit eligibility.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-minnesota/chief-compliance-officer>.

Rebecca Kennedy, Managing Partner
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Isaacson, Miller

The University of Minnesota shall provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, familial status, disability, public assistance status, membership or activity in a local commission created for the purpose of dealing with discrimination, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by the University of Minnesota. 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 the University of Minnesota would supersede any conflicting information in this document.