Search for the Dean, School of Law
Duke University
Durham, North Carolina

THE SEARCH

Duke University, a global leader in teaching, research, and innovation, invites applications and nominations for the position of Dean of the Duke University School of Law. Duke Law's position within one of the world's premier research universities creates compelling opportunities for collaboration, enabling students and faculty to address complex challenges at the intersection of law and society. Equally distinctive is Duke Law's culture: the School combines the intellectual rigor, scholarly influence, and global reputation of a leading law school with a culture that is notably collaborative, interdisciplinary, and deeply committed to student success. The School is home to over 100 full-time faculty and 64 part-time faculty and approximately 790 enrolled students in its J.D., LL.M., and S.J.D. programs, creating a close-knit academic community that brings together aspiring lawyers and legal scholars from across the United States and around the world. Duke Law's alumni network exceeds 14,000 graduates and includes leaders of the bench, bar, business community, government, and civil society across every major legal market.

The next Dean will join Duke Law at a moment of substantial strength and opportunity. The School is thriving academically, financially, and reputationally. The School has built considerable momentum through the expansion of its clinical programs, investments in public-interest and experiential learning, and the cultivation of a culture grounded in mutual respect. At the same time, legal education and the legal profession are experiencing profound change driven by technological innovation, evolving career pathways, increasing demands for interdisciplinary engagement, and shifting views of higher education. The Dean will have the opportunity to lead Duke Law's next chapter of growth and impact, weaving together strategic ambition, technological evolution, and interdisciplinary engagement with a commitment to maintaining the culture, values, and academic excellence that have made the School one of the nation's most respected and distinctive law schools.

Reporting to Alec D. Gallimore, Provost and Chief Academic Officer of Duke University, and serving as a member of Duke University's academic leadership team, the Dean will provide strategic, intellectual, and administrative leadership for the School. The Dean will be responsible for advancing Duke Law's

educational, scholarly, and service missions; recruiting and retaining outstanding faculty and staff; strengthening interdisciplinary partnerships across the University; ensuring an exceptional student experience; cultivating relationships with alumni and donors; and positioning the School for continued excellence in a rapidly changing environment.

Duke University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. Directions for submitting nominations, applications, and inquiries can be found at the conclusion of this document.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF LAW

History and Overview

Founded in 1868 as the professional law school of Trinity College, Duke Law traces its roots even further to law-related instruction offered at Trinity beginning in the 1850s. The School experienced several periods of closure and reorganization during its early history before being reestablished in the early twentieth century and becoming part of Duke University when the University was created in 1924.

Today, Duke Law School is a premier law school that combines rigorous legal education with a collaborative, supportive, and vibrant learning environment. Strategic investments in faculty, clinics, interdisciplinary centers, law journals, technology, public-interest initiatives, and student development opportunities have helped to ensure that Duke Law remains at the forefront of legal education. Long recognized for excellence in business law, constitutional law, international and comparative law, and environmental law, the School has also emerged as a significant contributor to legal and policy conversations surrounding artificial intelligence, innovation, intellectual property, cybersecurity, national security, and the future of legal practice.

Academics

Guided by a mission to advance knowledge and the rule of law through rigorous and collaborative education and scholarly inquiry, Duke Law prepares lawyers who combine intellectual discipline, ethical leadership, professional skill, and a commitment to service and equal justice. The School offers the Juris Doctor, Master of Laws, and Doctor of Juridical Science degrees, as well as an extensive portfolio of joint-degree opportunities. Duke Law's academic philosophy emphasizes not only mastery of legal doctrine but also the development of leadership, judgment, and professional versatility. Through collaborations with the Fuqua School of Business, Sanford School of Public Policy, Pratt School of Engineering, School of Medicine, and Nicholas School of the Environment, Duke Law students regularly engage questions that sit at the intersection of law, business, technology, health care, public policy, national security, and global affairs. In addition, faculty at Duke Law contribute to the campus-wide Margolis Institute for Health Policy and actively participate in the multidisciplinary Duke Initiative for Science & Society.

Students

The School attracts exceptionally talented students drawn by its academic reputation, outstanding professional outcomes, and distinctive culture. Recent entering classes have been among the most academically accomplished in the nation, with median LSAT scores of 171 and median undergraduate GPAs above 3.9. Duke Law's relatively intimate scale fosters meaningful engagement among students, faculty, and administrators and contributes to a community that is collaborative, supportive, and deeply invested in student success. Students benefit from an extensive array of curricular, co-curricular, and experiential opportunities, including clinics, externships, interdisciplinary programs, faculty research opportunities, and 75 student organizations through Student Affairs and Student Organizations.

Duke Law is especially well known for preparing graduates for sophisticated legal practice, with employment outcomes that consistently rank among the strongest in legal education. Recent graduating classes have achieved near-universal placement in J.D.-required positions, including substantial numbers entering the nation's leading law firms, judicial clerkships, government agencies, and public-interest organizations. Recent investments in public-interest programming, expanded clinical education, dedicated advising, guaranteed summer funding, fellowships, and the Public Interest and Public Service (PIPS) Certificate Program have strengthened opportunities for students pursuing careers in service and public leadership. Together, these experiences reflect Duke Law's commitment to developing lawyers who are intellectually rigorous, professionally versatile, and prepared to lead across sectors and throughout their careers.

Faculty

Duke Law's faculty reflects the depth, breadth, and distinction expected of one of the nation's premier law schools. The School is home to more than 100 scholars, practitioners, clinicians, and educators, including distinguished professors, leading public intellectuals, accomplished former government officials, influential litigators, and nationally recognized experts whose work shapes legal doctrine, public policy, and public discourse. Through influential scholarship, public service, policy engagement, and teaching, Duke Law faculty have helped shape legal thought and practice while advancing the School's reputation as a global leader in legal education.

Clinical Education

Clinical education has become one of Duke Law's defining strengths. Over the past decade, Duke has made major investments in experiential learning, expanding both the scope and prominence of its clinical offerings. Duke Law currently operates twelve in-house clinics, including the Appellate Litigation Clinic, Children's Law Clinic, Civil Justice Clinic, Community Enterprise Clinic, Criminal Defense Clinic, Environmental Law & Policy Clinic, First Amendment Clinic, Health Justice Clinic, Immigrant Rights Clinic, International Human Rights Clinic, Start-Up Ventures Clinic, and Wrongful Convictions Clinic, alongside a

substantial externship program serving governmental and nonprofit partners. Several of these programs have achieved impressive visibility and impact. The Wrongful Convictions Clinic and the Wilson Center for Science and Justice have contributed to national conversations surrounding criminal justice reform and wrongful convictions. The First Amendment Clinic, Immigrant Rights Clinic, and Environmental Law & Policy Clinic have become important vehicles through which students engage consequential legal issues while serving communities throughout North Carolina and beyond.

Centers, Institutes, and Initiatives

Duke Law's centers, institutes, and interdisciplinary initiatives extend the School's influence beyond the classroom and serve as important vehicles for scholarship, public engagement, and policy impact. Several Duke Law centers have achieved particular national prominence. The Bolch Judicial Institute has become one of the nation's leading centers devoted to judicial studies, judicial education, and the rule of law, while the Center on Law, Ethics and National Security convenes leading voices addressing issues such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, armed conflict, public health emergencies, and national security policy. The Richard A. Horvitz Program in Constitutional & Public Law promotes better understanding of our nation's public institutions, of the Constitutional framework in which they function, and of the principles and laws that apply to the work of public officials. The Wilson Center for Science and Justice has emerged as an influential voice in criminal justice reform, wrongful-conviction prevention, sentencing policy, and community reentry initiatives, and the Center for Firearms Law has established itself as a leading academic center dedicated to firearms law and Second Amendment scholarship. The Center on Law, Race & Policy advances racial equity and its educational programs, cutting-edge research, and community partnerships foster understanding of the interplay between race, law, policy, and people. Duke Law has also continued to strengthen its position at the intersection of law, technology, business, and innovation. Through the Center for Innovation Policy, the Center for International and Comparative Law, and the Duke Center on Law & Technology, faculty and students are addressing issues ranging from intellectual property and entrepreneurship to artificial intelligence, legal innovation, and global legal challenges.

Alumni and Development

Duke Law benefits from an exceptionally engaged and loyal alumni base whose members contribute their time, expertise, and resources in support of the School. Philanthropy plays a critical role in Duke Law's success, accounting for around one-third of the School's budget. The Dean is supported in these efforts by an experienced Alumni & Development team and by several highly committed alumni leadership groups, including the Board of Visitors, the Dean's primary advisory and fundraising board; the Law Alumni Association Board of Directors, which serves as the governing body of the alumni at large; and the Alumnae Leadership Council. To sustain and build upon this extraordinary culture of engagement and giving, the next Dean must be a compelling ambassador for the School, an effective fundraiser, a gifted communicator, and a thoughtful listener. As Duke University advances MADE FOR THIS campaign, the next Dean will have a meaningful opportunity to engage alumni and friends around a bold vision for Duke

Law's future.

Staff

The next Dean will lead and support a highly dedicated, talented, and experienced staff whose professionalism, collaboration, and commitment contribute to Duke Law's national reputation and continued success. Duke Law's professional staff are essential partners in advancing the School's mission. Working across admissions, career services, student affairs, alumni relations and development, communications, finance, the law library, academic administration, and operations, staff bring deep expertise, institutional knowledge, and a strong commitment to service.

ROLE OF THE DEAN

The Dean serves as the chief academic and administrative officer of Duke University School of Law and a member of Duke University's academic leadership team. The Dean is responsible for the School's strategic direction and overall operations, including the advancement of its mission and position among the nation's leading law schools. As the School's chief ambassador, the Dean will represent Duke Law to an extensive network of alumni, donors, judges, law firm leaders, policymakers, corporate executives, foundation leaders, and academic partners. The Dean will also recruit and support an outstanding faculty, ensure an exceptional student experience, foster excellence in teaching, scholarship, and clinical education, and champion Duke Law's influence and impact. Working within a tradition of faculty engagement and shared governance, the Dean will provide visionary leadership while cultivating the collaborative, intellectually rigorous culture that distinguishes Duke Law.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

To promote a successful future for Duke 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:

Shape Duke Law's Future While Preserving Excellence and Culture

The Dean will be charged with sustaining Duke Law's distinctive culture and excellence while positioning the School to proactively respond and thrive in a rapidly evolving environment. Higher education, legal education, and the legal profession are undergoing dramatic changes. Law schools cannot stand still. Duke University's leadership in technology, engineering, healthcare, policy, and interdisciplinary research—coupled with Duke Law’s strengths in technology policy, innovation, intellectual property, cybersecurity, national security, and related fields--creates a unique opportunity for the School to play a leading role in defining the future of legal education and legal practice. Within this context, the Dean will engage the Duke Law community around strategic priorities and opportunities for advancement. Areas of focus may include artificial intelligence and legal technology, public-interest law, faculty recruitment and retention,

clinical education, and interdisciplinary collaboration. By balancing innovation with stewardship, the next Dean will chart a course that builds on Duke Law's many strengths while ensuring its continued progress, leadership, and impact. Across this work, the Dean will demonstrate courageous leadership grounded in the highest standards of integrity and ethics.

Strengthen Duke Law's connections across the University.

Duke Law's distinctive culture, academic excellence, and history of success have been supported in part by a degree of autonomy that the community values deeply. At the same time, many see important opportunities to deepen engagement with the broader university and leverage Duke's extraordinary strengths in fields such as medicine, engineering, public policy, business, and technology. The next Dean will be expected to serve as both a strong advocate for Duke Law and an effective university partner, strengthening interdisciplinary relationships and expanding opportunities for collaboration while preserving the culture, independence, and sense of identity that distinguish the School.

Secure the Resources Necessary to Advance Duke Law's Ambitions

As the School looks toward its next chapter, the Dean will play a central role in ensuring Duke Law has the resources necessary to remain among the nation's most influential and competitive law schools. Duke Law has a strong culture of philanthropy and Duke University is in the midst of MADE FOR THIS: The Duke Campaign—the university's most ambitious campaign ever. The Dean must be a compelling ambassador capable of engaging alumni, donors, foundations, and other supporters in support of Duke Law's mission and goals. Fundraising priorities include, but are not limited to, scholarships, faculty recruitment and retention, clinics, public-interest initiatives, and addressing space constraints that limit future growth and collaboration.

Invest in the Infrastructure for Future Growth

The Dean will also have the opportunity to address one of the School's most compelling long-term priorities: ensuring that its facilities, infrastructure, and physical environment reflect the excellence of its academic programs and community. Investments in space, technology, experiential learning environments, and student gathering areas will play an important role in supporting future growth and enhancing the Duke Law experience. Advancing these efforts will require vision, partnership, strategic planning, and fundraising leadership, making this both a challenge and an inviting opportunity for the next Dean.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The search committee welcomes candidates from a broad range of backgrounds and experiences. The next Dean should possess intellectual distinction, a deep appreciation for Duke Law's strengths and culture, and the ability to lead one of the nation's premier law schools through a period of substantial

opportunity and change.

While no candidate will bring every desired qualification, the successful candidate will possess many of the following attributes:

- A distinguished record of scholarly achievement, professional accomplishment, or intellectual leadership sufficient to merit appointment as a tenured member of the faculty;
- A demonstrated commitment to excellence in legal education, scholarship, and public service;
- The ability to articulate a compelling vision for the future of Duke Law and translate that vision into action;
- An engaged, collaborative, and accessible leadership style that values consultation, shared governance, and relationship building;
- A record of successful leadership within a complex academic, legal, governmental, or similarly sophisticated organization;
- The ability to recruit, develop, and retain exceptional faculty and staff;
- Proven success in, or strong aptitude for, fundraising, alumni engagement, and external relations;
- Financial acumen and the ability to steward institutional resources strategically and effectively;
- The capacity to serve as an effective advocate for Duke Law within Duke University and with external constituencies;
- A nuanced understanding of the evolving legal profession and the challenges and opportunities facing legal education;
- Exceptional communication, interpersonal, and team-building skills;
- A commitment to fostering an academic community defined by excellence, integrity, mutual respect, and intellectual engagement;
- The judgment, emotional intelligence, and resilience necessary to lead effectively in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing environment.

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 submitted prior to December 1, 2026 via the Isaacson, Miller website: https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/duke-university-school-law/dean.

Amy Segal, Partner
Tim McFeeley, Partner
Miguel Santiago, Senior Associate
Lisa Landis, Senior Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

Duke is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer committed to providing employment

opportunity without regard to an individual's age, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, (including pregnancy and pregnancy related conditions), sexual orientation, or military status.

Isaacson, Miller, and Duke University are committed to creating an inclusive environment and welcome applications from candidates with disabilities. If you have any accommodation or access needs, we are happy to provide reasonable accommodations.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Duke University School of Law and Duke University. 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 Duke Law or Duke University would supersede any conflicting information in this document.

APPENDIX

DUKE UNIVERSITY

Duke University, a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities (AAU), is a global, research-intensive institution enrolling approximately 6,500 undergraduate and 10,800 graduate and professional students representing almost every state and many foreign countries. The university has a network of over 210,000 alumni, employs more than 4,250 regular-rank faculty, and has approximately 48,000 staff (including the Duke University Health System), making it one of the largest private employers in North Carolina. While guided since 1859 by the motto Eruditio et Religio, or "Knowledge and Religion," Duke University continues to evolve and is strengthened by its inclusive community that welcomes individuals of all backgrounds.

Duke is comprised of the following colleges and schools: Trinity College of Arts & Sciences; School of Law; Divinity School; Graduate School; School of Medicine; School of Nursing; Pratt School of Engineering; The Fuqua School of Business; Nicholas School of the Environment; and Sanford School of Public Policy. Duke's schools collaborate through interdisciplinary programs, centers, and institutes that connect scholarship with pressing societal challenges, including human health, climate change, artificial intelligence, and public policy. Through faculty-mentored student research, community partnerships, and the commercialization of discoveries, Duke connects education and scholarship with practical applications that benefit communities locally and globally.

Duke is a financially strong, growing institution. The university's endowment was $12.3 billion as of June 30, 2025. For fiscal year 2025, the endowment ranked 12th largest in the country according to the NACUBO survey.

In February 2025, Duke publicly launched MADE FOR THIS: The Duke Campaign, the most ambitious campaign in the University's history. The campaign seeks to accelerate Duke's impact in four areas where it believes it can make the greatest difference: science and technology, climate and sustainability, student experience, and health. In addition to advancing these priorities, the campaign emphasizes alumni engagement and philanthropy as critical drivers of Duke's future success and global impact.

Location

Duke's home campus spans 8,600 acres in Durham, North Carolina—a vibrant small city that has become an entrepreneurial hotbed and a cultural center with a population exceeding 304,000. The city is a two-hour drive from the beach and a three-hour drive from the Blue Ridge Mountains. Duke's proximity to the Mid-Atlantic Region and Washington, D.C. in particular, provides easy access to federal funding agencies, policymakers, and many other collaborators that advance the research and education missions. The area is served by a convenient international airport approximately twenty minutes from campus.

Duke is situated in the heart of the Research Triangle with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina Central University, and North Carolina State University nearby. These institutions are public research universities with exceptionally strong science and engineering programs that provide a myriad of opportunities for collaboration and partnership.