Dean, School of Law
University of St. Thomas
Minneapolis, MN

THE SEARCH

The University of St. Thomas ("St. Thomas" or "UST") invites nominations and applications for the position of Dean of the School of Law. The School of Law seeks an accomplished, collaborative, and visionary leader to build upon its strong foundation and guide the School through its next chapter of excellence and impact.

Founded in 1885, the University of St. Thomas is a comprehensive Catholic university with a strong presence in the Twin Cities and a commitment to academic excellence, the development of the whole person, and advancing the common good. The University offers a broad range of undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, creating opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and engagement. Within this setting, the School of Law serves close to 500 J.D. students, supported by a faculty that includes full-time scholars and teachers as well as adjunct professors drawn from the Twin Cities legal community. The School is distinguished by its commitment to rigorous legal education, outstanding teaching and scholarship, professional formation, and the integration of faith and reason.

The next Dean will join the School at an important moment of opportunity, working with an engaged community of faculty, students, staff, alumni, and supporters to advance academic excellence, strengthen the student experience and outcomes, support faculty achievement, and enhance the School's visibility and impact. The Dean will also cultivate relationships across the University and throughout the Twin Cities' legal and business communities while expanding philanthropic and external support for the School's priorities.

The successful candidate will bring the vision, academic credibility, administrative leadership, and relationship-building skills necessary to lead a distinctive law school within a comprehensive Catholic university. Above all, the next Dean will embrace the values that define St. Thomas and inspire the School of Law community around an ambitious and compelling vision for its future.

The University of St. Thomas 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.

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

Founded in 1885, the University of St. Thomas is a private, Catholic university rooted in the Catholic intellectual tradition and committed to preparing students to think critically, act wisely, and lead purposefully. St. Thomas is the largest private university in Minnesota, enrolling close to 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students across campuses in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Rome. Its mission emphasizes academic excellence, the pursuit of truth, human dignity, and preparation for lives of meaning, leadership, and service to the common good.

St. Thomas offers more than 150 undergraduate majors and minors and 55 graduate programs across eight schools and colleges, encompassing the liberal arts and sciences, business, engineering, education, health, law, and other professional fields. More than 800 faculty serve the University, and undergraduate classes are taught by faculty rather than teaching assistants. The University also maintains a global community of more than 120,000 alumni.

The University's location in the Twin Cities provides students with access to a significant metropolitan business and professional community. The historic St. Paul campus is home to the university's principal undergraduate residential community and a broad range of academic programs. The downtown Minneapolis campus is home to the School of Law, School of Education, and Dougherty Family College, as well as selected programs from the Morrison Family College of Health and Opus College of Business, providing opportunities for interdisciplinary engagement and connections with the region's professional community. A third campus in Rome supports international education and global engagement.

St. Thomas is currently advancing the St. Thomas 2030 Strategic Plan, which centers on student success and lifelong flourishing, expanding the University's national visibility and impact, and embedding innovation and entrepreneurial thinking across the institution. St. Thomas has also undertaken significant initiatives in academic innovation, interdisciplinary education, and the responsible integration of artificial intelligence, creating new opportunities for collaboration across its schools and colleges. Recent institutional momentum includes record undergraduate enrollment, continued growth in philanthropy, and the University's ongoing engagement in NCAA Division I athletics.

Location

St. Thomas School of Law is the only law school in downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota's most populous city. The law school is within walking distance of employers, courts, and mentors, including most of the major Minnesota law firms, the federal district court, multiple state courthouses, Target's international headquarters, and many other businesses. The law school is also close to many recreational opportunities. The school is situated in the heart of Minneapolis's theater district, within walking distance of the Orpheum Theater, Minnesota Orchestra, and Walker Art Center.

Minneapolis also has one of the best park districts in the country, with miles of walking, biking, and cross-country skiing trails. For those who prefer to stay inside during chilly winter days, the law school is connected to the largest contiguous skyway system in the world, offering the opportunity to walk, shop, dine, and go to work through a series of enclosed second-story walkways without setting foot outdoors.

Leadership

Robert K. Vischer became the University's 16th president in January 2023 after previously serving as interim president and as dean of the School of Law. His leadership is focused on advancing the University's Catholic mission, student formation, academic excellence, innovation, and the priorities of the St. Thomas 2030 Strategic Plan.

Dr. Eddy Rojas serves as executive vice president and provost, providing leadership for the university's academic enterprise and a broad portfolio that includes academic affairs, student affairs, enrollment management, information technology, and other areas central to student and institutional success. Since joining St. Thomas in 2021, he has helped lead a period of significant growth and institutional transformation, advancing academic excellence, student success, faculty achievement, interdisciplinary collaboration, and innovation, including the establishment of the Institute for AI for the Common Good.

SCHOOL OF LAW

The University of St. Thomas School of Law, located in downtown Minneapolis, offers students a distinctive legal education grounded in rigorous academics, practical preparation, and professional formation. Founded in 1999 and welcoming its first class in 2001, the School is accredited by the American Bar Association and has established a strong reputation within legal education. As a Catholic law school, St. Thomas is dedicated to integrating faith and reason in the search for truth through a focus on morality and social justice, while welcoming students, staff, and faculty from a wide range of faith traditions and perspectives.

St. Thomas Law is particularly recognized for practical training, ranking #2 nationally in 2026 by *The National Jurist*, and for its emphasis on mentoring and professional formation. Its distinctive Mentor Externship Program pairs each law student with a legal professional each year of law school, while the School's downtown Minneapolis location provides ready access to the Twin Cities legal and business community. Together, these strengths support a close-knit educational environment focused on preparing students for meaningful careers and lives of purpose in the law.

Academics

University of St. Thomas School of Law offers a full-time Juris Doctor program that combines a strong foundation in legal theory and analysis with practical skills, professional ethics, and experiential learning. The first-year curriculum includes foundational courses in civil procedure, constitutional law, contracts, criminal law, property, and torts, together with a multi-course Lawyering Skills sequence and courses

focused on moral reasoning and serving clients. In the second and third years, students build on that foundation through required upper-level coursework and a broad selection of electives, allowing them to tailor their studies to their professional interests.

Students may pursue coursework across a broad range of areas of study, including civil litigation and dispute resolution, criminal law, public interest and social justice, global and comparative law, and organizational ethics and compliance. The School also offers joint-degree opportunities in partnership with other areas of the University, including the J.D./MBA, J.D./M.S.W., and J.D./M.A. in Catholic Studies, as well as concentrations in Immigration Law; Law, AI & Evolving Technologies; and Organizational Ethics & Compliance.

Clinical education is an important component of St. Thomas Law's emphasis on experiential learning. Through its nine legal clinics, students gain hands-on experience working with clients and addressing legal issues in areas including appellate advocacy, criminal and juvenile defense, immigration, health law, small business and transactional law, religious liberties, trademark, and federal commutations. Five of the clinics operate within the School's Interprofessional Center for Counseling and Legal Services, where law students work alongside students in social work and psychology to provide coordinated, holistic services to clients.

Another distinctive feature of St. Thomas Law's academic program is its Lawyering Skills curriculum. Most Lawyering Skills professors are tenured or tenure-track faculty who collaborate with law librarians in delivering an integrated legal research and writing curriculum, while also developing and teaching courses beyond traditional lawyering-skills subjects. Their scholarship similarly extends across a wide range of areas, including interdisciplinary and traditional doctrinal fields.

Students and Alumni

The University of St. Thomas School of Law currently enrolls close to 500 J.D. students, creating a close-knit community in which students benefit from individualized support throughout their legal education. The School places particular emphasis on helping students develop their professional identity and prepare for meaningful careers, with each student assigned a dedicated career counselor through the Office of Career and Professional Development and access to professional development, networking, interviewing, and connections with legal employers.

St. Thomas Law graduates pursue careers across private practice, judicial clerkships, business and industry, government, public interest, and nonprofit organizations. The Class of 2025 achieved a 91.28% employment rate in full-time, long-term positions requiring bar passage or for which a J.D. provides a significant advantage. The School continues to support graduates through its J.D. Compass program, which pairs recent graduates with a career strategist for one year after graduation, as well as career services available to alumni throughout their professional lives.

Faculty and Research

The University of St. Thomas School of Law has 28 full-time faculty members, complemented by adjunct professors drawn from the Twin Cities legal community. Faculty are committed to excellence in teaching, scholarship, and engagement with the legal profession, contributing to legal scholarship through books and scholarly journals and engaging with the law through work in the courts. The faculty's scholarly influence is nationally recognized, with St. Thomas Law consistently ranking among the top 25 law schools in the country for scholarly impact, based on citations to tenured faculty scholarship.

Faculty scholarship and interdisciplinary work are supported by the School's centers and institutes, which advance research, programming, and academic engagement in areas closely connected to the School's mission. Among these is the Holloran Center for Ethical Leadership in the Professions, which provides national leadership in research and curriculum development focused on professional identity and the formation of ethical leaders and celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2026. Other initiatives include the Terrence J. Murphy Institute for Catholic Thought, Law and Business, the International Dispute Resolution Research Network, and the Initiative on Restorative Justice and Healing, among others.

ROLE OF THE DEAN

The Dean serves as the chief academic and administrative officer of the University of St. Thomas School of Law and provides strategic leadership for the School's academic programs, faculty, students, staff, and external relationships. The next Dean will build upon the School's distinctive identity and momentum while articulating an ambitious vision for its continued advancement within the University of St. Thomas and the broader legal academy.

Working closely with faculty and University leadership, the Dean will champion academic excellence and innovation, support faculty scholarship and professional development, and ensure that the curriculum continues to prepare students for a changing legal profession. Central to this work will be advancing the School's distinctive commitment to integrating faith and reason, professional formation, ethical leadership, and service while fostering a welcoming intellectual community in which students can thrive.

The Dean will serve as a visible external ambassador for the School of Law, strengthening relationships with alumni, donors, members of the bench and bar, and the broader legal and business communities in the Twin Cities and beyond. Fundraising and external engagement will be important components of the role, including securing philanthropic support for students, faculty, programs, experiential learning, and other strategic priorities.

As a member of the university's academic leadership team, the Dean will contribute actively to institution-wide strategic priorities while advocating effectively for the School of Law. The Dean will foster interdisciplinary collaboration across schools and colleges, recognizing opportunities to connect legal education and scholarship with business, engineering, health, education, and the liberal arts. The

successful candidate will appreciate that the School's long-term success is closely connected to the advancement of the broader university and its Catholic mission.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN

Define and advance the School of Law's next chapter

In just 25 years, the University of St. Thomas School of Law has built a distinctive identity grounded in its Catholic mission, commitment to professional formation, emphasis on practical preparation, and close-knit community. The next Dean will inherit a strong foundation and the opportunity to articulate a compelling vision for the School's next chapter, one that builds upon these defining strengths while continuing to raise its visibility and impact within legal education and the profession.

The Dean will position the School for long-term success in an increasingly competitive legal education environment, balancing academic excellence, affordability, enrollment strength, student outcomes, and financial sustainability while preserving the School's distinctive mission and educational model. This will require a leader who can bring the community together around a clear set of priorities and thoughtfully position St. Thomas amid a rapidly changing environment for law schools and the legal profession. The Dean will have the opportunity to sharpen the School's distinctive identity, build greater awareness of its strengths, and ensure that its mission remains a source of both continuity and innovation.

Advance innovation in legal education and prepare students for a changing profession

St. Thomas has established particular strength in practical training, professional identity formation, mentoring, clinics, and externships. Its nationally recognized Mentor Externship Program and legal clinics provide strong foundations for continued innovation, while the Holloran Center for Ethical Leadership in the Professions has helped establish the School as a leader in professional identity formation.

Rapid technological and societal change, particularly the growing capabilities of artificial intelligence, is transforming legal research, analysis, client services, and the practice of law. The Dean will work collaboratively with faculty, legal practitioners, and university partners to ensure that St. Thomas graduates are prepared to navigate and shape this evolving profession. This includes thoughtfully integrating emerging technologies into legal education while strengthening the human capabilities that remain essential to excellent legal practice: critical thinking, professional judgment, ethical reasoning, communication, and the ability to serve clients responsibly. The School's distinctive commitment to professional identity formation provides a compelling foundation for leadership in this area.

Strengthen student success and professional outcomes

Student success is central to St. Thomas Law's identity. The next Dean will be expected to sustain the School's highly student-centered culture while continuing to strengthen outcomes in areas including employment and bar passage. The School's Mentor Externship Program, clinical opportunities, career

support, and connections throughout the Twin Cities legal community provide a strong platform from which to advance this work.

The Dean will work collaboratively with faculty, staff, alumni, and the legal community to expand opportunities for students, strengthen pathways into the profession, and ensure that graduates are prepared to succeed across a changing and increasingly varied legal marketplace.

Expand engagement and secure resources for the School's ambitions

The next Dean will serve as a visible ambassador for St. Thomas Law, strengthening relationships with alumni, donors, the School's Board of Governors, the legal community, and other external partners. Deepening these relationships will be important both to increasing the School's visibility and to generating the philanthropic support necessary to advance its aspirations.

The Dean will have the opportunity to engage supporters around the qualities that distinguish St. Thomas Law and to translate a compelling vision into philanthropic investment. Success in this area will provide resources to support students, faculty, academic and experiential programs, and emerging priorities while extending the School's reach and impact.

Advance financial sustainability and organizational effectiveness

The Dean will provide responsible stewardship of the School's financial and human resources, working collaboratively with university leadership to advance sustainable enrollment, strengthen student recruitment and retention, and align academic investments with institutional priorities. The Dean will foster transparent decision-making, effective resource allocation, and a culture of accountability while supporting faculty and staff excellence and preserving the distinctive student experience that defines St. Thomas Law.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

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

- A J.D. or equivalent terminal degree, a distinguished record of academic or professional accomplishment, and credentials appropriate for appointment to the faculty of the School of Law. The successful candidate will demonstrate the academic credibility, intellectual leadership, and professional standing necessary to earn the confidence of faculty, students, alumni, and the broader legal community;
- Demonstrated leadership experience, including the ability to establish strategic priorities, lead organizational change, and work effectively with faculty, staff, students, and external constituencies;
- A strong commitment to the University's Catholic mission and the School of Law's emphasis on ethical leadership, professional formation, service, and the integration of faith and reason;

- A compelling vision for legal education and an understanding of the evolving legal profession;
- A commitment to academic excellence and the ability to recruit, support, and retain outstanding faculty and staff;
- A student-centered approach and commitment to student success, professional development, experiential learning, and career preparation;
- Demonstrated ability to lead strategically, manage resources effectively, and foster a collaborative and inclusive organizational culture;
- The ability to build strong relationships with alumni, donors, the bench and bar, employers, and other external partners;
- The capacity and enthusiasm to advance the School's fundraising and philanthropic priorities;
- Exceptional communication, judgment, integrity, and interpersonal skills, with the ability to build trust and unite a community around shared priorities.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. For full consideration, please apply by **January 5, 2027**. The anticipated annual salary range for this position is $325,000 to $375,000.

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

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The University of St. Thomas embraces belonging and equal opportunity for all. Our convictions of dignity, diversity and personal attention call us to embody and champion an inclusive environment. The University is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer (EEO). All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age, status as a protected veteran, or other protected characteristic. This commitment to inclusion and equal opportunity is consistent with our mission: Inspired by Catholic intellectual tradition, the University of St. Thomas educates students to be morally responsible leaders who think critically, act wisely, and work skillfully to advance the common good. A successful candidate will possess a commitment to the ideals of this mission.

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