



MINNESOTA LAW

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Search for Dean
University of Minnesota Law School
Minneapolis, Minnesota



Search Summary

The University of Minnesota seeks an accomplished scholar and visionary leader to serve as the next Dean of the University of Minnesota Law School (Minnesota Law). Known for its outstanding students, highly influential faculty-scholars, exceptional clinical programs, commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, global perspective, and support for interdisciplinary study, Minnesota Law draws talent nationally and internationally. The Dean will have the opportunity to work with ambitious and committed stakeholders from the Law School, the University of Minnesota, the Twin Cities community, and throughout the country who share the Law School's focus on producing engaged and service-oriented leaders.

The Law School is currently ranked 16th nationally in *U.S. News & World Report* and 5th among public university law schools. In fall of 2023, Minnesota Law enrolled 719 students across all its degree programs. The school has 65 full-time faculty, 234 adjunct faculty, 85 staff members, and an operating budget of over \$37 million. Driven by its strategic priorities, Minnesota Law seeks to attract an outstanding and diverse student body; promote curricular innovation; provide professional opportunities for students; leverage local, national, and international relationships; and support and grow a world-class faculty. Over the past several years, the Law School has demonstrated a record of financial stability, strong fundraising capabilities, increased diversity in the faculty and student body, and successful career outcomes for students.

The next Dean of Minnesota Law will be expected to build on past accomplishments and chart a new and exciting institutional future. Specifically, the Dean will be tasked with: ensuring that the Law School remains financially sound and continues to attract robust philanthropic support; serving as a collaborator and relationship builder within the University and across the Twin Cities and national communities; supporting and building an outstanding student body and faculty; sustaining the Law School's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; and positioning the Law School to meet the evolving challenges facing legal education and the legal profession. The Dean of Minnesota Law will serve as the chief academic and administrative leader of the school and report to the Executive Vice President and Provost of the University of Minnesota.

The University has retained the search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist with this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, and applications can be directed to the search firm representatives by following the instructions at the end of this document.

University of Minnesota

The University of Minnesota, founded in 1851, is an AAU and R1 public research university that is ranked among the world's most respected institutions of higher learning. The University is a community of nationally and internationally recognized scholars who continue to advance discovery and innovation to improve the lives of people in Minnesota and beyond.

The University has an annual operating budget of \$4.2 billion per year and generates an economic impact of \$9 billion for the Minnesota economy. The University, the state's sixth-largest employer, has over 27,000 faculty and staff; it enrolls over 68,000 students from 130 countries—54,000 on the flagship Twin Cities campus—and has over half a million alumni living around the world. The University of Minnesota has 15 schools and colleges in the fields of biological sciences; liberal arts; dentistry; design; education and human development; food, agriculture, and natural resource sciences; law; engineering; medicine; nursing; public affairs; public health; and veterinary medicine, in addition to world-class performing arts facilities, museums, and galleries.

The University surpasses \$1 billion in research expenditures annually, ranking 13th nationally among public universities, and its faculty and experts are considered some of the best in their respective fields. UMN

currently boasts 29 Nobel Prize winning faculty, recipients of prestigious awards such as Guggenheim and MacArthur Fellowships, and many who are members of the National Academies and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

The University is driven by the conviction that diversity and equity are inextricably linked to inclusive excellence and are essential to maintaining the University's position as a preeminent voice for innovation. The University strongly embraces equity, diversity, and inclusion and makes them central to its strategic planning across the entire system. The Twin Cities campus includes over 29 percent students of color, over 9 percent international students, and close to 25 percent of all undergraduates are first-generation students. The fall 2023 Twin Cities freshman class is also the most racially and ethnically diverse class in campus history, with 36.6% identifying as students of color, and that percentage has increased every year for the past 11 years.

The Twin Cities campus is in an economically vibrant region at the heart of an increasingly diverse Midwest, with 11 federally recognized Tribal nations; the largest urban Native American population in the country; a dynamic African American community; and growing African, Latinx, and Asian American populations. Located on traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of Indigenous people, the University acknowledges its complex and layered history. The University is committed to ongoing efforts to recognize, support, and advocate for Native American Nations and peoples. The Twin Cities has the largest number of people of Somali descent outside Somalia and the nation's largest urban Hmong population. The University continues to be dedicated to multiculturalism and equity in both education and employment.

Current Leadership

[Jeff Ettinger](#) currently serves as the interim University president. Prior to joining UMN in June 2023, he served as chair of The Hormel Foundation board of directors, one of Minnesota's largest community foundations and grant makers and prior to that as the CEO of Hormel Foods Corporation in Austin, MN.

[Rachel Croson](#), Executive Vice President and Provost, is the chief academic officer of the University of Minnesota multi-campus system and provost for the Twin Cities campus, with overarching responsibility for fostering the academic excellence of the educational and research missions of the University and providing leadership for undergraduate, graduate, and professional education.

Additional information about the University's academic deans can be found at:

<https://provost.umn.edu/about-evpp/office-directory>

The UMN executive leadership chart be be found at: <https://president.umn.edu/senior-leadership-chart>.



University of Minnesota Law School

Recognized as one of the country's preeminent public law schools, Minnesota Law is a leader in preparing students to solve complex legal, economic, business, and social issues. In addition to a full-time J.D. program, the school offers an LL.M for Foreign Lawyers, a Doctor of Juridical Studies, a Master of Science in Patent Law, and an LL.M. in Patent Law. The Law School attracts a talented, diverse student body from every part of the United States and many foreign jurisdictions. Its exceptional faculty, innovative curriculum, and outstanding clinical and experiential learning opportunities equip students for the demands of the twenty-first century. Minnesota Law is distinguished by a collegial culture emphasizing teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, and persuasion. Public service is at its core. Students embrace this commitment, the faculty and staff reinforce it, and the community benefits. A large, active network of alumni throughout the nation and around the globe mentors and hires the school's students.

The Law School faculty includes many of the world's most accomplished and productive scholars in business law, criminal justice, international law and human rights, and law, science, and technology, among other areas. The faculty also excels as engaged and innovative classroom instructors. Bolstered by the school's reputation as a hub for collaboration, the faculty is committed to producing critical and influential research and scholarship across a wide range of disciplines. This commitment is reflected in the large number of faculty holding dual degrees—a J.D. and a second degree in disciplines including philosophy, history, economics, sociology, political science, and geography. The school's robust affiliated

faculty program further stimulates intellectual, scholarly, and entrepreneurial cooperation across multiple units, such as medicine and agriculture, throughout the University.

Clinics and clinical faculty are integral to Minnesota Law's success and standing. The offerings of the Law School's 28 clinics combine to provide students with broad skills and experiential learning opportunities. All clinical faculty play an important role in teaching both doctrinal concepts and practitioner skills. The school's students consistently rank clinics as one of their most formative and positive experiences. More information about the school's clinics can be found here: <https://law.umn.edu/minnesota-law-clinics>.

In addition to clinics, Minnesota Law offers a robust menu of simulation courses, externships, field and residency placements, and other experiential learning opportunities designed to prepare students for law practice. In 2023, the school was ranked as one of the top ten law schools in the nation for practical training by *PreLaw Insider*. More information about the school's experiential learning programs can be found here: <https://law.umn.edu/academics/experiential-learning>.

The Law School is home to high-caliber interdisciplinary institutes and centers, which form an epicenter for research and policy development. These entities, which focus on issues ranging from health and medicine to human rights to immigration law, bring together students and faculty to research and address challenges with real-world legal applications. More information about Minnesota Law's centers and institutes can be found here: <https://law.umn.edu/academics/centers-institutes>.

Diversity has been a hallmark of Minnesota Law's recent successes. The Class of 2025 is the most accomplished and diverse in the Law School's 135-year history in terms of GPA and LSAT scores. For the past two years, 25 percent of the incoming classes are students of color. Half of the current 222-member class is LGBTQ+, students of color, and/or first-generation college graduates. More than a quarter of the school's students are from underrepresented groups.

The Law School is financially well-positioned and committed to careful stewardship of its resources. In the last five years, the Law School eliminated previous budget deficits and currently operates with a surplus. The *Driven to Lead* campaign, which concluded in June 2022, exceeded its \$80 million goal, and secured \$106 million to support strategic initiatives in areas including scholarships, professorships, research, and clinics. In addition, the school's endowment has grown significantly, from \$110 million in 2016 to \$205 million in 2023.

The Law School benefits from being part of one of the largest research institutions in the world and its location in vibrant and diverse Minneapolis/St. Paul, which annually ranks as one of the country's most affordable and livable metropolitan areas. With an exceptional legal community, federal and state courts and the state capitol just minutes away, the University of Minnesota is conducive to experiencing and fostering law in action.



The Role of the Dean

The Dean serves as the Law School's chief academic officer and reports to the Executive Vice President and Provost. The Dean is responsible for all areas of strategic planning and academic operations for Minnesota Law, including management of faculty and staff, development of academic programs, delivery of student services, oversight of facilities, development of research, and fiscal management, including fundraising. Minnesota Law has a strong shared governance tradition and culture, and the Dean is expected to exercise leadership within this context.

Leadership Opportunities and Challenges

The success of the next Dean will be determined by how well they address the following leadership opportunities and challenges:

Ensure effective financial stewardship and robust fundraising

The University of Minnesota uses a decentralized model of Responsibility Center Management. Minnesota Law has achieved financial stability through careful stewardship of resources. Working closely with University partners, the Law School has been able to ensure its future through assiduous attention to enrollment; careful consideration of the effectiveness of various programs; and a spirit of innovation. The next Dean will continue this trajectory through prudent and strategic management.

In the same manner as all deans of schools and colleges at the University of Minnesota, the Dean of Minnesota Law will be an enthusiastic and effective fundraiser. Given an extensive alumni network and strong relationships with multiple major corporations and legal entities, the Law School has many eager potential partners that want to promote its success. The next Dean will build upon past fundraising efforts and continue to raise funds to support student scholarships, faculty endowments, research, and other initiatives.

Serve as an effective advocate and bridge builder with the University and broader community

The Dean will serve as a collegial and effective advocate for the Law School in a complex university setting with many priorities and activities. To do this well, the Dean will be expected to build mutually advantageous and productive relationships with fellow deans and senior leaders across the University administration. While Minnesota Law has significant autonomy due in part to the budget model of the University, durable and lasting accomplishments are only possible by working with and garnering the support of larger segments of the University community.

Historically, the Law School has had an especially strong relationship with the broader Twin Cities community. The next Dean will continue to cultivate strong and enduring relationships with the many community stakeholders who want the Law School to thrive. These stakeholders include a dedicated alumni base, the bench and bar, and several Fortune 500 companies. The Dean of Minnesota Law must effectively communicate the mission of the Law School to all these groups. Many of these community stakeholders are generous institutional supporters as partners in fundraising, collaborators in experiential education, and employers of the Law School's graduates.

Cultivate and support a world-class faculty

The fate of any academic unit ultimately rests on the quality of its faculty. The Dean must ensure that Minnesota Law continues to recruit and retain outstanding faculty and nurture them to reach their greatest potential. The Dean will hold faculty to the highest scholarly and teaching standards and provide the support necessary to ensure that outcome. Over the last few years, the Law School has hired 13 additional faculty members and will hire more in the upcoming years.

The Dean will work closely with faculty and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to hire new faculty whose contributions will further distinguish Minnesota Law among its peer institutions. Given the Law School's strong reputation in clinical and experiential education, the Dean will continue to draw on the broader community of legal professionals to participate as instructors and to contribute to the Law School's intellectual environment.

Continue to support diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts

Minnesota Law has made significant strides in achieving greater levels of diversity, from the student population to the faculty ranks. While the Law School community is proud of these achievements, there is still more to be done. The Dean will continue to think creatively and thoughtfully about how to increase diversity throughout the Law School across a variety of dimensions. Minnesota Law resides in the heart

of one of the most diverse Midwestern metro regions. The Dean must ensure that Minnesota Law reflects the diverse context within which it operates.

Meet the challenges and changes facing legal education and the profession

Like all law schools, Minnesota 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 a more flexible and nimble legal profession, 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, Minnesota 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 Law School's curriculum and other programs to best navigate a fast-changing landscape.

Desired Experience and Qualifications

The search committee welcomes applicants from a diversity of backgrounds and experiences. The committee will consider the following factors in evaluating candidates for this important leadership role. The successful candidate should possess many, if not all, of the following:

- A J.D., or other terminal degree in law, at least ten years of experience in the teaching and/or practice of law, and accomplishments meriting tenure at the rank of professor under the Law School's criteria are strongly preferred;
- A leadership style characterized by flexibility, inclusiveness, integrity, and openness that ensures faculty and other key stakeholders share in governance;
- The ability to lead with decisiveness as well as to delegate appropriately;
- A demonstrated commitment to building an organization that values and practices diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- A demonstrated commitment to academic freedom and fostering an institutional environment that encourages expression of a broad range of perspectives;
- The ability to build and sustain collegial relationships;
- A record of fundraising success and/or the ability to fundraise;
- A commitment to public service and the mission of a land-grant, public university;
- The ability to collaborate with the University's senior academic leadership, including the Provost and fellow deans, to enrich the overall academic structure and the reputation of the University of Minnesota as a world-class research institution;
- Effective communication and advocacy skills;
- An enthusiasm for innovation.

Instructions for Applying, Nominating & Inquiring

All interested candidates should submit an updated CV/resume and statement of interest via the website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-minnesota-law-school/dean>.

All nominations and inquiries regarding the position should be submitted via the same site. The position will remain open until it is successfully filled. All correspondences can be addressed to the Isaacson, Miller representatives noted below.

Tim McFeeley, Partner
Kahn Lee, Managing Associate
Henry Nickerson, Search Coordinator
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.