



Dean, College of Law Florida State University

Leadership Profile

March 2026





Executive Summary

Florida State University (FSU) invites nominations, expressions of interest, and applications for the position of Dean of the College of Law. The University seeks a visionary leader who will shape the future of legal education at one of the nation's top public law schools.



The Dean of FSU College of Law serves as the chief academic and administrative leader of a nationally recognized institution, reporting to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. The next Dean will articulate and advance an ambitious vision that positions FSU College of Law at the forefront of innovation in a rapidly evolving legal landscape. This leader will enhance the College's national reputation for excellence in scholarship, teaching, and service while providing strategic and operational leadership across all academic, financial, and personnel functions. The Dean will recruit, support, and retain a high-performing faculty and staff and ensure strong and responsible stewardship of resources aligned with institutional priorities.

Florida State University is a nationally prominent public research institution located in the heart of Tallahassee. Known for academic strength and strong rankings across multiple disciplines, FSU cultivates a vibrant, collaborative environment grounded in innovation, research, and public service. Its strategic location, distinguished faculty, and commitment to student success contribute to its standing as one of the nation's leading public universities.

Located downtown—adjacent to the Florida Supreme Court and the State Capitol—FSU College of Law offers extraordinary proximity to state and federal courts, Florida Legislature, government agencies, and a dynamic legal community. The College is consistently recognized among the nation's top law schools, ranked #38 overall and #17 among public institutions, and is known for exceptional faculty, strong employment outcomes, and outstanding value. As it approaches its 60th year, FSU College Law continues to offer rigorous academics, robust experiential learning, and a collaborative culture rooted in professional achievement and public service.

The Dean will lead efforts to elevate student success, including strengthening bar passage, employment outcomes, and other key performance indicators, while ensuring continuous improvement in response to evolving accreditation standards and market forces. The role requires significant external engagement including building strong relationships with alumni, the legal profession, donors, and public stakeholders. The Dean will guide major fundraising initiatives to support faculty excellence, expand academic and experiential programs, and secure resources that advance the College of Law's mission. Working closely with university leadership, the Dean will champion innovation, expand non-J.D. and interdisciplinary offerings, and develop new revenue streams aligned with workforce needs and emerging opportunities.

FSU seeks a dynamic, collaborative, and forward-thinking leader committed to academic excellence, student achievement, community building and the future of legal education. Candidates must hold a J.D. and possess a distinguished record of scholarship, teaching, service, and professional accomplishment that warrants appointment as a tenured full professor. Leadership experience in legal education is strongly preferred, along with demonstrated success in fundraising, strategic and financial management, and meaningful community engagement.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see "[Procedure for Candidacy](#)" at the end of this document.

Role of the Dean, College of Law

The Dean of the College of Law is the chief academic officer and chief administrative leader of the College, reporting to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Dean will advance a bold and compelling vision for the future of legal education in a rapidly changing global and professional environment, strengthening FSU Law's national reputation for excellence in scholarship, teaching, and service to the legal profession and society. As the College's principal strategist and advocate, the Dean will provide collaborative leadership that reinforces FSU Law's commitment to rigorous scholarship, student centered education, meaningful engagement with the legal system, and measurable academic and professional outcomes.



The Dean has comprehensive responsibility for the strategic, operational, personnel, and financial affairs of the College of Law. This includes full oversight of all human resources functions for the College, encompassing the recruitment, appointment, development, evaluation, and retention of a high performing and engaged faculty and staff. The Dean will play a central role in attracting and retaining leading legal scholars and educators, fostering a culture of excellence, mentorship, accountability, and professional growth that advances the College's academic mission and long term success.

The Dean is responsible for the effective stewardship and management of the College's financial resources, including state appropriated funds, research and sponsored funding, and private and donor supported revenues. The Dean will oversee budget development and execution; ensure sound fiscal planning, controls, and accountability; align resource allocation with strategic priorities; and manage enrollment and market driven financial pressures while sustaining academic quality, student support, and institutional resilience.

A core responsibility of the Dean is to sustain and advance the College of Law's strong national standing through strategic leadership focused on student success, academic quality, and continuous improvement. The Dean will lead data informed efforts to strengthen key performance indicators, including enrollment quality, retention and graduation rates, bar passage, employment outcomes, and experiential learning participation. The Dean will proactively monitor and respond to evolving ranking methodologies, accreditation standards, and market dynamics, ensuring that academic programs, student support services, and resource decisions align with factors that drive national reputation and institutional competitiveness.

As the chief external ambassador for the College of Law, the Dean will strengthen and sustain relationships with alumni, the legal profession, peer institutions, donors, and the broader public. The Dean will commit to substantial fundraising efforts to secure resources that support faculty scholarship and retention, innovative academic and experiential programs, student success initiatives, and long term institutional growth. In partnership with university leadership, the Dean will lead efforts to advance academic innovation, expand non J.D. and interdisciplinary offerings, and diversify revenue streams in alignment with workforce needs and market demand.

The College of Law



Ranked as one of Florida's top law schools by *U.S. News & World Report*, the FSU College of Law is located in Tallahassee, Florida, a city with more than 500 law firms and numerous government agencies. Florida State University College of Law is located in the heart of downtown Tallahassee – the capital of the nation's third largest state – across the street from the Florida Supreme Court and one block from the Florida Capitol. Few other law schools in the nation can compete in terms of location. The unique legal opportunities that accompany being located in a state capital are invaluable. The experiences that FSU Law students have in Tallahassee and around the globe translate into careers all over the world for our graduates.



Coupled with a rich curriculum, law students at FSU earn academic credit through a variety of hands-on learning experiences from the Business Law Clinic, Children's Advocacy Clinic, Children in Prison Project, Health Care Access Project, Human Trafficking and Exploitation Law Project, Bankruptcy Law Clinic, International Human Rights Advocacy Clinic, and Juvenile Solitary Confinement Project.

Additionally, FSU College of Law's Stoops Center of Law & Business, Center for Environmental, Energy and Land Use Law, and Institute of Law, Technology & Innovation host programming featuring top scholars and practitioners from around the nation to enhance the training of students. FSU College of Law's extensive clinical externship program, offers law students the opportunity to earn academic credit by working in one of 100+ outside law offices or courts. Externship placement areas include judicial, criminal, civil, legal services, appellate, business, and international.

The current and future experiential and academic success of the students at FSU's College of Law is paramount to the mission and vision of the College evidenced by the college's #1 ranking of best value law school by *preLaw Magazine* (2025); #4 ranking of best student quality of life by *Princeton Review* (2024); and #8 best value law school by *National Jurist's PreLaw Magazine* (2024).

The College of Law's academic programs and faculty are among the best in the nation. The law faculty delivers a sophisticated program of study that prepares students to enter the worlds of law, business and government at the highest level. *U.S. News & World Report* (2025) ranks the College of Law as the 38th best law school in the nation and #17 best public law school. College of Law specialties notably received the following rankings by *U.S. News & World Report* in 2025:

- #8 public/#18 overall Environmental Law Program
- #13 public/#30 overall Contracts/Commercial Law Program
- #14 public/#34 overall Criminal Law Program
- #15 public/#35 overall Tax Law Program
- #16 public/#37 overall Constitutional Law Program
- #17 public/#41 overall Business/Corporate Law Program
- #24 public Health Care Law Program
- #25 public International Law Program
- #27 public Intellectual Property Law Program
- #35 public Trial Advocacy Program

The FSU College of Law faculty are recognized for both their exceptional scholarship and an unwavering commitment to student success. They are prolific scholars and industry experts whose work regularly appears in the nation’s top law journals and publications. Beyond their research, they are dedicated mentors who prioritize teaching excellence and accessibility, often collaborating with students on legal publications, moot court, and advocacy competitions. In 2024, the *Princeton Review* ranked FSU Law #6 nationwide and #1 in Florida for best professors. Combining elite academic credentials with real-world experience provides students with an enriching classroom experience that prepares them to thrive in their future careers.

College of Law Mission

The primary mission of the Florida State University College of Law is to deliver an excellent legal education to an outstanding and heterogeneous student body. The College seeks to graduate students who possess practice-ready skills and abilities and who will become leaders in law, business, and public service. The College seeks to equip students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to thrive in and to help shape the dynamic, rapidly evolving environment that will define the practice of law in the years and decades to come. In addition to its student-oriented mission, the College of Law has a complementary mission of contributing to the legal and policy environment through in-depth scholarly research and analysis including publication and noteworthy participation in an array of fora—local, regional, national, and global.

In advancing its mission, the College of Law aims to be driven by, and to inculcate in its students and graduates, the values of Professionalism, Excellence, Community and Collaboration, and Dynamism in Attitude and Action. Regarding Professionalism, the privilege of practicing law demands from us high quality, prompt, and diligent attention to our clients’ needs and well-being, respect for others in the legal profession and for the institutions through which law and justice are administered, commitment to the enduring principles on which our laws are based, and dedication to improving the ability of our laws to satisfy human needs and aspirations. Regarding Excellence, we aspire to give the best of ourselves in the work we do and in our professional and personal interactions. And we aspire always to raise the level of what our “best” is. Regarding Community and Collaboration, we learn from colleagues, classmates, and constituents whose backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives differ from ours. A broader angle of vision helps us see more clearly. We strive to be sensitive to those differences both out of respect for the dignity of others and in order to encourage constructive exchange of ideas. Regarding Dynamism in Attitude and Action, we aspire to prepare our students to excel in a rapidly changing profession. We focus on interdisciplinary education because understanding law in multiple contexts renders a lawyer better able to adapt to change. We introduce students to how technological developments may refine and redefine how law is practiced. Finally, we foster in our students the qualities of creativity, entrepreneurship, and confidence that will enable them both to navigate known waters and to explore new seas.



Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The Dean will have extraordinary opportunities to lead the continued academic success for an ambitious and rapidly climbing institution that embraces intelligent risk taking, entrepreneurial thinking, and strategic innovation. In addition, the Dean will be expected to focus on the following priorities:

- Encourage and enable fair-minded and honest academic inquiry by faculty and students.
- Lead the College through a rapidly changing legal profession and higher education landscape while retaining its uniquely collaborative culture.
- Lead the institution's efforts to train faculty and students on technological developments, and to increase opportunities for students to put their forward-facing skills to work in professional environments that help them secure desirable employment after graduation.
- Advance the College's efforts to provide robust opportunities for students to develop leadership skills that enable them to advance their careers while adapting to and leading advances in the legal profession.
- Work with law school organizations, accreditors, courts and others to anticipate and adapt to evolving regulation relevant to law schools and their accreditation.
- Foster a vision that enables the College to continue its rise in law school rankings.
- Recruit, retain, and inspire exceptional faculty.
- Advance the College's mission to attract high-quality J.D. applicants.
- Promote a strategic plan that utilizes FSU College of Law's low tuition and cost of living to attract more top students to FSU.
- Expand and strengthen non-J.D. and professional programs to meet workforce and market demand for sophisticated education in compliance and legal risk management.
- Provide steady leadership to negotiate enrollment, budgetary, and higher-education market pressures.
- Continue the University and College's commitment to making data-driven decisions that contribute to the College's rankings and the academic and professional success of its students and faculty.
- Work with the university advancement team and donors to participate robustly in FSU's development campaigns.
- Grow the community of legal professionals who teach, lecture, mentor, donate, sponsor, and otherwise advance the College's students, faculty, and educational programming.
- Further the law school's core mission and vision with staff recruiting and talent development plans.
- Lead the College's continued efforts to identify desired positions for J.D. graduates in major employment markets.
- Deepen interdisciplinary collaborations across the university and beyond.
- Lead the College's efforts to communicate its reputation for exceptional education and ground-breaking scholarship.
- Work to enhance/modernize the physical and virtual footprint of the law school and lead the development of innovative learning spaces.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

A successful candidate will possess academic and professional credentials sufficient to engender respect from the academy, the state university system, students and prospective students, and the community at large. The Dean will display both a successful record as a faculty member and evidence of leadership experience in higher education, including experience leading complex academic or professional organizations. The new Dean must be adept at supervision and at working with faculty, staff, the student body, community partners, alumni, and donors, and should have a demonstrated ability to work effectively across disciplines. In addition, the successful candidate will possess:

- A demonstrated commitment to principled, mission-driven leadership and institutional integrity.
- An exceptionally strong ability to advocate for the needs of the law school and to promote excellence throughout the institution.
- Strong listening abilities and a demonstrated capacity to learn from others.
- Experience fostering collaboration and a strong sense of community among faculty, staff, students, alumni, other schools and colleges within the university, the local bar, and the judiciary.
- The ability to adapt with agility, embrace innovation, and rely on data-driven insight to advance the College.
- A demonstrated commitment to student success, access, and educational affordability.
- A deep understanding of academic values, legal education and scholarship.

Required Qualifications

- Juris Doctorate or equivalent from an accredited institution.
- Academic and professional experience that will enhance the reputation of the College of Law which will foster the support of the university leadership, faculty, students, alumni, the judicial system, and the Legislature.
- Academic and professional experience consistent with eligibility for appointment at the rank of tenured full professor, with preference given to candidates who currently hold or have recently held a professorial appointment at an accredited law school.
- Demonstrated fundraising skills.
- A comprehensive understanding of the current and emerging trends in legal education and higher education more broadly.
- A track record of consensus building.
- Excellent communication skills.
- A deep appreciation for the legal profession and for legal scholarship.
- Outstanding interpersonal skills and the ability to articulate and advocate for the needs of the College.
- Administrative experience that includes academic planning, program review, strategic planning, program development, budgeting, fiscal/personnel management, and problem solving in similar organizations.

- The ability to promote professional development activities related to academic leadership, classroom instruction, instructional technology, and support staff development.
- Experience developing or overseeing non-traditional or alternative revenue programs, including but not limited to joint degree programs, online or hybrid programs, executive education, or certificate programs.
- Familiarity with legal technology, innovation, and policy-oriented initiatives affecting legal education.
- The breadth and depth of legal education experience required to oversee the program and to help ensure that relevant accreditation standards are maintained.



About Florida State University

Overview

As one of the nation's elite research universities, and one of the largest of the 12 institutions of higher learning in the State University System of Florida, FSU offers a distinctive academic environment built on its cherished values and unique heritage. With over 46,000 students, over 16,000 employees, and an operating budget of \$2.32 billion, FSU provides a welcoming campus environment on the oldest continuous site of higher education

in Florida with a prime location in the heart of the state capital. *U.S. News and World Report* ranks Florida State University as #21 among all public universities in the nation. Underlying the educational experience at FSU is the development of new generations of citizen leaders, based on the concepts inscribed in the University's seal: *Vires, Artes, Mores — Strength, Skill, and Character.*

Combining traditional strengths in the arts and humanities with internationally recognized leadership in the sciences, FSU provides unmatched opportunities for students and faculty through challenging academics, cultural discovery, and community interaction. FSU's 17 colleges offer more than 274 undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, specialist, and professional degree programs, including medicine and law. The University awards over 4,000 graduate and professional degrees each year. With an impressive breadth of leading graduate, professional and undergraduate programs, FSU is a demanding, intellectually stimulating, yet warm and caring environment for students and faculty. The University also has over 65 years of experience in international education and is a leader in the field of study-abroad programs, consistently ranking among the top public universities in the nation for "long-term duration" experiences through its permanent study centers in London, Florence, Valencia, Panama City, Panama, and summer-specific programs in various locations around the world.

FSU's arts programs — performing and fine/visual arts, design, and education — rank among the finest in the world, offering an arts education comparable to leading conservatories. The creative writing program is home to the most consistently honored and published student body in the country. FSU also operates the Ringling Center for the Cultural Arts in Sarasota, which includes the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, the largest museum/university complex in the nation, and home to the FSU Center for the Performing Arts, which houses the Asolo Repertory Theatre.

Other programs consistently included in the top public university rankings include physics, chemistry, political science, psychology, criminology, public administration, library science, human sciences, business, education, social work, nursing, economics, and law. At the Ph.D. level, interdisciplinary programs draw on notable research faculty strengths that transcend the traditional disciplines, including neuroscience, molecular biophysics, computational science, materials science, and research at the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory — home to the world's most powerful magnets. More than 1,000 scientists from around the globe utilize the magnet lab each year to conduct their research.

The student experience is also highly ranked, earning in the top 10 of public universities best first-year experience, best student life, and Living-Learning Communities (LLCs) programs, as well as top 25 for best public universities for veterans.

Throughout its rich history, FSU has grown its academic organization and expanded from the original site and modest beginnings of Bryan Hall (1908) and Westcott Building (1909) to more than 400 buildings spanning over 1,600 acres with multiple campus locations in Florida and abroad. FSU's Main Campus includes an assemblage of over 485 acres. The Main Campus is complemented locally by a 73-acre FSU Lakefront Park & Retreat Center, over 200 acres in Innovation Park (home of the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory), and the South Campus which is home to the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering, the Nicklaus design Seminole Legacy Golf course, and multiple other sports and athletic venues. Beyond Tallahassee, FSU Panama City is a 28-acre campus serving over 4,000 students. FSU has a presence along the Gulf Coast at the Marine Laboratory, in Sarasota at the Ringling Museum, and satellite locations in Pensacola, Palm Beach, Marianna, and others. FSU's academic impact is experienced globally with study centers in Florence, Italy; London, England; Valencia, Spain; and Panama City, Panama.

FSU has received the Carnegie Foundation's highest designation (Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity, R1) and receives more in National Science Foundation funding than any other university in the state. FSU also produces exceptional scholarship from highly ranked programs in the humanities and performing and fine/visual arts and each year attracts world-class exhibitions and performers to Tallahassee. FSU faculty includes members of the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, the National Academy of Medicine, the National Academy of Inventors, and the American Academy of Arts & Sciences; Pulitzer Prize winners; Oscar winners; and Guggenheim, Fulbright, and National Endowment for the Humanities fellows. Six Nobel laureates have been associated with FSU.

Florida State University's athletics program is one of the nation's most prominent and successful collegiate sports organizations. It operates within NCAA Division I and is a long-standing member of the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC). Seminole athletics is recognized as one of the nation's top all-around programs having finished 13 of the last 14 seasons ranked among the 20 best programs in the country, including 12 among the top 15. Last year alone, FSU played for the national title in women's soccer and softball and the program has won 17 National Championships in its history.

Additional information about FSU, its history and programs can be found at <http://www.fsu.edu>

Leadership

President Richard McCullough



Richard McCullough became the 16th president of Florida State University in August 2021, bringing more than three decades of academic leadership experience to the role. During his tenure, he has strengthened FSU's foundation as one of the nation's top public universities by investing in student and faculty success as well as academic and research excellence.

Before joining FSU, McCullough served as vice provost for research for 10 years and professor of materials science and engineering at Harvard University. He previously spent 22 years at Carnegie Mellon University, where he began his academic career as an assistant professor of chemistry and rose through the ranks to become the Thomas Lord Professor of Chemistry. He also served as the head of chemistry, the dean of science and vice president for research.

McCullough has more than 110 publications, holds 16 U.S. patents, and is an entrepreneur who started two companies. He is a Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors and was inducted into the Advanced Materials Journal Hall of Fame in 2021, and the Florida Inventors Hall of Fame and the Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine of Florida, both in 2025. He is the recipient of the Carnegie Science Center Award for Excellence as a Start-Up Entrepreneur.

He earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry from the University of Texas at Dallas and a Ph.D. in organic chemistry from Johns Hopkins University, followed by a postdoctoral fellowship at Columbia University.

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs James J. Clark



As the Chief Academic Officer, Provost Clark leads the Division of Academic Affairs by providing strategic direction, investment, and support for FSU's academic enterprise. His office collaborates closely with FSU's academic deans, faculty, internal and external stakeholders, and senior leadership team to advance the division's mission of achieving excellence in teaching, research, and service. Provost Clark guides FSU's strategic investments in student achievement, faculty excellence, and institutional impact by advancing FSU's academic mission by driving the success of its academic colleges, research centers and institutes, and international study centers through pioneering initiatives that advance the university's reputation as a leader among public, R1 research universities.

From 2015-2021 he served as Dean of the College of Social Work at Florida State University. Prior to that he served for three years as the Director of the School of Social Work at the University of Cincinnati, as well as Associate Director for Research and faculty member at the University of Kentucky from 1991-2012. Clark co-founded the UK Center on Trauma & Children, a nationally recognized clinical research center and has published in the areas of evidence-based behavioral health, forensic mental health, child and adolescent traumatic stress, criminal justice, ethics and accountability, and psychobiography and the study of lives. Dr. Clark also co-founded a private sector company that developed novel approaches for work with at-risk children and families.

During his term as a dean at FSU, Dr. Clark developed and enhanced research centers that have driven innovations in criminal justice, child and family assessment and interventions, university student resilience, and other translational science programming. His leadership is characterized by interdisciplinary team science, translational research, and community-based strategic partnerships.



Tallahassee

Tallahassee is a distinctive capital city defined by education, public institutions, and a high quality of life. As Florida's seat of government and home to Florida State University, Florida A&M University, and Tallahassee State College, the city brings together higher education, healthcare, and statewide organizations in a collaborative and accessible environment. Its role as the capital provides proximity to state agencies, academic institutions, and cross-sector partners, creating opportunities for meaningful partnership and applied impact while maintaining the collegial atmosphere of a university-centered community.

Cultural life in Tallahassee reflects both heritage and momentum. The Florida Historic Capitol Museum and the modern State Capitol complex stand as architectural

markers of the city's evolution, while destinations such as the Challenger Learning Center, Railroad Square Art District, and a growing array of galleries and performance venues contribute to a vibrant creative scene. Midtown and downtown districts continue to expand with locally owned restaurants, cafés, and gathering spaces that foster connection and community.

Unlike many Florida cities, Tallahassee is distinguished by its natural landscape. Rolling hills, live oaks draped in Spanish moss, and scenic canopy roads lend the city a character more reminiscent of the Southeast's historic college towns than coastal resort communities. Residents enjoy extensive parks and trails, including Cascades Park, Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park, and the St. Marks Trail, along with convenient access to freshwater springs and the Gulf Coast. Tallahassee International Airport provides regional connectivity while preserving the ease and livability of a mid-sized city.

With a population of approximately 200,000 and a metropolitan region approaching 400,000, Tallahassee offers the resources of a capital city within a setting that remains navigable, affordable, and community-oriented. The partnership between Florida State University and the broader Tallahassee region supports innovation in research, healthcare, the arts, and economic development. Leaders who choose Tallahassee will find a community that values academic excellence, thoughtful growth, and collaborative progress in an environment that balances professional opportunity with personal quality of life.

To learn more about Tallahassee, Florida, [click here](#).

Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV/resume and a letter of interest. Please do not add photos or reference contacts to your application materials. Review of applications has begun and will continue until the position is filled. For fullest consideration, all materials should be received by **May 4, 2026**

Please submit all applications, nominations, and inquiries to the WittKieffer consultants, Werner Boel, LL.M and Ashlee Musser, through the WittKieffer Candidate Portal by [clicking here](#). New users should select “Register Here” to create an account before proceeding. After logging in, navigate to “Open Positions,” then locate the role by entering the institution’s name and clicking the search wheel.

Applications, nominations, and inquiries can also be directed to the WittKieffer consultants assisting Florida State University with this recruitment via e-mail to FSULawDean@wittkieffer.com

This position requires successful completion of a [criminal history background check](#).

This position requires annual Financial Disclosure based on Florida Statutes 112.3144 and 112.3145.

FSU is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.

Florida's "Sunshine Law" requires that all search committee business be open to public review.