EXECUTIVE POSITION PROFILE

General Counsel

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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OVERVIEW

The University of Minnesota is looking for a visionary, strategic, and highly experienced General Counsel to lead its large and successful legal division. The General Counsel oversees the remarkably varied legal needs of the University, a multi-campus, statewide system with an annual budget of $3.7 billion a year. With a staff of 18 in-house attorneys and 30 employees, the Office of the General Counsel handles hundreds of legal cases a year, both litigation and transactional. Its work can involve everything from patent protection to real estate transactions, from technology transfers to labor arbitration, and from intellectual property licensing to personal injury claims.

The General Counsel also oversees the school’s Athletics Compliance Office, the Records and Information Management Office, and the Academic Health Center counsel. As the University’s chief legal officer, the General Counsel provides legal services and advice to the Board of Regents and senior leadership, reporting directly to the Regents and to the President.

The position of General Counsel for a major research university is one of the most wide-ranging, challenging, and rewarding jobs in the legal profession. The successful candidate will have a proven record of exceptional leadership, a highly regarded reputation in the legal community, and an impressively broad and deep legal résumé.
ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The University of Minnesota is a world-class research university and one of the largest in the United States. Founded in 1851 as a land grant university, the school now encompasses more than 60,000 students and nearly 26,000 employees on five campuses across Minnesota. With an annual operating budget of $3.7 billion a year, the University generates an economic impact of $8.6 billion on the Minnesota economy.

The University’s mission is threefold: research, education, and outreach. Recently, the Twin Cities campus embarked on a 10-year strategic plan called “Driving Tomorrow,” which focuses its resources on meeting society’s “grand challenges”—the most critical and complex issues facing Minnesota and the world. Broadly, we determined those challenges to be:

- Feeding the world sustainably
- Assuring clean water and sustainable ecosystems
- Fostering just and equitable communities
- Enhancing individual and community capacity for a changing world
- Advancing health through tailored solutions

To meet those challenges, the strategic plan outlined four goals for the University:

- Build an exceptional University, leveraging our research and curricular breadth and depth to address societal changes.
- Support excellence and, with intention, reject complacency.
- Aggressively recruit, retain, and promote field-shaping researchers and teachers.
- Establish a culture of reciprocal engagement, capitalizing on our unique location.

The school’s distinguished intellectual history includes 25 Nobel Prize winners, plus Guggenheim Fellows, Pulitzer Prize winners, MacArthur Fellowships (“genius awards”), members of the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and many other significant honors. Famous alumni include former vice president Walter Mondale, humorist Garrison Keillor, Super Bowl championship coach Tony Dungy, and Nobel Peace Prize–winning agronomist Norman Borlaug.

The University is committed to supporting its employees physically, emotionally, financially, socially, and professionally. We offer a comprehensive benefits package.

The University has also developed a unique program to measure and improve employee engagement. Our high employee engagement scores are comparable to top-performing corporations.

Set on the banks of the Mississippi River, the University is surrounded by the vibrant Twin Cities metropolitan community, known for its thriving culture of arts, dining, and outdoor recreation.
ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

As one of the largest, most complex research universities in the country, the University of Minnesota's legal needs are extraordinarily varied and specialized. The job of the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) is to ensure the best possible litigation outcomes and to minimize legal problems by offering proactive legal services. Few universities in the United States have an in-house law office with the range of experience the OGC offers.

The OGC maintains a staff of 48 employees, including 18 associate general counsels, plus paralegals and support personnel. The OGC includes the Athletics Compliance Office, the Records and Information Management Office, and the Academic Health Center counsel. The office will also occasionally retain outside counsel to represent the University. Every year, the Office of the General Counsel is involved in hundreds of legal matters, both litigation and transactional. Its work encompasses an extraordinary range of legal services, which can include:

- Patent protection
- Technology transfer and commercialization
- Research contracting and regulation
- Health law and medical law
- Labor arbitrations
- Real estate transactions and construction
- Personal injury suits
- Discrimination claims
- Contract law
- Student affairs
- Public records and data privacy
- Overseeing rules compliance by hundreds of student-athletes
- Internal University proceedings and investigations
- And many more

Over the last five years, the Office of the General Counsel has achieved a 91% success rate in litigation.
POSITION DESCRIPTION

As chief legal officer of the University of Minnesota system, the General Counsel provides legal services to the Board of Regents and senior leadership. The General Counsel reports directly to the University’s Board of Regents and to the President, provides legal guidance and counsel in executive and policy decision-making, and serves as a member of the President’s senior leadership group.

The General Counsel is responsible for leading the Office of the General Counsel and its team of attorneys, staff, and any outside counsel retained to represent the University. The General Counsel manages the University’s legal representation in all litigation and administrative proceedings. The General Counsel provides legal advice, including preventive legal services, and legal representation in disputes that may lead to litigation. Subject to direction of the Board of Regents and President, the General Counsel is responsible for resolving all legal claims and initiating and appealing all lawsuits and administrative proceedings. The General Counsel also advises on complying with federal and state laws and regulations affecting the University. The General Counsel manages outside counsel budgets, issues contracts for legal services, and retains outside counsel on behalf of all University units. In extraordinary circumstances, the Board of Regents may retain outside counsel independently.

Due to the unique status of the University of Minnesota under the Constitution of the State of Minnesota, the General Counsel should be knowledgeable in the doctrine of constitutional autonomy and able to provide advice, counsel, and legal support to the Board and President in this area. The General Counsel also establishes internal controls to evaluate and protect the University’s legal interests and reduce its legal risks. All University contracts relating to employment, purchasing, real estate, patents, technology marketing, sponsored research, external sales, and other activities are subject to General Counsel review.

The General Counsel provides administrative leadership to the Board of Regents Litigation Review Committee, serves as attorney to the Board of Regents in legal matters, and communicates legal issues and concerns to the Regents, President, and senior leaders. The General Counsel serves as the Board of Regents’ parliamentarian and as the Board’s ethics advisor. The General Counsel also is responsible for reviewing all Board resolutions and policies for form and legality.

Essential Qualifications

- J.D. degree from an accredited law school
- Substantial experience as a practicing attorney in a sophisticated environment such as a large law firm, government agency, university, or nonprofit or business corporation
- Significant leadership experience managing the work of attorneys and other professionals and/or in the representation of large, complex, and highly decentralized organizational clients with multiple stakeholder groups
- Maintains a high level of respect within the bench and bar, and has the ability to be admitted to practice law in the state of Minnesota
- Proven success in providing legal guidance in the context of complex organizations and a deeply held commitment to, and belief in, the value of collaborative decision-making
- Experience directly managing or supporting leadership in managing controversial and high-profile issues
- Demonstrated success in leading, empowering, and delegating effectively to a successful team
• Ability to work collaboratively and communicate effectively with multiple and diverse constituencies, such as faculty, staff, students, legislators, corporate partners, community leaders, the public, alumni, donors, and union leaders
• Demonstrated commitment and contribution to fostering equity, diversity and inclusion
• High ethical standards with a strong commitment to legal ethics exhibited in knowledge and practice, and professional responsibility
• Exceptional analytical, interpersonal, and written and oral communication skills
• Sound judgment and personal and professional integrity
• Visionary, strategic, and inclusive leader committed to the highest standards of excellence

Preferred Qualifications

• Experience in, or understanding of, the public sector and/or higher education environment
• Familiarity with the University of Minnesota or a comparable higher education institution
• Understanding and appreciation of the historic role of a public land grant research university

Key Leadership Competencies

• Innovative
• Drives efficiency and effectiveness
• Thinks strategically
• Aligns resources
• Selects and develops talent
• Motivates and inspires others
• Builds relationships
• Resiliency and courage
• Operates with integrity
• Learns and adapts
• Ability to work as part of a team
• Creative problem solver who develops win-win solutions

Appointment

The General Counsel is a full-time, 12-month senior leader position appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the University's Board of Regents and President. Salary is commensurate with education and experience. A comprehensive benefits package is provided. The anticipated start date for this position is July 1, 2016.
FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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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, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.