THE UNIVERSITY of TULSA

Dean of the College of Law

Leadership Prospectus

November 2026



A century of legal education. A distinctive position at the intersection of law, enterprise, and community.

Association of American Law Schools
Legal Education Leadership Advisors

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A consequential opportunity at UTulsa Law

The next dean of The University of Tulsa College of Law will lead a strong, close-knit law school with a century of service, a history of distinguished scholars and gifted teachers, and an alumni community whose influence on Tulsa and Oklahoma far exceeds its size. The role calls for an entrepreneurial scholar-leader and disciplined executive who can strengthen the college's financial footing and build on its distinctive academic identity and community connections.

Founded in 1923 and part of The University of Tulsa since 1925, the College of Law combines a tradition of practical legal education with a student-centered university. Its location and relationships provide an uncommon setting for scholarship, professional preparation, and public service.

A distinctive academic and civic setting

In the heart of a vibrant, midsize city known as much for its historic Black Wall Street, music, and museums as for its thriving energy and aerospace industries, the college is also located on the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Reservation and near numerous tribal headquarters. Its Native American Law Center and specialized scholarly resources make Indigenous sovereignty, tribal governance, and federal Indian law central to the college's teaching and scholarship.

An alumni community with outsized influence

UTulsa Law graduates are woven into the legal, business, civic, and tribal leadership of Tulsa and the state. That deep and loyal alumni base is a source of pride, a ready network for students, and a foundation for philanthropy and partnership.



Momentum and stewardship

The college reported a 93% overall employment rate for its Class of 2025 and a seven-place rise in the 2026 U.S. News ranking; its 2025 first-time bar rate was 71.05%. The next dean can build on these gains while bringing creative, steady stewardship to the college's resources.

A moment of institutional possibility

The arrival of President Stacy Leeds, a UTulsa Law graduate and former law dean, opens the way for the college to define its next chapter in concert with university leadership. The university seeks a dean who brings sound academic judgment, financial discipline, fresh thinking about enrollment and employment, and a commitment to lead the college for a sustained period.

THE POSITION

Role of the dean

The dean is the chief academic and administrative leader of the College of Law and its principal advocate within the university, the profession, and the communities the college serves.

Working with the president, executive vice president and provost, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and university partners, the dean sets an ambitious and achievable direction for the college and champions the values of academic freedom, scholarly independence, shared governance, rigorous teaching, and respectful dialogue while making timely and transparent decisions.

Academic stewardship

The dean promotes excellence in legal scholarship, teaching, and experiential learning; oversees academic quality and accreditation; recruits, develops, and retains faculty and staff; and ensures that student learning and professional outcomes guide curricular improvement. The role includes supporting faculty across doctrinal, clinical, and legal-writing roles and recognizing the different contributions through which a strong academic institution fulfills its mission.

Resource and operational leadership

As the college's senior operating executive, the dean oversees budget development and allocation, organizational effectiveness, enrollment planning, academic and student services, and the deployment of facilities and technology. At a time when most colleges and universities face financial pressures, the dean partners closely with university leadership to grow revenue, use resources wisely, and make thoughtful long-term choices.

Institutional and external leadership

The dean cultivates relationships with the bench and bar, law firms, corporate leaders, tribal nations, public agencies, community organizations, and the college's influential alumni across Oklahoma and beyond. These partnerships strengthen student placements, research engagement, service, continuing education, philanthropy, and the college's reputation.

Shared governance and administrative partnership

The dean fosters meaningful faculty participation, sets clear expectations, engages constructively with university colleagues, and delegates effectively. Success depends on supporting associate and assistant deans, program leaders, professional staff, and faculty committees while establishing reliable systems for implementation and accountability.

A role that grows outward

In the early years, the dean is likely to invest more time inside the college than outside it, getting to know faculty, staff, and students and strengthening the foundation for what comes next. Over time, the role is expected to evolve, with the dean spending more and more time with alumni, donors, employers, and the wider community as the college's leading voice.

LEADERSHIP AGENDA

Opportunities and expectations for leadership

The next dean has the chance to choose a small number of consequential priorities, set measurable goals, and work with the community to align investments with those commitments.

1. Advance an academically distinctive portfolio

Build strategically where Tulsa's location, faculty expertise, networks, and student interest reinforce one another: Native American and Indigenous law; energy, natural resources, and environmental governance; business and commercial law; and access-to-justice practice.



2. Elevate student success and employment

Lead an institutional review of bar readiness that begins with the first year, and bring fresh thinking to graduate employment. The Tulsa Legacy 100 initiative has already directed philanthropic attention to academic support, bar preparation, and professional development.

3. Strengthen the financial footing and rethink enrollment

Build a shared understanding of the college's financial position and a credible multiyear plan to strengthen it, supported by transparent budgeting and clear decision making. Bring an entrepreneurial spirit to attracting new students while protecting academic standards and students' long-term economic opportunity, treating scholarships, net tuition, class size, and debt as connected decisions.

4. Respond deliberately to technology and a changing profession

Develop a coherent approach to generative artificial intelligence, data competence, legal ethics, information security, and the future of legal services. Support faculty in thoughtful experimentation and prepare students to use emerging tools with professional judgment, ethical awareness, and an understanding of their limitations.

LEADERSHIP AGENDA

Opportunities and expectations for leadership (continued)

5. Sustain a tradition of excellent scholars, teachers, and community leaders

UTulsa Law has long been home to distinguished scholars, dedicated teachers, and faculty who are deeply engaged in service to the legal profession and to the wider Tulsa community. The next dean can honor and extend that tradition by supporting research time, mentorship, teaching excellence, meaningful professional and community service, equitable workload practices, inclusive collaboration, and the recruitment necessary to sustain the curriculum, while valuing expert professional staff.

6. Connect scholarship to public questions

Tulsa is a natural setting for sustained legal inquiry on tribal sovereignty, governmental authority, natural-resource development, corporate governance, and the relationship between law and economic change.

7. Engage alumni and expand private support

The college's alumni base in Tulsa is strong, loyal, and influential across the city and state. Working closely with advancement professionals and university leadership, the dean can deepen those relationships, celebrate what alumni have accomplished, and make a persuasive case for investment in student scholarships, faculty, clinics, facilities, and bar success, converting goodwill into durable commitments. Tulsa's exceptional culture of philanthropy is a rare asset.

8. Strengthen reputation through authentic differentiation

Tell a coherent story about why UTulsa Law matters and what it offers that cannot simply be replicated elsewhere.



THE CANDIDATE

Professional qualifications

The ideal candidate brings many of the following skills and qualities:

- **Law school leadership experience.** Service as a law school dean, associate dean, or director of a center or institute is especially valued, as is comparable leadership gained along other professional pathways.
- **Scholarly distinction and curiosity.** A record of scholarship, teaching, and service, paired with genuine appreciation for diverse legal methodologies, emerging fields, and forms of scholarly contribution.
- **Financial and operational acumen.** Skill in managing budgets, personnel, and organizational change in a challenging financial environment, including enrollment management, scholarship strategy, and resource allocation.
- **Entrepreneurial creativity.** A record of launching new programs, enrollment pathways, or employer partnerships, and fresh ideas for attracting students and opening careers for graduates.
- **Strategic vision and execution.** The ability to articulate a persuasive vision, engage colleagues in setting priorities, and turn plans into achievable, resourced, and measurable commitments.
- **Commitment to shared governance.** Transparent and decisive leadership grounded in respect for academic freedom, consultation, constructive disagreement, and personnel development.
- **Commitment to student success.** Deep understanding of legal education, accreditation, bar readiness, experiential learning, and career services, with experience improving measurable outcomes while maintaining rigor.
- **Investment in faculty and staff.** Experience recruiting, mentoring, and retaining talented colleagues across doctrinal, clinical, legal-writing, and professional staff roles.
- **Fundraising and relationship building.** Success or clear promise in major gifts, campaigns, and alumni engagement; the ability to inspire giving within Tulsa's strong philanthropic community; and productive ties with employers, judges, tribal governments, and interdisciplinary partners.
- **Compelling communication.** Ease with faculty, students, alumni, donors, lawyers, judges, policymakers, and the public, and a willingness to explain difficult decisions with candor and care.
- **Respect for varied communities and perspectives.** A commitment to an environment where students and employees are respected, supported, and challenged, and a talent for working with people whose experiences and viewpoints differ.
- **Integrity, resilience, and judgment.** Sound ethical judgment, composure under pressure, discretion with confidential information, and a reputation for fairness and reliability.
- **Thoughtful use of technology.** A strategic approach to technology, including AI, in legal education and operations.
- **Commitment to continuity.** The ability and intention to serve as dean for a sustained period, at least five years, giving the college stable leadership through its next chapter.

Candidates must hold a J.D. or equivalent law degree and have a record of scholarship, teaching, and service sufficient for appointment as a tenured professor at the College of Law.

ABOUT UTULSA LAW

Programs, scholarship, and student experience

Juris Doctor education

The J.D. curriculum offers August and January entry points, and upper-level students pursue courses, clinics, externships, journals, and advocacy activities that connect analysis with professional skills.

Clinics and externships

The Boesche Legal Clinic houses the Buck Colbert Franklin Legal Clinic, Terry West Civil Legal Clinic, and Public Defender Clinic, where students handle live matters under close supervision. Externships place students in courts, agencies, and legal organizations; the college filled 169 field placement positions in 2024–25.

Journals and advocacy

Students edit the Tulsa Law Review and the Energy Law Journal, and the Board of Advocates offers negotiation, trial, and moot court competition. The Health Law Moot Court team won a national championship in November 2025.

Native American Law Center

Established in 2000 on a concentration dating to 1990, the center supports the study of federal Indian law, tribal governance, and Indigenous law. Faculty expertise, specialized collections, and proximity to tribal governments give it unusual depth.

Energy, natural resources, and facilities

The Energy Law Journal and the Mabee Legal Information Center's specialized energy, environmental, and Native American law collections support expertise in fields that shaped Oklahoma and remain vital nationally.



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THE UNIVERSITY

About The University of Tulsa

The University of Tulsa is a private, doctoral-degree-granting research university with an academic mission centered on learning, inquiry, knowledge creation, and service. Its institutional roots reach to Henry Kendall College and its predecessor institution in Indian Territory.

Scale and academic environment

The University of Tulsa enrolls more than 4,000 undergraduate, graduate, and law students across colleges in arts and sciences, business, engineering and computer science, health and natural sciences, honors, and law. Its 11:1 student-faculty ratio supports close collaboration between students and faculty.

Research and collaboration

The university has identified energy, cyber, student success, career preparation, and its relationship with the city of Tulsa as strategic priorities. For the College of Law, these commitments invite collaboration on governance, regulation, public policy, business formation, technical change, ethics, and security.

An evolving institutional value proposition

In August 2026, UTulsa announced a new $25,000 annual published tuition-and-fees rate for first-time undergraduate students entering in fall 2027. That initiative concerns undergraduate pricing, not College of Law tuition, but signals university-wide attention to access, affordability, and long-term student value.

The university's mission

The University of Tulsa describes itself as a student-centered research university cultivating connected learning, free inquiry, service, and belonging. Within that framework, the law school has a vital role: preparing ethical professionals, advancing legal scholarship, and connecting university expertise with the institutions that shape public and private life.



THE SETTING

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Tulsa offers a rich combination of metropolitan resources, business activity, a substantial legal community, cultural institutions, and proximity to tribal nations. The city is an integral part of the law school's intellectual and professional setting.

A city of enterprise and reinvention

Long associated with the energy industry, Tulsa continues to develop as a center for entrepreneurship, technology, finance, philanthropy, and civic innovation. Potential partners for the law school include established businesses, emerging enterprises, cultural institutions, nonprofits, and public agencies. These relationships let students take on substantive work and give local leaders trusted academic partners.

Indigenous nations and government

Located on the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Reservation, UTulsa operates in a legal setting where the practice and study of federal Indian law, tribal law, and intergovernmental relations have daily importance. The Native American Law Center reports nearby access to 35 tribal headquarters, an important asset for teaching, professional engagement, and research.

Greenwood, history, and responsibility

Tulsa's Greenwood neighborhood and the history of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre are central to any understanding of the city. The B.C. Franklin Legal Clinic draws upon the example of attorney Buck Colbert Franklin, who served Greenwood residents after the massacre, and today supports residents and small businesses through legal representation.

A culture of philanthropy

Few cities of Tulsa's size can match its tradition of giving. Tulsa is home to some of the country's most significant private philanthropies, including the George Kaiser Family Foundation, Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies, the Anne and Henry Zarrow Foundation, and the Helmerich Trust, as well as the Tulsa Community Foundation, which ranks among the largest community foundations in the nation. Generations of Tulsa families have invested in the city's schools, parks, arts, and civic institutions.

Culture, family, and quality of life

Tulsa pairs the amenities of a much larger city with an easy pace of life. Gathering Place, a 66.5-acre riverfront park that is free to the public, has been named one of *Time* magazine's World's Greatest Places. The Tulsa Arts District is home to the Woody Guthrie Center and the Bob Dylan Center, and Greenwood Rising tells the story of the historic Greenwood District. Philbrook Museum of Art is a longtime cultural anchor, and Gilcrease Museum, which The University of Tulsa manages in partnership with the city, is scheduled to reopen in a new building in early 2027. With a cost of living well below the national average, Tulsa is an affordable place to build a career and raise a family.

THE SEARCH

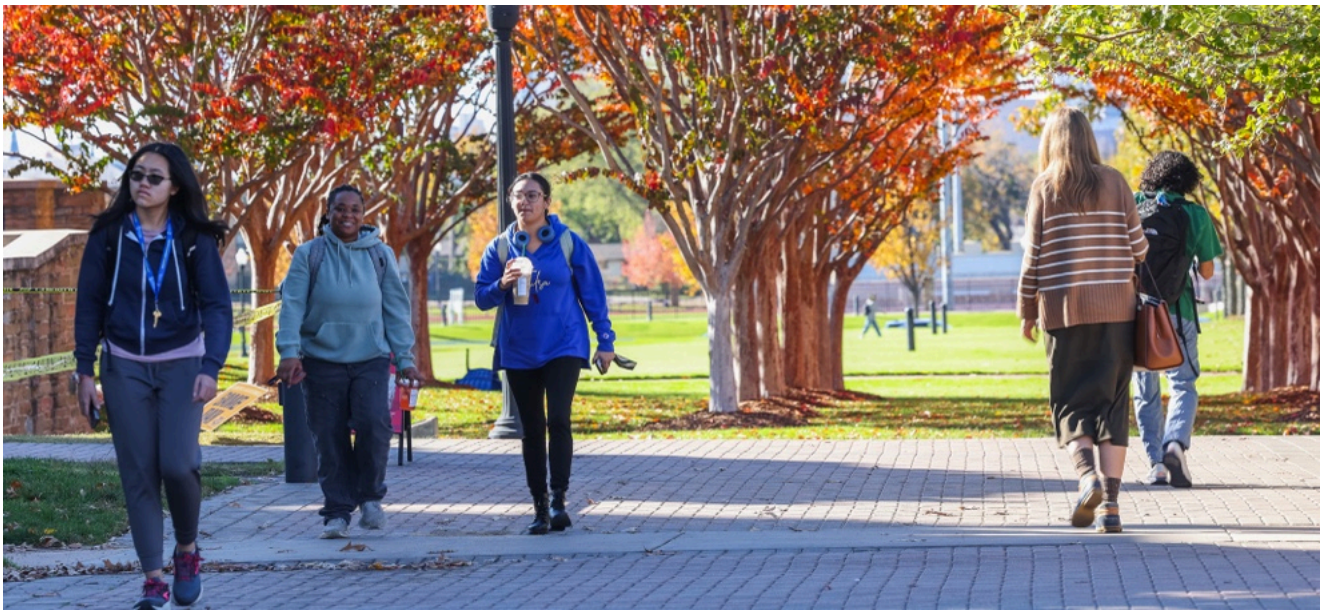
Procedure for candidacy

Applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile, and should be sent to tulsasearch@aals.org.

AALS is assisting The University of Tulsa College of Law with this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by January 11, 2027. The successful candidate is expected to join the College of Law in summer 2027. All inquiries, nominations, and applications will be held in confidence.

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Alena Allen
AALS Senior Counselor
aallen@aals.org



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The University of Tulsa (the "University") is committed to maintaining equal access to its programs, facilities, admission, and employment for all persons, including by maintaining an environment that is free of illegal discrimination and harassment. In keeping with that commitment, the University prohibits discrimination and harassment by or against any member of the University Community because of their race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, pregnancy, pregnancy related conditions, age, genetic information, disability, military or veteran status, marital or family status, or any other legally-protected class. Discriminatory conduct and harassment violate the dignity of individuals, impede the realization of the University's educational mission, and will not be tolerated.