

UCI Law

Opportunity and Challenge Profile

Search for the Dean
University of California, Irvine School of Law
Irvine, California

Executive Summary

The University of California, Irvine (UCI) seeks its next dean of the School of Law. UCI is noted as one of the most innovative American institutions of higher education. *The New York Times* named UCI No. 1 among U.S. universities “doing the most for the American dream.” In 2008, the University of California, Irvine School of Law (UCI Law) was established by visionaries who wanted to reimagine legal education. The School has built its reputation with its distinctive egalitarian composition among faculty and staff and through its interdisciplinary approach to legal education. *U.S. News & World Report* ranks UCI Law 19th in academic peer reputation and in the top 10 in clinical training, tax law, and legal writing specialties. UCI Law’s prominence is enhanced by its deep commitment to public service, social justice, research excellence and experiential learning — all core pillars of the School’s identity and mission. And since its founding, UCI Law’s research faculty has consistently been ranked in the top 15 in scholarly impact by the leading Sisk et al. study. The next dean of UCI Law will be a strategic and collaborative leader with a distinguished scholarly record, a person who will provide both inspiration and cohesion to guide the School into its next chapter of growth, impact and prominence.

As a designated Hispanic-serving institution and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institution, UCI is home to approximately 37,000 undergraduate and graduate students, nearly 1,500 ladder-rank faculty, and over 12,000 campus and medical center staff members. The University continues to excel in student interest, experiencing a nearly 40% rise in applications over the last five years and recognition as the leading campus for California freshman applications. Founded as an interdisciplinary university, it boasts excellence across its arts and sciences core and in its professional schools. UCI has been ranked among the top 10 public universities in the nation for seven consecutive years by *U.S. News & World Report*. As one of the youngest members of the prestigious Association of American Universities, UCI combines the strengths of a major research institution with the dynamism and agility of a youthful and ascending campus. In addition, its mission as a public land grant institution — on the homelands of the Acjachemen and Tongva peoples — plays a significant role in contributing to the advancement of the state, the nation, and the world.

Founded 13 years ago, UCI Law operates an annual budget of approximately \$66 million and has grown to serve nearly 500 students, employ 53 full-time faculty, five adjunct faculty, 16 affiliated faculty, four visiting faculty, seven librarians and over 70 staff and other academic members. UCI Law is highly regarded for the scholarly impact of its faculty and expert skills training and clinics, including distinct and innovative approaches to legal education that feature experiential learning and interdisciplinary studies. In addition to the J.D. program, UCI Law offers a Master of Laws (LL.M.), a first-rate legal education to lawyers, judges, government officials and others wishing to become educated about the legal system and practice of law in the United States. Additionally, the new Graduate Tax Program offers an innovative, one-of-a-kind LL.M. curriculum that instills students with both the doctrinal depth and the practical skills needed to practice tax law at the highest levels, in the United States or abroad.

The next dean, only the third in UCI Law's history, has an opportunity to continue to advance the School's reputation as an eminent and innovative learning community, building upon its ethos and mission as a force for good. As one of the most diverse law schools in the country, the next dean will preserve and enhance the School's commitment to public service and social justice. The dean will advance efforts to raise to the surface structural and historical inequities in the region, nation and world, and the role of law and lawyers in both facilitating and abating such inequities.

The next dean will strive for excellence, but true to UCI Law's culture, it will not happen through competition or conformity, but rather, through innovation. For UCI Law to achieve its ambitious goals, the dean will address the following opportunities and challenges:

- *Articulate an actionable plan that significantly advances the School's prominence and impact;*
- *Generate and expand resources needed to achieve the School's high aspirations;*
- *Continue to invest in and support equity, diversity, and inclusion as key pillars of the School;*
- *Champion and support the academic and professional success of UCI Law students;*
- *Recruit and retain exceptional and highly dedicated faculty, students and staff;*
- *Further enhance an environment of collaboration, innovation and transparency; and*
- *Strengthen and expand global, national, regional and local partnerships.*

A list of the desired qualifications and characteristics of the dean can be found at the conclusion of this document, which was prepared by the UCI Law Dean Search Advisory Committee with the assistance of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm. All confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the parties listed at the conclusion of this document.

About the University of California, Irvine

UC Irvine (UCI) traces its roots to the late 1950s, when the University of California began planning for a new campus to meet the needs of Southern California's growing population. Orange County still contained vast open spaces that provided a variety of options for locating a campus. Out of 23 possible sites, the Irvine Ranch site was chosen, and the University opened for classes on October 4, 1965.

Since its founding almost 60 years ago, UCI has grown to include 14 schools and many more programs that offer 87 undergraduate degrees, and 129 graduate and professional degrees. The five original divisions of the College of Arts, Letters, and Science remain intact to this day as independent schools: biological sciences, fine arts (now the Claire Trevor School of the Arts), humanities, physical sciences, and social sciences. UCI acquired the California College of Medicine and the Orange County Medical Center (renamed the UCI Medical Center), establishing the university as one of the five academic medical centers in the UC System. UCI also added the Donald Bren School of Information & Computer Sciences, the School of Education, the School of Law, and the School of Social Ecology, and most recently, the Susan and Henry Samueli College of Health Sciences, which includes the School of Medicine, the Sue & Bill Gross School of Nursing, the School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences, and the planned School of

Population and Public Health. For more information on UCI's academic programs, visit: www.uci.edu/academics.

UCI has experienced rapid growth in enrollment since its inception, as well as increases in the size and influence of its research programs, performing arts program, and professional schools. UCI is home to three Nobel laureates (and a UCI alumnus recently won the 2021 Nobel Prize in Chemistry), three Pulitzer Prize winners, two recipients of the National Medal of Science, and many members of the most important scholarly, scientific, and professional organizations. As one of the nation's top research universities, UCI is committed to providing students, faculty, and scholars with a variety of avenues to improve lives and communities through research and teaching that spans disciplines and academic units. For more information on research, visit: www.uci.edu/research.

UCI is among the most diverse and dynamic campuses in the University of California system. In 2017, the U.S. Department of Education named UC Irvine a Hispanic-serving institution. The designation builds on UCI's recognition in early 2016 as an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institution, demonstrating the University's dedication to providing a world-class education to every qualified student. The HSI and AANAPISI designations increase UCI's eligibility for funding and grants from the Departments of Education, Agriculture, and Housing & Urban Development. These designations signify the campus-wide commitment to promoting the value of diversity not just as a goal in and of itself, but as an essential component to improving the student experience and advancing knowledge. Established in 2020, the UCI Black Thriving Initiative leverages UCI's role as a public research university to dismantle anti-Blackness as an institutional imperative, and advance understanding of the Black experience and the drivers of community wellbeing. For more information on UCI Diversity initiatives, visit: <https://uci.edu/diversity>.

About University of California, Irvine School of Law

Approved by the UC Board of Regents in 2006, UCI School of Law was created in response to a call for change in legal education and to build a new school relevant to contemporary legal scholarship and law practice for the 21st century. Founding faculty moved from leading institutions to help build a transformative new model of legal education. Since the first class of students entered UCI Law in 2009, the School has maintained its bold founding vision to provide innovative, unparalleled legal education for the 21st century. The School, committed to enriching communities through public service, offers an innovative curriculum featuring experiential learning, strategic problem solving, and interdisciplinary study.

Under the leadership of the founding dean, Erwin Chemerinsky, and with robust support from the UCI campus and surrounding legal and business communities, UCI Law has quickly developed a strong national reputation. The School received full accreditation from the American Bar Association in 2014; in 2015, its first year of eligibility, the *U.S. News & World Report* ranked UCI Law 30th in the nation – the highest debut ranking by any new law school in *U.S. News* history. The 2022 *U.S. News & World Reports* ranked UCI Law 19th in academic peer reputation, and the faculty has been ranked 14th and 5th, respectively, for its legal and interdisciplinary scholarly impact. Core features of UCI Law have also attracted national attention, with clinical training, tax law and legal writing ranked 6th, 6th and 9th, respectively, in the 2022 *U.S. News & World Report*. UCI Law also ranked 9th in the 2021 *U.S. News & World Report* student diversity index. For more information, visit: <https://www.law.uci.edu/>.

Academic Programs and Faculty

UCI Law is known for its accomplished faculty, composed of nationally ranked scholars and experienced practitioners from around the country who bring a broad range of expertise and excellent teaching skills. UCI Law faculty have also had an immense impact on student experience and have consistently been a highlight of a student's time at UCI Law. Coming from previous positions at distinguished law schools across the country, faculty expertise is diverse and covers the spectrum of legal fields, as well as interdisciplinary work that joins law with disciplines such as political science, philosophy, history, sociology, criminology, urban planning, public policy, ecology, public health and business. UCI Law faculty currently occupy positions of leadership in numerous academic and professional organizations, including the Association of American Law Schools, the American Law Institute, the American Bar Foundation, the Law and Society Association, and the American Society of International Law. UCI Law's small class sizes and the student-faculty ratio of 7 to 1 allows for maximum interaction between students and faculty.

Since its founding UCI Law has sought to educate students to practice law at the highest levels of the profession. The first-year curriculum at UCI Law is marked by courses devoted to a wide range of legal analysis, including statutory law, common law, and constitutional law. It is distinctive in its inclusion of legal profession courses committed to interdisciplinary approaches to legal ethics and practice, and a full-year lawyering course in collaboration with legal aid and public defender offices. UCI Law is one of the first in the country to adopt a requirement that each student take at least one graded course that includes substantial content relating to race and indigeneity, structural inequities, and the historical basis for such inequity.

The curriculum also places emphasis on experiential learning and provides significant opportunities for students to gain real-world legal experience. [Clinical education](#) is a cornerstone of the experience at UCI Law and student participation in clinics is required for all students. The clinical program features 11 core clinics and several elective clinics across a range of subject areas and advocacy modalities in which students are taught and supervised by law faculty and act as primary legal representatives for their clients.

UCI Law hosts 18 centers, institutes and projects that encourage collaboration, contribute in-depth research, and advance policy in specific areas of law. These programs range in topics including environment and natural resources; law, equality and race; empirical study of the legal profession; the future of Latinos in the United States, globalization, law and society; fair elections and free speech; digital and intellectual property law; cybersecurity policy; and biotechnology and global health policy. The [Department of Criminology, Law and Society](#) within the School of Social Ecology, the [Newkirk Center for Science and Society](#), and the [UCI Center in Law, Society, and Culture](#) also provide fruitful interdisciplinary synergies.

One of the most recent initiatives, the Artificial Intelligence Public Policy Institute, offers research opportunities for students and faculty to further examine the spectrum of ethical and legal dilemmas at the intersection of law, technology and artificial intelligence. The institute was recently awarded distinguished grants to further study cyber insurance, cyber security, and the destabilizing effects of digital speech on American democracy, as well as to integrate the study of law, AI and other emerging technologies throughout the law school curriculum. For more information, visit: <https://www.law.uci.edu/emergingtech/>.

UCI Law also has well-regarded global programming, as well as additional aspirations in this space. The [Korea Law Center](#), for example, works to study and promote solutions to issues arising

at the intersection of U.S. and Korean Law. Additionally, UCI's [Long U.S.-China Institute](#) serves to enhance and facilitate knowledge about the opportunities and challenges of China's rise.

In addition to offering a J.D. program, UCI Law offers a LL.M. (Master of Laws) program that can be personalized to accommodate students' individual interests and professional goals. The highly regarded [Graduate Tax program](#) instills students with practical skills and doctrinal depth to practice tax law at the highest levels in the United States and globally.

The LL.M. programs are guided by dedicated advisement staff, students can choose from a broad range of electives in the upper-level curriculum. The LL.M program can be completed in one year during full-time study. UCI Law also embraces interdisciplinary learning through the [Program in Law and Graduate Studies](#) (PLGS) that allows students to earn concurrent degrees with other UCI Master's or Ph.D. programs. PLGS enables students to obtain both a J.D. and a M.A., M.B.A., M.S., or Ph.D. in less time than would be required to earn both degrees separately. For more information on degree programs, visit: <https://www.law.uci.edu/academics/degree-programs.html>

Students and Alumni

UCI Law has a diverse student body with a strong sense of community. The School promotes the personal and professional success of all students and values a holistic approach to student support. Students are passionate, talented, and accomplished. For the incoming class of 2021, the 75th percentile had a 3.8 GPA and 168 LSAT score. Last year's class was composed of 53% students of color and UCI Law was listed as one of the best law schools for diversity by *PreLaw Magazine*. UCI Law provides a collegial and collaborative environment for incoming students that sets itself apart from other law schools. Each new student is assigned a mentor from the local legal community and students form Community Fellows groups that help welcome and mentor each new incoming class.

Students have started numerous campus organizations, many of which are unique to UCI Law. Consistent with the public service culture of the School, more than 90% of students are involved in the pro bono program and have contributed more than 120,000 hours of pro bono services both locally and beyond. Student organizations, an integral part of UCI Law student life, often collaborate with various centers on campus that provide students with many opportunities to engage in open dialogue on current events facing the community and the country.

Pioneering alumni of UCI Law have played a significant role in building the School's culture and reputation and are fiercely loyal to the School. In addition, they have been successful in making immediate and meaningful contributions to the legal community after graduation. Based on the calendar year of 2020, 86% of first-time takers of the Bar exam passed. For the graduating class of 2020 and 81.8% of graduates found employment within 10 months of graduation, entering the private sector, nonprofit and public interest fields, and government roles. Alumni have been appointed to a variety of positions of leadership in the legal profession.

Role of the Dean

UCI Law continues to modernize legal education with innovative skill-learning and engaging in emerging legal fields in the surrounding communities. The next dean will be an academic and administrative leader with a strong skill set in leadership, management and fundraising, as well as have significant notable legal scholarship or practice background. Reporting to the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor, the dean will oversee all areas of UCI Law, acting as the School's chief executive and academic officer. The dean will oversee a budget of 66 million and manage

20 direct reports. Overall, this individual will bring strategic leadership to advance the reputation, quality, goals and mission of UCI Law. The dean will work with other academic deans on campus to advance the strategic priorities and overall ambitions of the campus.

Key Opportunities and Challenges for the Dean

Building on UCI Law's legacy, the new dean will lead the School through its next phase of growth. Working in partnership with students, faculty, staff and senior leadership, the dean will expand the School's unique vision and mission, secure financial commitments and develop a sustainable financial model to ensure the future success of the School and strengthen faculty and student experience while maintaining an uncompromising commitment to equity, social justice and public service. To be successful, the dean will address several key opportunities and challenges described below:

Articulate an actionable plan that significantly advances the School's prominence and impact

UCI Law's commitment to public service and social justice, impactful scholarship, and an innovative approach to legal education has helped establish the School as a leader in the broader community and contributed to its academic reputation. The dean will continue to leverage these strengths while identifying opportunities to create new programs and partnerships to ensure that students with diverse and varied professional interests have opportunities to explore all aspects of the legal field. With a continued focus on public interest law and existing strengths in environmental law, civil rights, and intellectual property law, the dean will also work to expand into other socially relevant fields including corporate law, banking law, consumer law, and law and technology to further the School's growth and impact. Promoting UCI Law's unique approach to innovative legal education, the dean will serve as an intellectual leader and demonstrate commitment to exceptional scholarship, high quality teaching, and experimental pedagogy. By building on the existing mission and values, the School of Law can continue to position itself as a premier public law school committed to serving the field of law, the state of California, and beyond.

Generate and expand resources to achieve the School's high aspirations

The dean will work closely with the Chancellor, the Provost, and senior leadership at the University to advocate for and identify appropriate resources to support the continued success of the School of Law. A top priority of the School is to find additional resources, funding, and support for the physical expansion of the School— namely, a new building. The dean will seek patronages and public and private grant funding for scholarships, endowed positions, and expansion of academic programs and experiential clinics that attract top-tiered students and notable faculty. The dean must connect with and capitalize on the growing philanthropic community in Orange County and the surrounding areas, cultivating the necessary donations and resources for the School. The dean will engage with the School's growing alumni, which spans public and private legal fields across the state and country, to maintain connection to the School and offer opportunities for alumni to participate in School activities and offer support.

Continue to invest in and support equity, diversity and inclusion as a key pillar of the School

UCI Law has established itself as one of the most diverse law schools in the country, and the School has a deep commitment to providing access to an exceptional legal education to students from a wide range of backgrounds, including increasing social mobility for its first-generation

students. The School offers a collaborative approach to leadership and values stakeholders' opinions and ideas. To continue to promote necessary, and at times difficult, conversations surrounding social justice, racial justice, and equitable legal access, the next dean must be able to hold and defend spaces in which differing perspectives can be shared and respected, while protecting the integrity of students, staff and faculty. The dean must enable curricular innovation so as to lift the silences in the legal academy and profession with regard to historical and structural inequities in society and the role of law in facilitating such inequities. The dean must be able to provide sufficient resources to promote a campus that is welcoming and inclusive, and continue to expand upon diversity efforts in recruitment, retention and support for students, staff and faculty.

Champion and support the academic and professional success of UCI Law students

The UCI Law student body ranks among the happiest in the nation. There has been significant investment from the School's early days to ensure a student-centric approach, close-knit community, and emphasis on quality instruction. Student voices are highly valued at UCI Law, and the next dean will continue to be a champion for students and involved and invested in student life and culture. The dean will embrace and strengthen the culture of commitment to student success, further improve student outcomes, and ensure graduates are ready for legal careers. UCI Law has always placed student success in the center of every decision made, and the next dean must maintain the academic rigor of courses and skill-based learning opportunities while expanding opportunities and connections with diverse legal organizations that meet students interests and needs. The dean will ensure that the School stays focused on graduating lawyers that are ready to practice and have the skills and knowledge to contribute directly and immediately in their chosen career paths.

Recruit and retain exceptional and highly dedicated faculty and staff

UCI Law prides itself on being a collaborative, supportive and innovative academic community. Core to this success is a committed and engaged faculty. The dean will lead efforts to recruit, retain and develop an exceptional and diverse faculty and staff. As the leader of the School of Law, the dean will support both staff and faculty in their mission to provide an impactful mission-centered legal education and excellent outcomes for all students through transparent communication and a collaborative style.

In particular, the student experience at UCI Law is enhanced by the presence of top faculty scholars at the forefront of global and national legal and public policy discussions and debates. The dean will continue to support all faculty members in their pursuit of scholarship, teaching and service and be able to acknowledge and appreciate the nuances that exist between types of faculty appointments. The dean will need to foster a culture that both recognizes contributions made by all members of the community and prepares faculty and staff to be nimble and ready to address upcoming unknown challenges in the law and in legal education.

Further enhance an environment of collaboration, innovation and transparency

The dean will be an effective advocate for the School, promoting an authentic spirit of collegiality among faculty, staff, administration and students. The dean's leadership style should be visible, accessible and cooperative, while maintaining a culture of trust, transparency and inclusivity. The dean will model and promote open and transparent communication by seeking meaningful input from a broad range of constituencies. The Dean will work closely with the UCI leadership team to identify and articulate the needs and advantages for programming and activities specific to UCI

Law. The dean should be an active collaborator with other UCI deans as well as other campuses within the University of California system, finding opportunities for cross-disciplinary partnerships, activities, and programming to expand UCI Law's presence and influence. Shared governance is a hallmark of the University of California system, and the dean will be grounded in a deep understanding and appreciation of working within this model of governance.

Strengthen and expand global, national, regional and local partnerships

The dean will be an inspirational and respected representative of UCI Law, building productive local, regional, national and global partnerships and ensuring the broader legal and professional community continues to recognize the reputation and value of the School and works to support it. The dean should continue engaging and working closely with existing community partners in Orange County, building connections with surrounding counties and beyond to identify areas of alignment between the priorities of the School and the overall legal landscape.

The dean will partner with alumni and other supporters of the School to develop and enhance partnerships with potential employers, including judges, who seek curious and questioning attorneys. These relationships will raise the profile of the School and provide direct benefits to all members of the UCI Law community. It will be crucial that this dean serve in an externally facing capacity and be equipped to understand, navigate and capitalize on the rich and diverse legal community in the surrounding area and beyond.

Qualifications and Characteristics

The search committee strongly welcomes applicants from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. It will consider the factors below when evaluating candidates for this important leadership role. A successful candidate should possess many of the following characteristics:

- J.D. or other terminal degree in law, minimum 10 years of teaching or law practice experience with distinguished scholarly record and accomplishments equivalent to tenure at the rank of professor under the Law School's criteria;
- Demonstrated commitment to the School's values of public service and social justice;
- Transparent and visible leadership style that invites and values collaboration from multiple perspectives;
- Demonstrated experience building organizations and/or engaging in research or practice focused on equity, diversity and inclusion;
- Ability to communicate UCI Law's distinct vision for legal education to multiple diverse constituencies, both internally and externally;
- Innovative and entrepreneurial spirit;
- Strong administrative skill set with emphasis on fairness and community building;
- Capacity to navigate a large public university system and to build and maintain cross-school partnerships;
- Skill set to develop a strong record of fundraising success;
- Nuanced understanding of the current challenges facing legal education and higher education, and current existential issues facing a diverse public law student body and society, more generally.

Location

UC Irvine is located in one of the world's safest and most economically vibrant communities and is Orange County's second-largest employer, contributing \$5B annually to the local economy. The city of Irvine is located in the heart of Orange County, between Los Angeles and San Diego counties and only five miles from the beach. Orange County is the sixth-most populous county in the U.S. and one of its most diverse. Orange County has two major freeways, rail service, and an active domestic airport – John Wayne Airport – only minutes away from campus. Irvine is located less than 50 miles from Los Angeles International Airport and downtown Los Angeles. The city of Irvine is among the nation's largest planned urban communities, encompassing more than 65 square miles and home to nearly 350,000 residents. The city consistently ranks as one of the best and safest places to live in the United States with excellent public schools. UCI enjoys the best of what Southern California has to offer: beaches, mountains, deserts and a broad variety of cultural, entertainment and intellectual activities. To learn more about Irvine, see www.destinationirvine.com.

Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/search-detail/S8-154>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

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