



UNIVERSITY OF **St. Thomas**

Dean, School of Law

Leadership Profile
Summer 2023



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

The University of St. Thomas School of Law is seeking a Dean eager to capitalize on a pivotal moment in the Law School's short but extraordinary history, and ready to guide it through the next stage of its emergence as a national leader in values-driven, whole-person-centered legal education and in scholarly and societal impact. In the two decades since its opening in 2001 the School of Law has outpaced all expectations, validating the hopes embedded in its mission: "The University of St. Thomas School of Law, as a Catholic law school, is dedicated to integrating faith and reason in the search for truth through a focus on morality and social justice."

That mission commits the School of Law to providing rigorous engagement on matters of faith and values in the pursuit of excellence in legal education and scholarship. The school has a unique culture, fostered by its place within a Catholic university, that respects and embraces the contributions of various faiths and value systems and that nurtures respectful and rigorous exchanges of differing views and opinions on the most pressing and divisive contemporary legal and social issues. Its mission is reflected in the School of Law's commitment to seven values: professional formation, Catholic foundation, service, scholarship, innovation, community, and relationships.

Guided by its mission and culture, the School of Law has achieved objective metrics of excellence across the key aspects of legal education:

- **Professional preparation:** The School of Law is a rigorous and supportive academic community where students learn legal doctrine, practical skills, and tools for professional identity formation that equip them for lifelong professional and personal growth and success:
 - #1, #2, or #3 in the nation in practical training every year since 2014 (National Jurist)
 - A nationally recognized, award-winning mentor externship program that matches every student with a lawyer or judge for each year of law school
 - 90% of 2022 graduates employed in full-time, long-term jobs for which bar passage is required or where having a J.D. provides a significant advantage
 - #4 in judicial clerkships (National Jurist 2020) and #5 for best state and local clerkships (Princeton Review 2023)
 - Top 10 nearly every year for Student Quality of Life (Princeton Review 2008 - 2021)
 - Overall experience rated "excellent" or "good" by 94% of first-year students (Law School Survey of Student Engagement 2020); 93% of first-year students say, if they had to choose again, they would select St. Thomas (Law School Survey of Student Engagement 2022)
- **Scholarly engagement:** The School of Law is a vibrant scholarly community where faculty and students produce scholarship that incorporates deep commitments of faith and values and that significantly impacts the legal academy, the legal profession, and society:
 - Scholarly/academic impact: #23 in Leiter-Sisk Study (2021) and #21 in Heald-Sichelman study (2019)
 - #3 in new downloads per author on Social Science Research Network (April 2022)

- Professional formation: the focus of the Holloran Center for Ethical Leadership was instrumental in to the American Bar Association's adoption of changes to accreditation standard 303(b) in 2022.
- **Public service and community engagement:** The School of Law is committed to social justice through active engagement in local and national activism and service opportunities:
 - 10 legal clinics, serving an average of 200 clients annually
 - Fellowships (the Archbishop John Ireland Justice Fellowships) that place licensed new graduates in one-year full-time positions with organizations providing civil representation to low-income persons
 - More than 10,400 hours of public service work performed by J.D. students (Class of 2023)
 - Engaging the community after the 2020 murder of George Floyd: providing legal training and representation to peaceful protesters; assisting with grant distribution for minority-owned businesses and community enterprises affected by the events; and advocating successfully for to the abolition of "no-knock" warrants in Minneapolis
 - 60% of alumni stay actively connected to the School of Law community as mentors, career advisors, moot court coaches, and alumni engagement officers

The School of Law draws support from the University of St. Thomas, Minnesota's largest private university and one of the nation's largest Catholic universities, which serves 9,000+ students and eight schools and colleges on campuses in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Rome. The University benefits from net assets of \$1.2 billion; a strong legacy; a dedicated and generous Board of Trustees; strong philanthropic support; and an engaged network of over 115,000 alumni worldwide. The University, like the School of Law, is poised to reach new heights, having made a historic leap in 2021 from NCAA Division III directly to Division I is expected to catapult the University to expanded enrollment, fundraising, and national visibility.

The School of Law seeks a Dean energized by the opportunity to steward a vibrant, engaged community to its next stage of growth. The new Dean must be committed to the school's unique faith-based culture and prepared to build on the school's areas of excellence. To succeed, the next Dean will need to cultivate relationships with alumni, philanthropic partners, and external stakeholders. The Dean therefore must have either a proven track record or demonstrated ability in fundraising and must show a desire to engage individuals, organizations, and corporations in meaningful conversations around shared values and philanthropic impact. The Dean must also have a strong vision for meeting the challenges from the technological and social changes affecting the legal profession. Candidates must, at a minimum, hold a J.D. degree and have an outstanding record of accomplishment in the legal academy, the practice of law, or the judiciary, demonstrating intellectual leadership warranting appointment at the rank of Professor of Law.

For information regarding how to apply, submit nominations, or inquire about the role, please see the section "[Procedure for Candidacy](#)" at the end of this document.

The Dean: Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The next Dean of the University of St. Thomas School of Law will have an unparalleled opportunity to build on the strong foundation laid in the first two decades of the Law School's operations, by harnessing the entrepreneurial spirit of a relatively new enterprise poised to enter a new stage of national prominence. The Dean will be expected to appreciate and be attracted by the unique strengths already manifested by the School of Law; to recognize the opportunities for deepening the impact of existing strengths; and to envision opportunities to leverage those strengths into new and innovative opportunities to meet the challenges presented by the rapid pace of technological and social changes affecting the legal profession. The Dean must have demonstrated leadership skills and the emotional intelligence to operationalize this vision by communicating it in an inspiring and convincing manner to the constituencies necessary to implement this vision: students; faculty; staff; alumni; the School of Law's Board of Governors; the University; donors; and the local, national, and international legal community.

FOUR KEY AREAS OF LEADERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

The Dean will be expected to exercise leadership across four key areas: faith-based culture, professional preparation, scholarly engagement, and public service and community engagement.

Faith-Based Culture

The Dean must understand and embrace the value of the School of Law's Catholic identity. In keeping with the Catholic intellectual tradition, the School of Law embraces people of differing faiths and values, and we welcome applicants from all faith traditions. The School of Law's place within a Catholic university provides the freedom, responsibility, and motivation to work to preserve a space for serious consideration of how faith and values shape law and the legal profession. Our faith-based identity has created a uniquely vibrant and close-knit community motivated to achieve excellence in every area of operation.

- *Maintaining student-centered education.* The Dean must nurture and participate in the student-centered approach to legal education. This approach is evidenced both by the School of Law's impressive record of student satisfaction with their education and by exceptionally strong alumni engagement. Students and alumni consistently cite its positive culture as a hallmark of the School of Law. The Dean's leadership in this area must include a personal commitment to engaging with students.
- *Committing to diversity and inclusion.* The Dean must preserve the vitality of the School of Law's culture by attracting, supporting, and retaining students, faculty, and staff who represent diverse identities, faith traditions, experiences, cultures, viewpoints, and interests. The Dean must also preserve the School of Law's culture of vibrant, respectful, and productive engagement on divisive issues, a culture that necessarily characterizes a truly diverse and inclusive community.

Professional Preparation

- *Developing curriculum to address the future of legal education.* The Dean must collaborate with the faculty to build upon the strengths of the curriculum to address the future of legal education. Many aspects of the School of Law's curriculum have anticipated current trends in legal education. Its recognized excellence in practical training foreshadowed the changes

coming with the “Next Generation” bar exam. Its emphasis on professional identity formation preceded (and indeed helped shape) the ABA’s adoption of accreditation standards requiring such formation of students in all law schools. The School of Law’s 10 legal clinics, nationally recognized mentor externship program, and robust other externship offerings offer strong foundations for further curricular innovation that anticipates the social and technological developments reshaping legal education and the profession. The Dean must offer the vision and support to guide these innovations.

- *Supporting student employment and bar passage outcomes.* The Dean must be a strong advocate for students in expanding employment opportunities and increasing bar passage rates.

Scholarly Engagement

- *Building on existing strengths in scholarly impact.* The School of Law has achieved extraordinary success in scholarly impact with a small faculty. This success stems from the quality of faculty attracted to the school’s unique mission and culture, and from the appetite in the academy and the profession for the kind of scholarship that the mission and culture foster. As a faculty member, the Dean will work to maintain this culture of academic vitality and a rigorous intellectual climate. The Dean will lead the faculty by encouraging and supporting faculty scholarship, and by ensuring sufficient library and information resources and financial support for scholarship.
- *Advancing faculty recruitment, support, and retention.* The School of Law’s full-time faculty is marked by its small size, its collegiality, and its pervasive integration of theory and practical advocacy. Virtually all full-time faculty members, whether teaching doctrinal, clinical, or legal skills courses, are tenured or on the tenure track. Clinical and legal skills faculty regularly teach doctrinal courses, and four members of the doctrinal faculty supervise clinical courses. Scholarly productivity is high among clinical and legal skills faculty, as well as doctrinal faculty. The Dean must be committed to recruiting scholars who are attracted to the school’s mission and who represent diverse characteristics and perspectives.

Public Service and Community Engagement

- *Supporting, and increasing resources for, clinics and other public-service and community programs.* The School of Law’s 10 clinics, Ireland Justice Fellowships, racial-justice efforts, required public-service hours, and other programs significantly advance social justice and the common good. But the school also needs additional resources both to solidify these programs and to proceed on new ideas and opportunities for expanding their impact. The Dean must support the School of Law’s commitment to public service and social justice and must lead development to support ambitions in this area.
- *Articulating the public-interest commitment.* The Dean must inspire continued commitment to public service among students, faculty and staff, alumni, and donors. The Dean must also engage the broader community, articulating the school’s commitment to serving the community. As with other key areas, the Dean must articulate how the school’s public-service and community activities stem from, and are deepened by, its faith-based identity.

GENERAL LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS

To accomplish the School of Law's ambitions outlined above, the Dean must have the following specific leadership and administrative skills.

Development and Fundraising Skills

Fundraising and building a culture of philanthropy are top priorities for the Dean. The Dean must possess all the qualities and characteristics of a proven fundraiser: exceedingly high emotional intelligence; exceptional listening skills; strategic vision; and a strong desire to cultivate, grow, and steward new and existing relationships. A proven fundraising track record is a strong advantage for the position. Working in collaboration with a Law Director of Development, University Advancement, and other key stakeholders, the Dean will spend a significant amount of time setting goals and priorities and executing a fundraising plan. The fundraising plan will capture annual fund, major gifts, planned corporate and foundation relations, grants, and sponsorships. Bringing innovation, creativity, and commitment to stewardship of School of Law gifts will also be a priority. The Dean must articulate a compelling case for the impact that the school's unique mission has had and can have on legal education, on legal scholarship, on the legal profession, and on the broader community, particularly people underserved or in need. The Dean must also articulate how envisioned curricular innovations can address the requirements of the future of the legal profession. The Dean must have the skills to identify and cultivate relationships with constituencies drawn to this mission and vision for the future, and to attract the resources needed to create the desired impact. These roles will require a creative and entrepreneurial spirit, an ability to promote and articulate initiatives, and an open personal and professional style characterized by a genuine interest in others.

The University of St. Thomas is currently beginning year three of a 10-year, \$850 million comprehensive campaign, inclusive of all fundraising and includes all schools and colleges. The School of Law has raised just over \$6 million toward its \$25 million goal. The Dean is responsible for ensuring the School of Law goal is met. Consistent with its strategic plan, the School of Law seeks to elevate opportunities for impact in the areas of faculty excellence and hiring, DEI, scholarship aid, and clinical education. Other fundraising priorities include post-graduate Ireland Fellowships, the Mentor Externship program, and student success and wellness. Maintaining strong relationships with the School of Law Board of Governors, and recruiting new governors to serve, are critical to the success of the Capital Campaign.

Operational Planning and Management

Day-to-day activities turn heavily on the management of School of Law operations and require the Dean to work collaboratively with several diverse stakeholders, including the University President and the Provost. The Dean will provide leadership in long-range and strategic planning that addresses the evolving academic and financial environment of legal education. The Dean will implement, monitor, and report on the progress of such plans in close collaboration with faculty and staff.

A successful Dean will inspire, motivate, and support the staff at the School of Law, and work collaboratively to achieve strategic objectives with a specific focus on admissions, employment, bar passage, and other School of Law degrees. As a people builder, the Dean will work skillfully with staff to set challenging, bold, and achievable goals, providing the requisite support for success, including open and transparent communications.

Collaboration with University Community, University Administration, Board of Trustees, and University Alumni

The Dean will play a critical role in engaging with other units of the University of St. Thomas to identify and implement opportunities for collaboration with other schools and departments. The Dean will collaborate with the President and Provost on administrative, educational policy, financial, governance, institutional advancement, Catholic identity, and other matters, and will represent the interests of the School of Law in matters requiring University approval. The Dean will effectively manage and build relationships with all Board members and will actively advise and inform Board members regarding issues critical for the School of Law's success. These roles will likewise require an open, transparent, and collegial personal and professional style.

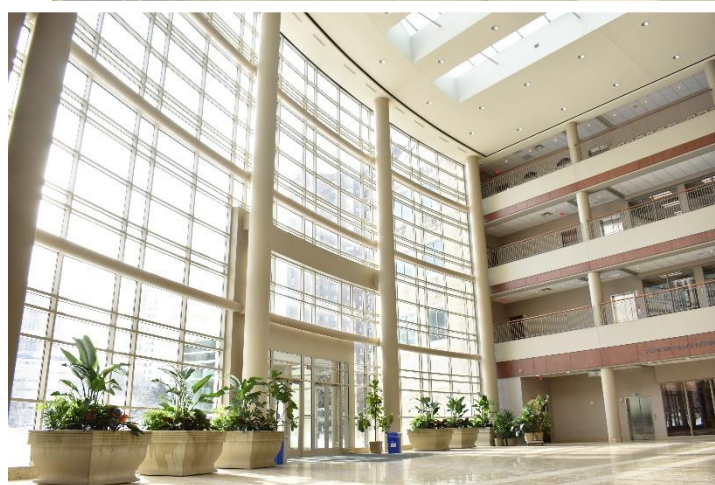
About the School of Law

Overview

Founded in 1999, the University of St. Thomas School of Law is an ABA-accredited law school in downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota, offering an innovative curriculum that emphasizes professional formation and the education of the whole person. Inspired by its Catholic identity, the School of Law strives to help students of all faiths and deep beliefs develop the professional and ethical values that are vital to long-term success in the profession, enabling them to become lawyers who lead their communities by serving them. The School of Law prepares lawyers to lead through faith and reason in service to their communities to create a more just and equitable society.

The School of Law's [J.D. program](#) is distinctive in embracing the importance of relationships as well as the traditional aspects of a legal education. As a result, the School of Law has earned top rankings nationally for practical training, clinical programs, and externships. The School of Law also offers four joint degree options – [J.D./LL.M.](#) in Organizational Ethics and Compliance, [J.D./M.B.A.](#), [J.D./M.S.W.](#), and [J.D./M.A.](#) in Catholic Studies – as well as a [Master of Studies in Law](#). The law school also offers an [LL.M. in U.S. Law](#) degree which is an educational experience for foreign-educated attorneys who are attracted to the School of Law's mission and its focus on students.

Faculty at the School of Law are leaders in their academic fields and receive consistent praise for accessibility and teaching. Professors influence students through the classroom; they influence other scholars through writing in scholarly journals and books; and they influence the law through work in the courts. In addition to the full-time faculty, the School of Law regularly welcomes adjunct professors from throughout the Twin Cities legal community. The School of Law has 28 full time faculty and 132 adjunct faculty, and its student-to-faculty ratio is 6.7 to 1. Of the nation's 200 law schools, its scholarly impact is world-class: #23 in the nation in 2021 using the Sisk-Leiter methodology and #21 in 2019 using the Heald-Sichelman methodology. Both studies measure the influence of a law school's faculty based on how often its work is cited. Faculty from the School of Law were part of more than 250 local and national newspaper, television and radio stories in the 2021-22 academic year — more than any other school or college at St. Thomas. It is one of the nation's most politically balanced faculties: A 2018 study from Harvard and the University of Chicago identified St. Thomas as one of only six law schools perfectly balanced between conservative and liberal faculty. This encourages lively and respectful debate. In 2022,



the School of Law was ranked by preLaw magazine as politically moderate, a designation shared by only 12% of law schools.

The staff at the School of Law are passionate professionals dedicated to student success. Many hold advanced degrees, including several at the director level who hold J.D. degrees and have practiced law. The School of Law also has 2,920 living alumni in 46 states. The student experience is so compelling that 60% of alumni stay actively connected to the community as mentors, career advisors, moot court coaches, and beyond.

Mission

The University of St. Thomas School of Law, as a Catholic law school, is dedicated to integrating faith and reason in the search for truth through a focus on morality and social justice.

Vision

By providing, from a faith-based perspective, practical skills and theoretical legal education and mentoring, the School of Law commits to preparing students to become accomplished servant leaders in the practice of law, the judiciary, public and community service, business, and in education. The law school's faculty and curriculum will be distinctive in supporting and encouraging students' integration of their faith and deepest ethical principles into their professional character and identity. Because legal education is enhanced by a broad understanding of global society's many challenges, the law school will also provide students with opportunities for interdisciplinary study and experiential learning.

Values

- **Professional Formation:** *We help each student attain personal and professional satisfaction by developing the qualities of excellence, social responsibility, and ethical integrity. Our students acquire strong technical skills and develop the habits necessary for professional growth through individual reflection, personal dialogue with faculty and other mentors, moral development, and vocational discernment.*
- **Catholic:** *We are a distinctly Catholic law school with a strong ecumenical component, inviting students of all faith traditions to integrate their personal and professional values in their search for justice.*
- **Service:** *We recognize the dignity of every human being and foster in our students a commitment to serving those in need.*
- **Scholarship:** *We continue to build a faculty of outstanding teacher-scholars whose work benefits society and enhances the educational experience.*
- **Innovation:** *We are forward-thinking and committed to creative improvements in legal education for the benefit of students and society.*

- **Community:** *We foster a diverse environment in which each student feels supported in his or her unique journey from law student to lawyer and called to share his or her gifts to enrich the collective learning community.*
- **Relationships:** *We take relationships seriously both inside and outside the classroom. The practice of law is a social endeavor, and we help students to develop the practical skills and emotional intelligence lawyers need to engage and nurture all relationships.*



Diversity, Community and Inclusion

"The University of St. Thomas School of Law is committed to ensuring that its administrators, faculty, staff, and students fully reflect the great diversity of God's creation. University of St. Thomas Law's commitment to diversity is inseparable from its identity as a Catholic law school. Central to Catholic social teaching is the belief that every human being is made in the image of God, and that, reflecting the Trinitarian nature of God, human persons are social beings who thrive in community with others." – School of Law Affirmative Action Plan Preamble

The School of Law has a unique mission founded on the precepts of diversity, community, service, and inclusiveness. The mission drives the School of Law to ensure that it fully reflects the greater community and to educate lawyers who recognize the dignity of every human being and understand their professional and ethical responsibility to serve their clients and society.

The law school was founded in the Catholic intellectual tradition, which means St. Thomas School of Law welcome students of all faith traditions, nationalities, races, ages and genders, and creates opportunities for students to deepen their purpose and explore who they are.



The School of Law Diversity and Inclusion Committee is comprised of students, faculty and staff. The committee promotes diversity initiatives and partners with the university's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and law student organizations to sponsor events throughout the semester.

The School of Law's student organizations are representative of the vast number of backgrounds, interests, experiences and beliefs within the community. Student groups include the American Constitutional Society; Black, Latinx and Asian Pacific law student associations; Federalist Society; First-Generation Law Student Association; Lex Vitae; Out!Law; Women's Law Student Association; and several faith-based organizations (Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and interfaith).

Practical Training

Legal education goes beyond the classroom and a theoretical knowledge of the law. The School of Law's practical training opportunities allow students to develop professional relationships, learn vital professional skills through hands-on experiences, and build their resumes. The School of Law currently ranks #2 in the nation for practical training based on clinics and externships, according to National Jurist, and has been ranked among the nation's top three law schools in this category since 2014. The School of Law offers students [10 legal clinics](#) and [eight legal externship programs](#). Practical training offerings are further enhanced by the award-winning [Mentor Externship Program](#). The Mentor Externship Program is one of the School of Law's most distinctive and innovative components. With more than 500 lawyers and judges paired as active mentors with students, the School of Law is one of just two law schools in the country that offer more externships than full-time enrollment. The School of Law clinics serve 200 clients per year on average.

Quality of Student Life

The School of Law was ranked by the Princeton Review among the nation's top 10 law schools in quality of student life nearly every year from 2008-2021. The ranking is based on students' rating of the beauty, safety, and friendliness of the campus; whether there is a strong sense of community; whether differing opinions are tolerated in the classroom; and research resources the school offers. The School of Law draws passionate students from around the world who hold a wide range of experiences, voices and beliefs and who want to improve the world in which they live. More than three dozen active student organizations at the School of Law, allow students to put their commitment to service, leadership and social justice to work. According to the 2020 Law School Survey of Student Engagement (LSSSE), 94% of first-year law students rate their overall experience at St. Thomas as "excellent" or "good."

Class of 2025 by the numbers:

- Total class size: 157
- Average age: 25
- Age range: 21-56
- Minority enrollment: 25% (including international students)
- States represented: 19
- Undergraduate institutions: 70
- Median GPA: 3.63
- Median LSAT: 156
- J.D. tuition: \$46,220
- Community-service hours provided under graduation requirement (Class of 2021): 12,400+





About the University of St. Thomas

Overview:

The University of St. Thomas, inspired by Catholic intellectual tradition, was founded in 1885 as a high school, college, and seminary to provide high-quality education for Catholic immigrants suffering

social and economic hardships. Today it is the largest private university in Minnesota, serving 9,000+ undergraduate and graduate students, representing 41 states and 92 countries, on three campuses located in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Rome, Italy. Eight schools and colleges offer over 150 undergraduate majors and minors and over 55 graduate degree programs. The University employs approximately 1,000 staff, 425 full-time faculty, and 344 part-time faculty.

Students contribute over 80,000 hours toward community engagement, assisted by the University's Center for the Common Good, which connects St. Thomas students, faculty, and staff with community engagement opportunities. The University collaborates with community partners, Fortune 500 companies, and its 115,000+ person alumni network to connect students with internships and full-time jobs. One-hundred percent (100%) of classes are taught by faculty, 95% of graduates are employed or in graduate school within one year, and 80% of the top public companies in Minnesota actively recruit St. Thomas students.

The University of St. Thomas ranks as a top National University and Best Value School by *U.S. News & World Report*, and is in the top 25 Entrepreneurship Undergraduate Programs according to *The Princeton Review*. St. Thomas is the only university in Minnesota designated an Ashoka "Changemaker Campus," meaning that social innovation, entrepreneurship, and caring for the common good are embedded throughout the University.

The University of St. Thomas is recognized as a First-Gen Forward Institution for its commitment to first-generation student success. Ninety-six percent (96%) of first-year students receive a St. Thomas scholarship. It is also recognized as a military friendly campus, ranked No. 82 as Best College for Veterans nationally by *U.S. News & World Report*. Fifty-four percent (54%) of students study abroad in more than 50 countries, earning St. Thomas a ranking of seventh in the country and first in Minnesota for the percentage of undergraduates studying abroad by the Institute of International Education.

St. Thomas is committed to sustainability and is recognized in the *Princeton Review* Guide to Green Colleges and earned a Gold rating from the Sustainability Tracking Assessment & Rating System. Additionally, the University is rated in the top 100 Most Sustainable Colleges in America by *Sierra*

Magazine and is a Top 10 Zero Waste campus in the United States as assessed by PLAN's Atlas Zero Waste Certification™ Program.

Mission

Inspired by Catholic intellectual tradition, the University of St. Thomas educates students to be morally responsible leaders who think critically, act wisely, and work skillfully to advance the common good.

Convictions

As a community, the University of St. Thomas is committed to:

- **Pursuit of Truth.** *We value intellectual inquiry as a lifelong habit, the unfettered and impartial pursuit of truth in all its forms, the integration of knowledge across disciplines, and the imaginative and creative exploration of new ideas.*
- **Academic Excellence.** *We create a culture among faculty, students, and staff that recognizes the power of ideas and rewards rigorous thinking.*
- **Faith and Reason.** *We actively engage Catholic intellectual tradition, which values the fundamental compatibility of faith and reason and fosters meaningful dialogue directed toward the flourishing of human culture.*
- **Dignity.** *We respect the dignity of each person and value the unique contributions that each brings to the greater mosaic of the University community.*
- **Diversity.** *We strive to create a vibrant diverse community in which, together, we work for a more just and inclusive society.*
- **Personal Attention.** *We foster a caring culture that supports the well-being of each member.*
- **Gratitude.** *We celebrate the achievements of all members of our community in goals attained and obstacles overcome, and in all things give praise to God.*

2025 Strategic Plan

[St. Thomas 2025](#) is a five-year strategic plan designed to drive the University to a new level of impact. Guiding themes in developing the plan are:

- Ever Press Forward through Innovation
- Build Belonging and Promote Equity
- Ensure Access, Achievement, and Outcomes for All
- Lean In to Our Catholic Mission
- Widen the Circle of Impact
- Strengthen Culture As We Embrace Change

New emerging priorities outlined in the plan were identified as:

- Lead in STEAM Education
- Grow the Morrison Family College of Health
- Meet Ever-Changing Needs of Students, Alumni, and Employers
- Foster Belonging and Dismantle Racism
- Prepare Students for Work and Career
- Build National Awareness and Advance Priorities through Athletics

Ongoing priorities outlined in the plan were identified as:

- Promote and Leverage Our Comprehensive Academic Excellence
- Retain and Attract World-Class Talent
- Prepare Educators to Dismantle Disparities
- Expand Pathways through the Dougherty Family College
- Illuminate Our Mission and Charism
- Close Financial Gaps for Students
- Expand Our Pipeline of Students
- Create a Robust Residency Culture
- Live and Work Sustainably
- Engage All Tommies as Changemakers

The University's ten-year aspiration is to advance to the level of excellence, impact and reputation that distinguishes the top 10 national Catholic universities.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The University of St. Thomas' commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion stems from its founding as a university for immigrants who weren't welcomed elsewhere. The University believes that diversity, equity, and inclusion are indispensable to academic excellence and the holistic development of its students. The St. Thomas community includes and welcomes people of diverse races, ethnicities, geographic origins, gender identities, ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, sexual orientations, religions, work experiences, physical and intellectual abilities, financial means, and all other characteristics as protected by applicable laws. The [2025 Strategic Plan](#) includes a strategic priority to "[Foster Belonging and Dismantle Racism](#)."

The University exemplifies its commitment to internal work on diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives via the [Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#), [Student Diversity and Inclusion Services](#), and [Racial Justice Initiative](#). The University of St. Thomas has specialized resources and support for: [All Faiths](#), [BIPOC Students](#), [First-Generation Students](#), [International Students and Faculty Scholars](#), [LGBTQIA+ People](#), [Students with Disabilities](#), [Undocumented Students](#), [Veterans](#) and [Women](#).

Up-to-date information regarding the University of St. Thomas' commitment to and initiatives relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion can be found [here](#). The St. Thomas Land Acknowledgment can be seen [here](#).

Finances

Since FY 2010, the University's net assets have increased 88%, to \$1.2 billion in 2021, with endowment net assets increasing to \$709 million for the fiscal year end 2021. The endowment returned 31.9% versus the strategic benchmark of 28.5% for FY 2021. Since 1984 when the endowment moved to external fund management, it has returned 9.9% (compared to the benchmark of 9.3%).

The University's budgeted operational revenue, which excludes most gifts and investment return, for FY 2022 was \$279 million. St. Thomas is largely tuition-driven, with tuition and fees comprising 76% of its FY 2021 revenues. A majority of the balance is related to meal plan and residence hall revenue. Compensation and benefits comprise the majority of the University's expenditures, approximately 78% in FY 2021.

At the end of FY 2021, the University had bonds payable of \$236 million, a reduction of \$54 million since FY 2010 when debt levels peaked after the issuance of bonds for the building of the Anderson Student Center. The University most recently issued \$80.5 million of bonds in 2019 for the construction of two new dorms and \$9.1 million for the renovation of existing dorms in 2020. In FY22, the University will be going out for approximately \$136 million of debt to finance a new, interdisciplinary STEAM building (partially funded by donor gifts), perform renovations on existing dorms, renovate a space for the newly accredited nursing programs and finance other building projects. As of the most recent review performed by Moody's in April 2022, the University's long-term bond rating is A2 stable. With asset growth, principal repayment and debt refinancing, the University's debt coverage ratio has improved from 1.1 in FY 2011 to 2.6 in FY 2021.

Fundraising

In July 2021, St. Thomas launched the leadership phase of a new fundraising campaign with a "working goal" of \$850 million. The funding priorities currently target \$325 million for student access and scholarships; \$300 million for academic and programmatic excellence across the seven colleges and schools; and \$225 million for athletics, including student-athlete scholarships and new facilities in support of the University's historic transition directly to Division 1 athletic competition. Rooted in the priorities identified in the St. Thomas 2025 strategic plan, the campaign will drive lasting impact through support in students, faculty, programs, facilities, and new gifts to endowment. It is anticipated that St. Thomas will launch the public phase in 2026 and conclude the campaign by June 2031. As of May 2022, the University has raised \$251 million.



Leadership

Rob Vischer, President

Rob Vischer was named the 16th President of the University of St. Thomas on January 1, 2023, after acting as interim president for the previous seven months, beginning in June 2022.

In nearly 10 years as dean of the St. Thomas School of Law, Vischer has helped leverage the law school's mission to achieve critical objectives in student success and community impact. Over the course of his deanship, the law school has dramatically improved employment outcomes for its graduates, built a global student body by establishing partnerships with law schools in more than a dozen countries, redoubled its commitment to

whole-person professional formation, maintained its top-25 ranking for scholarly impact, and made racial justice core to its mission. The Harvard Law School graduate was an inaugural recipient of the Minnesota Lawyer Diversity and Inclusion Award for his contributions to the advancement of diversity and inclusion in the practice of law.

Before entering the legal academy, Vischer was associated with Kirkland & Ellis in Chicago, where he practiced corporate litigation. He clerked for three federal judges: Judge David Ebel of the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, Judge Joan Gottschall of the Northern District of Illinois, and Judge John Wiese of the Court of Federal Claims. He received his B.A. degree, summa cum laude, from the University of New Orleans, and his J.D., cum laude, from Harvard Law School, where he was an editor of the Harvard Law Review.



Dr. Eddy Rojas, Executive Vice President and Provost

Dr. Eddy Rojas is executive vice president and provost. He oversees academic affairs, schools and colleges and other academic-related units. As provost, he plays a critical role in ensuring the success of St. Thomas' strategic plan to propel the university forward to a new level of academic excellence and impact. His collaborative style is rooted in his dedication to inclusive leadership and diversity.

Prior to joining St. Thomas in 2021, Rojas served seven years as dean of the School of Engineering at the University of Dayton where he oversaw undergraduate, master's and doctoral programs. During his tenure as dean, he raised student retention rates, championed gender equity among faculty, and increased new faculty hires from historically underrepresented groups.

Rojas spent four years as director of the Durham School of Architectural Engineering and Construction at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He began his academic career at the University of Buffalo followed by the University of Washington.

A native of Costa Rica, he holds a civil engineering undergraduate degree from the University of Costa Rica and received his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in civil engineering from the University of Colorado Boulder. A lifelong learner, he also has an M.A. in economics from the University of Colorado Boulder, an M.Ed. in higher education from Penn State and an M.P.S. in the psychology of leadership, also from Penn State.

Colleges and Schools

With eight schools and colleges, St. Thomas is a comprehensive university. Interdisciplinary connections among them empower a broad perspective and multifaceted approach to problem solving.

- [College of Arts and Sciences](#)
- [Opus College of Business](#)
- [School of Engineering](#)
- [School of Education](#)
- [School of Law](#)
- [Morrison Family College of Health](#)
- [Dougherty Family College](#)
- [The Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity](#)



Minneapolis

St. Thomas School of Law is the only law school in downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota's most populous city. The school is within walking distance of employers, courts, and mentors, including most of the major Minnesota law firms, the federal district court, multiple state courthouses, Target's international headquarters, and many other businesses. Minneapolis has the most Fortune 500 companies per capita of any U.S. metro area. Fifteen Fortune 500 companies are located in

Minnesota, several with headquarters in Minneapolis or its surrounding communities, including 3M, Target, Cargill, Best Buy, Ecolab, UnitedHealth Group, and General Mills.

The School of Law is also close to many recreational opportunities. The school is situated in the heart of Minneapolis's theater district, within walking distance of the Orpheum Theater, Minnesota Orchestra, and Walker Art Center. For sports fans, the Minnesota Twins (MLB), Timberwolves (NBA), Lynx (WNBA), and Vikings (NFL) are all a short walk from the law school, and the Wild (NHL) and Loons (MLS) are a \$2 train ride away in St. Paul. Foodies will enjoy the school's proximity to many unique restaurants, including Owamni (Minneapolis's first full-service Indigenous restaurant, and a winner of the national 2022 James Beard award for best new restaurant), Young Joni, and many others.

Minneapolis also has one of the best park districts in the country, with miles of walking, biking, and cross-country skiing trails. For those who prefer to stay inside during our chilly winters, the School of Law is connected to the largest contiguous skyway system in the world, offering the opportunity to walk, shop, dine, and go to work through a series of enclosed second-story walkways without setting foot outdoors.

While the law building is ideally situated for both work and pleasure, it is also just 3 miles away and 3 years removed from the site of George Floyd's tragic murder in 2020. Our location has enabled law students, faculty, and staff to engage in efforts to address the injustices this murder exposed, in keeping with the school's mission focus on social justice. These efforts include assisting with the grant distribution process for minority-owned businesses and community enterprises affected by the murder, providing legal training and representation to peaceful protesters, advocating successfully for an end to no-knock warrants in Minneapolis, training students and community members in restorative justice, participating in development of pipeline programs for economically disadvantaged students or racially minoritized students to attend law school, and much more.

In addition to the School of Law, St. Thomas's downtown Minneapolis campus is home to the Dougherty Family College (St. Thomas's innovative two-year school designed to propel first-generation college students toward college success, an associate's degree, and a transition to bachelor's studies); the Opus College of Business; and components of the Morrison Family College of Health and School of Education. St. Thomas's St. Paul campus, the primary home to approximately 6000 undergraduate students, is a free shuttle ride away.

Procedure for Candidacy

All 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.

WittKieffer is assisting the University of St. Thomas in this search. Review of applicant materials has begun; for fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by September 30, 2023 and submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Werner Boel, LL.M., and Ashlee Winters Musser

StThomasLawDean@wittkieffer.com

The University of St. Thomas embraces diversity, inclusion, and equality for all. Our convictions of dignity, diversity and personal attention call us to embody and champion a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment. We welcome applicants of diverse races, ethnicities, geographic origins, gender identities, ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, sexual orientations, religions, work experience, physical and intellectual abilities, and financial means. We are committed to building a team that represents a variety of backgrounds, perspectives, and skills.