

Fairleigh Dickinson University General Counsel, Chief Compliance Officer, and Secretary to the Board



**FAIRLEIGH
DICKINSON
UNIVERSITY**



Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU) invites applications and nominations for the position of General Counsel, Chief Compliance Officer, and Secretary to the Board (General Counsel).

FDU seeks a highly experienced, strategic, and solutions-oriented attorney to provide comprehensive legal guidance to the University on a broad range of matters, oversee the institution's compliance and risk management programs, serve as Secretary to the Board of Trustees, and lead the Office of the General Counsel with professionalism and collaboration. The ideal candidate will advise with sound legal insight and demonstrate exceptional judgment, strong analytical and communication skills, leadership ability, and the ability to navigate higher education's complex legal and regulatory environment.

The largest private university in New Jersey, Fairleigh Dickinson University is a not-for-profit, nonsectarian, multicampus institution. The University offers more than 100 undergraduate and graduate degree programs, including doctoral programs in pharmacy, nursing practice, clinical psychology and school psychology, and education; and an AACSB-accredited business school. Degree programs are offered on two New Jersey campuses and at FDU's campus in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. FDU also owns a campus outside the United States at Wroxton College, in Oxfordshire, England, where students can participate in short- or long-term study-abroad programs.

Position Summary

The General Counsel, Chief Compliance Officer, and Secretary to the Board is a senior leadership position and encompasses responsibility for, and oversight of, all legal affairs and compliance matters for all campuses of the University, while also serving as Secretary to the Board of Trustees. Reporting directly to the President, and working closely with the senior management team, the General Counsel is a partner in implementing the strategic vision and direction of the University and serves as counselor and advisor on matters relating to University operations to the Board of Trustees, President and other officers of the University, senior management team, and campus leaders.

The General Counsel provides comprehensive legal guidance across the full spectrum of the University's activities. In this capacity, the General Counsel manages the contract review process and reviews, drafts, and negotiates contracts related to academic, administrative, and operational functions, ensuring that all agreements align with institutional goals and legal requirements. The General Counsel also advises on legal matters involving compliance with municipal, state, and federal regulations in the United States and Canada. In addition, the General Counsel serves as a key resource on matters of institutional governance, policy development, and adherence to higher-education regulatory standards. Further, the General Counsel engages and oversees outside counsel (in the U.S. and Canada), ensuring that external legal services are efficient and delivered at the highest professional standards.

In the role of Chief Compliance Officer, the General Counsel is responsible for overseeing, coordinating, and monitoring the University's efforts to comply with federal, state, and local regulations, both domestic and international, as well as internal policies and accreditation requirements. The Chief Compliance Officer develops and maintains compliance programs, conducts risk assessments, and implements training to ensure that faculty, staff, and administrators understand their



obligations. The individual also monitors emerging regulatory changes, investigates potential violations, and works with academic and administrative leaders to promote ethical conduct and safeguard the institution's integrity.

As Secretary to the Board of Trustees, the General Counsel is responsible for the smooth operation of Board and committee meetings, offers advice and resources for discharging the Board's fiduciary duties, serves as a confidant(e) and resource to the Board and senior management, provides advice and counsel on Board responsibilities and logistics, and ensures the recording of minutes and proper handling of other corporate documents.

The General Counsel manages and supervises the Office of the General Counsel, including personnel and the legal affairs budget. Current personnel in addition to the General Counsel include:

- Administrative Legal and Compliance Operations Attorney
- Assistant Chief Compliance Officer & Assistant Secretary
- Senior Paralegal, Legal Operations
- University Risk Manager
- Senior Assistant to the Administrative Legal and Compliance Operations Attorney
- Title IX and Civil Rights Investigator
- University Director of Environmental Health & Safety

Leadership Agenda

A Trusted Advisor

The General Counsel, Chief Compliance Officer, and Secretary to the Board will have the skills and expertise to manage the wide range of legal matters and transactions Fairleigh Dickinson University faces. The General Counsel must be a straightforward and trusted advisor as this individual identifies risks, develops strategies to mitigate potential liabilities, confirms compliance, and helps ensure FDU's success.

A Highly Functioning Cabinet

The new General Counsel will join a cabinet of professionals effectively led by the dynamic President Michael J. Avaltroni, who was named to Innovate New Jersey's "Innovate 100 List." The President is a visionary and an alum of FDU himself, and he is determined to meet the challenges of the moment through innovation and growth, proactively modernizing the sector and seeking out new opportunities, especially in healthcare education. The Cabinet is an accomplished and forward-thinking team, united by a commitment to transformative education and a deeply collaborative, collegial approach.

The Office of the General Counsel

The General Counsel will find the attorneys and staff in the Office of the General Counsel to be a high-functioning, cohesive team that works exceptionally well together. This atmosphere is conducive to sound decision making.



A Tumultuous Marketplace and Disruption

The higher education marketplace is tumultuous. In response, to quote President Avaltroni, “[w]e must embrace disruption.” Accordingly, the General Counsel will collaborate with their new colleagues to assess the risk and reward of innovative strategies and, in so doing, help ensure success in a chaotic market. This will require not only legal counsel, but business strategy advice. The successful candidate will not simply identify problems but lead in formulating solutions.

Federal Regulatory Changes

The higher education legal and regulatory landscape is changing at a velocity not seen before. The General Counsel will closely monitor these developments, translate their meaning for FDU, and help ensure compliance.

Contract Streamlining

The General Counsel will collaborate with others to evaluate ways to streamline the contract management and approval process and arrive at a conclusion on a timely basis.

International Campuses

In addition to its two New Jersey campuses, FDU has a campus in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, and an additional study-abroad campus in Wroxton, England. FDU also runs various educational programs in other international locations. The General Counsel will coordinate the legal work associated with both the domestic and international campuses and activities, with the assistance of outside counsel as appropriate.

Partnership with the Board of Trustees

FDU is fortunate to have highly intelligent and dedicated trustees. The General Counsel will form an effective and trusting partnership with the trustees where all parties are keenly engaged in furthering FDU’s continued success.

A Role in Shared Governance at FDU

FDU has adopted a Charter of Shared Governance that affirms the University’s commitment to shared governance practices that are “representative, inclusive, transparent, consultative, and streamlined.” The Board of Trustees, the administration, the faculty, the administrative staff, and student government all have a voice in University affairs. While the General Counsel engages mainly with the Board and the administration, this individual is potentially an important partner and resource to other constituencies, in particular the Governance Steering Council regarding the legal implications of proposals affecting the FDU community, and the Faculty Senate regarding academic policies and our binding document on faculty issues, the Faculty Handbook.

Principle Duties

1. Serve as primary legal counsel on all matters affecting the University and a key legal advisor to the President, members of the senior leadership team, and members of the Board of Trustees.
2. Serve as an active member of the President’s senior management team and help develop and support the strategic direction of the University.

3. Advise the Board of Trustees in carrying out their duties and obligations while serving in the role of Secretary to the Board, General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer.
4. Prepare for, attend, and actively participate in all regularly scheduled meetings of the Board of Trustees and appropriate committee meetings.
5. Manage the University's legal affairs budget and personnel within the Office of the General Counsel.
6. Oversee and coordinate the University's contract review process to ensure the appropriate delegation of signature authority and review of all contracts and serve as a legal advisor on all business matters.
7. Serve as a partner and resource to administrators, faculty committees, and joint task forces developing University policies, programs, and procedures and offer continuing legal advice in these areas.
8. Proactively engage with the Board of Trustees, President, Officers of the University, and campus leaders at all University locations to ensure they receive legal advice on the regulatory and governmental frameworks in which they are operating, including matters involving employment, employment discrimination, business and real estate transactions, research compliance, immigration, students' rights and responsibilities, healthcare, athletics, and academic freedom. Provide advice on relevant statutory laws, court decisions, and administrative regulations of the state and federal government necessary for the performance of their responsibilities.
9. With the Senior Vice President for University Advancement, manage the review and development of charitable vehicles including bequests, trusts, and donations of property.
10. Oversee Enterprise Risk Management initiatives.
11. Oversee compliance matters including regulations, policies, laws and contractual obligations in partnership with the University leaders and managers responsible for implementation and activities in affected areas. Oversee an ongoing University-wide compliance program that utilizes and informs the on-going and existing processes and policies that address areas of compliance.
12. Serve as a member of the data security team to ensure the University has appropriate policies, contracts with service providers, and is current on regulatory and legal issues in this area.
13. Retain, oversee and evaluate outside counsel when necessary and coordinate the services rendered by outside counsel.
14. As Secretary to the Board of Trustees, the General Counsel is responsible for the smooth operation of Board and committee meetings, offers advice and resources for discharging the Board's fiduciary duties, serves as a confidant(e) and resource to the Board and senior management, provides advice and counsel on Board responsibilities and logistics, and ensures the recording of minutes and proper handling of other corporate documents.
15. All other matters assigned by the President.

Qualifications

Minimum Qualifications

- Juris Doctor from an accredited law school.
- Member of the New Jersey Bar and authorization to practice law in New Jersey, or the ability to become a member within one year of employment.
- A minimum of ten years of legal practice at a senior level, preferably with at least five years focused primarily on representation of institutions of higher education.



- Demonstrated expertise in handling complex transactions, such as mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, large procurements, and multi-party collaborations.
- Excellent problem-solving skills and analytical habits, out-of-the-box thinker, innovator.
- Excellent interpersonal, listening, written, and oral communication skills.
- Excellent judgement, strong critical thinking skills, and unquestioned integrity.
- Ability to prioritize work strategically and manage multiple competing projects.
- Calm demeanor, patient, confident in knowledge.
- Demonstrated ability to advise senior leadership in all legal matters.
- Demonstrated ability to review and make recommendations to improve, streamline processes, and be in compliance with policies.

Preferred Qualifications

- 15 or more years of experience in legal practice.
- Prior experience serving as in-house counsel at an institution of higher education.
- Experience in managing, developing and leading attorneys and staff, and delegating responsibilities.
- Knowledge of federal, state, and local laws and regulations applicable to the University.
- Experience operating in a complex regulatory environment and advising on governance matters within a university or an organization with a similar governance structure including a board of directors or trustees.
- Experience with pre-litigation and litigation, including outside counsel management.
- Experience with labor and employment law.
- Experience working with business, government, and other non-profit institutions as partners, grantors, and contractors.
- Experience with university research programs and federal grants, including the creation of intellectual property.
- Experience with healthcare matters, including affiliation agreements and new ventures.
- Experience developing and overseeing an institution-wide compliance program. Experience with international compliance is a plus.

Employment is contingent upon a satisfactory background check. Candidates for hire will be required to sign a waiver authorizing the background check and produce a Social Security Card.

Search Timeline

February 18, 2026: Target date for applications

Mid-March: Semifinalist interviews (virtual)

Late March: Campus visits

June 1: New General Counsel starts (earlier start preferred, if possible)

Benefits

Fairleigh Dickinson University provides competitive employee benefits. For more information, visit

[Benefits | Fairleigh Dickinson University](#).

Applications and Nominations

AGB Search is pleased to assist Fairleigh Dickinson University with this leadership search.

To apply for the General Counsel, Chief Compliance Officer, and Secretary to the Board position, candidates are requested to submit the following:

- (i) resume or curriculum vitae;
- (ii) a letter of interest that addresses how the candidate's experiences and qualifications connect with the required/preferred characteristics and priorities as expressed in this position profile; and
- (iii) contact information for five references (to be contacted with the candidate's permission at a later date).

For best consideration, applications should be submitted by **February 18, 2026** to the AGB Search application portal at: [FDU General Counsel](#). The search will remain open until an appointment is made.

Nominations and expressions of interest in the General Counsel, Chief Compliance Officer, and Secretary to the Board position are encouraged. Please direct them to FairleighDickinsonGC@agbsearch.com or the AGB Search consultants listed below:



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Fairleigh Dickinson University strongly supports the principles of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action in all its employment policies and practices, and requires that all these practices be administered without regard to race, color, citizenship status, disability, veteran status, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, handicap, gender, sex, sexual preference or marital status.