GENERAL COUNSEL
System and Position Profile
Minnesota State invites applications and nominations for the position of General Counsel

Minnesota State seeks an accomplished individual who can provide legal guidance and counsel to the Minnesota State system, including its board of trustees, and its member colleges and universities.

The General Counsel reports directly to the Minnesota State Board of Trustees and to the chancellor and serves in the chancellor’s cabinet. The General Counsel is responsible for the development and implementation of strategies to effectively coordinate and integrate the system’s legal services and compliance activities to achieve Minnesota State objectives.

The Minnesota State Office of General Counsel focuses primarily on areas that present significant policy as well as legal issues, including employment law, governance, data practices, immigration, global study programs, copyright, and other policy-related issues. The General Counsel coordinates the provision of legal services, including consultation on litigation, contracts and other legal issues of special significance to the system.

The Office of General Counsel works collaboratively with other system and campus leaders to design and deliver training and education to Minnesota State leaders and staff that aligns with Board policy and procedure and legal issues.

The General Counsel is responsible for leading a team of four attorneys and three staff and managing a $2.2 million budget.

The colleges and universities of Minnesota State do not employ or contract with their own legal counsel. Legal representation is provided by the Minnesota Attorney General’s Office at the direction of the Minnesota State Office of General Counsel.

Minnesota State has an enduring commitment to enhancing Minnesota’s quality of life by developing and fostering understanding and appreciation of a free and diverse society and providing equal opportunity for all its students and employees. To help effectuate these goals, Minnesota State is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and nondiscrimination in employment and education.
At Minnesota State, we provide the opportunity for all Minnesotans to create a better future for themselves, for their families, and for their communities through access to affordable higher education.

With 26 community and technical colleges and seven state universities on 54 campuses, Minnesota State is the workforce engine for Minnesota, serving nearly two-thirds of the entire state’s undergraduate student population.

We are committed to equitable outcomes for all our students, and in 2019 pledged to eliminate educational equity gaps at every Minnesota State college and university by the year 2030. Achieving this goal, called Equity 2030, is a moral imperative, and an economic imperative for our state. As our population continues to grow more diverse, it will ensure Minnesota has the workforce it needs for generations to come.

Minnesota State employs more than 14,400 people, most of whom are represented by one of several bargaining units and personnel plans. The bargaining units include:

» Inter Faculty Organization
» Minnesota State College Faculty
» Minnesota State University Association of Administrative and Service Faculty
» American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
» Minnesota Association of Professional Employees
» Minnesota Government Engineers Council
» Middle Management Association
» Minnesota Nurses Association

Governance
The 15-member Board of Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities is appointed by the Governor and has policy responsibility for system planning, academic programs, fiscal management, personnel, admissions requirements, tuition and fees, and rules and regulations. Learn more at MinnState.edu/board.

Chancellor
Under the direction of the Board of Trustees, the chancellor is the executive officer of Minnesota State and is responsible for providing educational leadership to the 33 colleges and universities of Minnesota State, ensuring effective and efficient management and operation so that Minnesota State can meet the current and long-term educational and workforce development needs of all Minnesotans. Learn more at MinnState.edu/system/chancellor.
In June 2019, we set a critical goal: By 2030, Minnesota State will eliminate the educational equity gaps at every Minnesota State college and university.

Equity 2030 serves as the organizing principle across all campuses – for all our work, our operational structures, policies and procedures, and for the inclusive, safe, and anti-racist organizational ethos we strive to reach.

Only by addressing systemic inequities in educational access and outcomes can we build a better future for students, families, and our communities. It is both a moral imperative and the path to economic prosperity.

The pandemic further magnified persistent racial disparities across the country and in Minnesota, and we have doubled down on our commitment, advancing Equity 2030 with a strong sense of urgency and united resolve.

Our approach to meeting this goal coordinates key initiatives across Minnesota State focused on the following six strategic dimensions:

» Enhanced Access
» Student Academic Success
» Student Success: Engagement and Support
» Data-Guided Decision Making
» Financial Resources and Support
» Workforce Diversity

For more information about Equity 2030, visit MinnState.edu/Equity2030.
ABOUT THE POSITION

Core Duties and Responsibilities

The General Counsel is charged with providing advice and support to the chancellor, the Board of Trustees, and the system leadership (presidents, chancellor’s cabinet, system and campus administrators) on business, legal, and public policy issues. The General Counsel will:

» Provide leadership and counsel and legal advice on legal issues, including strategies regarding litigation, settlements, stipulations and trends so that Minnesota State policies, standards, and procedures are consistent and followed to advance the system’s strategic positioning and mission

» Provide counsel and legal advice regarding compliance with federal and state statutes and regulations, Board policy and procedures and other matters affecting higher education, including preventive legal services and legal representation in monitoring and resolving disputes that may lead to litigation

» Advise the Board of Trustees and its committees on laws, regulations, and other governance issues

» Develop and implement an ethical vision and strategic plan for legal services

» Provide legal and strategic advice during any emergency or crisis situation involving Minnesota State

» Manage relationships with external legal partners (including the Minnesota Attorney General’s Office), ensure that all such relationships are effective, cost efficient, and foster constructive outcomes for the system’s stakeholders

» Establish and manage a budget for the provision of the system’s legal services by both inside and outside counsel, ensuring compliance with the budget, establish levels of accountability, and evaluate results

» Lead and manage the staff and work of the Office of General Counsel

» Serve as a member of the chancellor’s cabinet

» Collaborate with senior leaders to design and deliver training and education to Minnesota State leaders and staff that aligns with board policy and procedure and legal risk management
Qualifications

Minimum Qualifications

» Education: J.D. Degree

» Professional Licensure/Certification: Must be licensed to practice law in Minnesota, or be licensed in good standing in another state and be able to become licensed in Minnesota within six months of starting employment

» Proven success in providing legal guidance in the context of complex organizations and a deeply held commitment to, and belief in, the value of collaborative decision-making

» Experience directly managing or supporting leadership in managing controversial and high-profile issues

» High ethical standards with a strong commitment to legal ethics exhibited in knowledge and practice, and professional responsibility

» Demonstrated legal and ethical stature, maturity, competence, and confidence to operate with credibility at the executive and trustee level, as well as a professional history of maintaining objectivity while driving appropriate outcomes, managing multiple stakeholder agendas, and promoting high client service standards

» Intellectual and conceptual flexibility and creativity, with the ability to analyze, interpret, present, and write about complex ideas and concepts in a clear, concise fashion to persons not trained in the law

» Demonstrated success in leading, empowering, and delegating effectively to a successful team

» Ability to work collaboratively and communicate effectively with multiple and diverse constituencies such as faculty, staff, students, and legislators

» Demonstrated commitment and contribution to fostering and advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion organizational priorities

» A history of successfully working with a complex organization that faces constant change; adeptness at working in a highly nuanced environment with varied constituencies

Preferred Qualifications

» Experience in, or understanding of, the public sector and/or higher education environment

» Five years managerial and supervisory experience

» Five years of experience with high level policymaking responsibilities

» Successful experience practicing in a large, complex organization

» Experience advising a board

» Litigation or ligation management experience
Kris Hnastchenko, President of Heinze & Associates Executive Search, is supporting Minnesota State in this search.

Screening of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. The preferred date to receive application materials for maximum consideration is September 29, 2022. The search will be conducted with a commitment of confidentiality for candidates until finalists are selected.

Applications must include:

» Letter of interest stating how the candidate’s experiences and qualifications connect with the strategic priorities expressed in the position prospectus

» A resume

» Names, addresses telephone numbers, and email addresses of five references for future contact, including the candidate’s professional relationship with each reference listed. References will only be contacted with permission of the candidates

Confidential inquires, nominations, and application materials should be directed to:
Kris Hnastchenko, President
Heinze & Associates Executive Search
kris.heinzeandassociates@gmail.com
763-242-9926

The target start date for the new General Counsel is no later than January 1, 2023