



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

University Counsel

East Tennessee State University

East Tennessee State University (ETSU), located in the Appalachian Highlands of Tennessee, invites applications and nominations for an experienced leader to serve as University Counsel. For more information on ETSU, visit [ETSU At-a Glance](#).

University Counsel is responsible for providing legal services, as well as coordinating with the Attorney General and overseeing outside counsel. Serving as a primary legal advisor to the President and the Board of Trustees, University Counsel will work integrally with all departments, keeping the University's mission and vision at the forefront when educating and advising University constituents on legal issues that may impact the Institution. The ideal candidate will possess exemplary communication skills and business acumen, demonstrating the ability to manage, guide, and inspire a team of legal professionals and collaborate with campus constituents and external parties to achieve objectives. This role is crucial in fostering a collaborative and engaging environment, ensuring the delivery of legal to accomplish university goals, strategies, and priorities.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Identifies legal issues and conducts research to provide legal recommendations and proposals.
- Advises on transactions, such as real estate purchases, ground lease agreements, management and development agreements, lease agreements, and contracts
- Manages legal issues related to labor & employment, including Title VII, Title IX, ADEA, ADA, FMLA, FLSA, & OSHA.
- Provides leadership and oversight of the Office of University Counsel including management of its personnel.
- Works with Attorney General's office to provide advice regarding all legal matters involving outside agencies or complainants.
- Provides legal representation, advice, counsel, and opinions in all areas of law affecting the University, including, but not limited to corporate, student, and faculty affairs, academic programs, academic freedom, promotion and tenure, due process and First Amendment matters, campus security, NCAA rules and intercollegiate athletics, nondiscrimination statutes, financial aid, open meetings laws, the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act, trademark licensing, intellectual property, international agreements and immigration, privacy law, real estate, open records, all aspects of employment law, important legal documents and agreements, and University policies and procedures. University Counsel does not provide legal assistance to students, faculty, or staff regarding personal matters, but may provide general information about the legal system and referrals to legal aid resources.
- Provides legal advice on issues related to higher education, and university grants, contracts, agreements, and related matters; provides advice and representation concerning the University's

participation in joint ventures with other universities, healthcare enterprises (Colleges of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Nursing, and other health sciences programs and their affiliated clinical operation), business entities, non-profits, or governmental organizations in the United States.

- Oversee the University policy process.
- Attends Board of Trustee meetings and serves as Attorney to the Board in legal matters.
- Acts as a resource on the interpretation of existing or proposed local, state, or federal laws and regulations.
- Provides legal memorandum to the President or as directed by the President.
- Provides legal representation, advice, and opinions in monitoring and resolving disputes that may lead to mediation or litigation.
- Arranges and supervises outside attorneys through the Office of the Attorney General.
- Handles litigation as needed in cooperation with the Office of the Attorney General, including, but not limited to attending depositions, discovery conference, motion practice, in federal and state courts and with administrative agencies such as the TN Administrative Procedures Division.
- Maintains a current knowledge of legal issues of importance to the University through participation in continuing legal education and membership in appropriate bar and professional associations.
- Assists as needed with the University responses to external requests for information, reporting, complaints, or citations from external governmental or non-governmental organizations.
- Responsible for the University's public records process.
- Responsible for oversight of the University's NCAA certification process.
- Reviews and advises on matters referred by the President.
- Reviews and answers correspondence.
- Performs other related duties as assigned.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Must possess a demonstrated ability to engage in problem solving; employ exceptionally strong judgment and unquestioned discretion in maintaining confidentiality; and adapt to a rapidly changing and intellectually challenging work environment.
- Must maintain a collaborative work style and possess personal and professional integrity beyond reproach with a commitment to the highest ethical and professional standards.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Ability to effectively engage in and communicate the results of legal research and translate complex legal issues for a lay audience.
- Must possess strong leadership and interpersonal skills, be able to organize and direct a staff of professional/administrative personnel, be able to collaborate with all campus constituents, and have the ability to relate well with Trustees, senior administrators, students, faculty, staff, alumni, government officials, and external audiences.

Required Qualifications

- JD from an ABA accredited law school or LLB.
- Ten (10) years of professional legal experience required in a relevant area and a demonstrated understanding of federal and state legal and policy issues facing higher education.

- Must either: (1) be a member of good standing to the Tennessee State Bar membership in good standing; or (2) be licensed to practice law in another state or the District of Columbia at time of hire and gain admittance to the Tennessee State bar within 6 months of employment.

Preferred Qualifications

- Knowledge of federal and state laws and regulations affecting public higher education institutions.
- Experience in negotiation strategies and tactics to achieve favorable outcomes.
- Three (3) years of supervisory experience preferred.

East Tennessee State University

East Tennessee State University East Tennessee State University is located in Johnson City, one of the Tri-Cities of Northeast Tennessee and a Metropolitan Statistical Area with over 215,000 residents. The larger region, known as the Appalachian Highlands, is adjacent to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and is a 4-6-hour drive from Nashville, Washington, DC, Atlanta, and the Research Triangle of North Carolina. Johnson City is frequently ranked among the best small towns in the U.S., with affordable housing, an accessible regional airport, excellent schools, and outstanding cultural and outdoor recreational activities. Clinical care in Washington County is consistently ranked among the best in Tennessee.

ETSU is a regional public university. Described by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities as “stewards of place,” regional universities serve rural, often underserved students and communities.

Application and Nomination Process

The University Council Search Committee invites nominations and applications (letter of interest, complete resume/CV, and references) to be submitted to the search firm assisting ETSU. Confidential review of materials will begin immediately and continue until the appointment is made. It is preferred, however, that all nominations and applications be submitted before Friday, May 15, 2026. For more information, please contact Parker Executive Search:

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