



South Texas
COLLEGE OF LAW
— HOUSTON —

PRIVATE AND INDEPENDENT SINCE 1923

President and Dean

Leadership Profile

July 2024



WittKieffer



The Opportunity

South Texas College of Law Houston (STCL Houston) invites inquiries, nominations, and applications for the position of President and Dean.

The successful candidate will have the opportunity to build upon the law school's proud history and develop a clear vision for its future. The law school seeks a leader who will inspire excitement about the STCL Houston mission, connect and engage meaningfully across multiple constituencies, and serve as a role model for STCL Houston students and alumni.

The successful candidate will be a leader of impeccable integrity and judgment with outstanding communication, relationship-building, and management skills, who will build upon the elements of the law school's strategic plan, adapting and changing—where appropriate—to meet emerging challenges. The next leader will be an effective public advocate, regionally and nationally, for the law school and the importance of legal education.

Information about nominating someone or applying for this opportunity may be found near the end of this document in the section entitled "[Procedure for Candidacy](#)."

Role of the President and Dean

The President and Dean reports directly to and serves at the pleasure of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors chose decades ago to use a dual-responsibility leadership position based on the determination that it is essential for the continued positive evolution of the law school. Consequently, the Board seeks to identify one individual who best meets its needs for the objectives and responsibilities of both positions.

The ultimate governing authority for STCL Houston is vested in the corporation's Board of Directors. The Board, informed by the President and Dean, faculty, and staff, establishes the policy within which the institution operates, consistent with accrediting standards and accepted administrative practices. These policies are intended to implement the mission of STCL Houston, which is defined as providing its diverse body of students with the opportunity to obtain an exceptional legal education and preparing graduates to serve their community and the profession with distinction.

The President is the corporation's Chief Executive Officer and reports to the Board of Directors of STCL Houston. The President's leadership responsibilities include all business matters, including public relations, contractual issues, development, and general institutional operations. Under this responsibility, the President is expected to develop and present to the Board the annual budget for school operations.

The Dean is the Chief Academic Officer of the law school. The Dean chairs the faculty and, consistent with faculty governance practices, formulates and directs the educational programs of the law school. These educational programs include faculty and academic staff selection, retention, promotion, and compensation; curriculum development and implementation; library operations; academic standards for admission, retention, advancement, and graduation of students; and all other academic affairs. Within the budget allocation for academic operations, the Dean establishes all fiscal priorities, including salaries, associate or assistant deans appointments, financial incentives, and distribution of resources to support all academic endeavors. The Dean's authority and responsibilities are defined with reference to applicable American Bar Association Standards for Approval of Law Schools.

The President and Dean is expected to exercise leadership consistent with the highest academic and scholarly standards over the faculty, professional and supporting academic employees, and students. The President and Dean must promote excellent institutional relationships with alumni, the judiciary and practicing bar, the broader educational community, and other constituencies of the law school. The President and Dean represents the law school to the American Bar Association Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, the Association of American Law Schools, all relevant academic accreditation organizations, other academic and professional organizations, and the local and civic communities.



Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The new President and Dean will be asked to address the following critical leadership issues, among others:

- **Shape the Future Through Strategic Planning**

One of the President and Dean's key priorities will be engaging in collaborative planning with the board, faculty, and key stakeholders to develop STCL Houston's next five-year strategic plan. This process must address legal education's evolving academic and financial environment—with a keen eye on the law school's place in the Greater Houston market and beyond. The plan will refine efforts to build upon and honor the school's mission and crystallize its identity and brand for long-term sustainability.

- **Support Academic Excellence and Student Success**

The President and Dean will lead and guide the further development of academic programs while encouraging and supporting faculty scholarship. The President and Dean will facilitate teaching excellence, cultivate collegial and constructive relations with and among faculty, and encourage faculty service. This will promote STCL Houston's reputation locally, nationally, and abroad.

- **Manage Effectively**

The President and Dean is responsible for building and maintaining a positive and productive organizational culture that encourages teamwork, trust, and tradition.

One of the President and Dean's primary leadership objectives will be to effectively manage the people, operations, and resources—and to assure compliance with current standards, regulations, and laws.

The President and Dean must ensure that the financial resources are prudently managed through effective annual budgeting and long-term financial planning.



- **Fundraise and Build Alumni Support**

The President and Dean, supported by the advancement team, will be responsible for cultivating major donors and realizing appropriate fundraising outcomes. The President and Dean will actively partner in all of the law school's advancement efforts, including alumni engagement, major gift drives, planned giving, and capital/endowment campaigns.

- **Collaborate with the Board of Directors**

It will be important for the President and Dean to develop an excellent working relationship with the Chair and members of the Board of Directors, to whom she or he directly reports.



Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The ideal candidate must embody an unwavering commitment to STCL Houston's mission; they must embrace the importance of practice-ready graduates and demonstrate a commitment to and achievement in advancing diversity and inclusion. The successful candidate will demonstrate empathy and an innate ability to recognize, reflect on, and address matters with nuance and finesse in all matters involving the law school, its people, and the community it serves. The candidate must be willing to safeguard the law school's proud culture and build upon the best of its history and traditions so that it may be enthusiastically propelled into its second century.

Additionally, the candidate should possess the following professional qualifications and personal characteristics:

Academic

A combination of excellent academic credentials and intellectual abilities sufficient to command the respect of faculty and alumni, the judiciary and practicing bar, the broader educational community, and other constituents of the law school, and a deep understanding of the challenges that legal education faces nationally and globally.

Leadership

Vision and imagination; record of exceptional leadership that indicates a proven ability to align vision with capability, capacity, and resources; demonstrated leadership and strength in creating and supporting an environment of continuous improvement; ability to inspire and guide diverse stakeholders; ability to generate sound ideas and champion the ideas of others; ability to assess risk, make difficult decisions, and effect change; commitment to consensus-building and shared governance; potential to be a thought leader and to contribute meaningfully to the national dialogue; and ability to serve as champion for institutional visibility and reputation.

Management

Evidence of successful executive or managerial experience sufficient to lead a complex institution; fiscal sophistication and analytical strength; experience in fiscal management sufficient to make wise choices in allocating resources for emerging and current needs and provide overall stewardship for the law school; ability to delegate smoothly and effectively; understanding of and appreciation for technology and its ability to enhance the academic enterprise and experience; demonstrated commitment to the professional development of staff and faculty; experience with a governing board; finesse in crisis management; and ability to attract, retain, and further develop superior faculty, staff, and student talent, as well as enlist and harness the strength of others who support the law school's mission.

Resource development

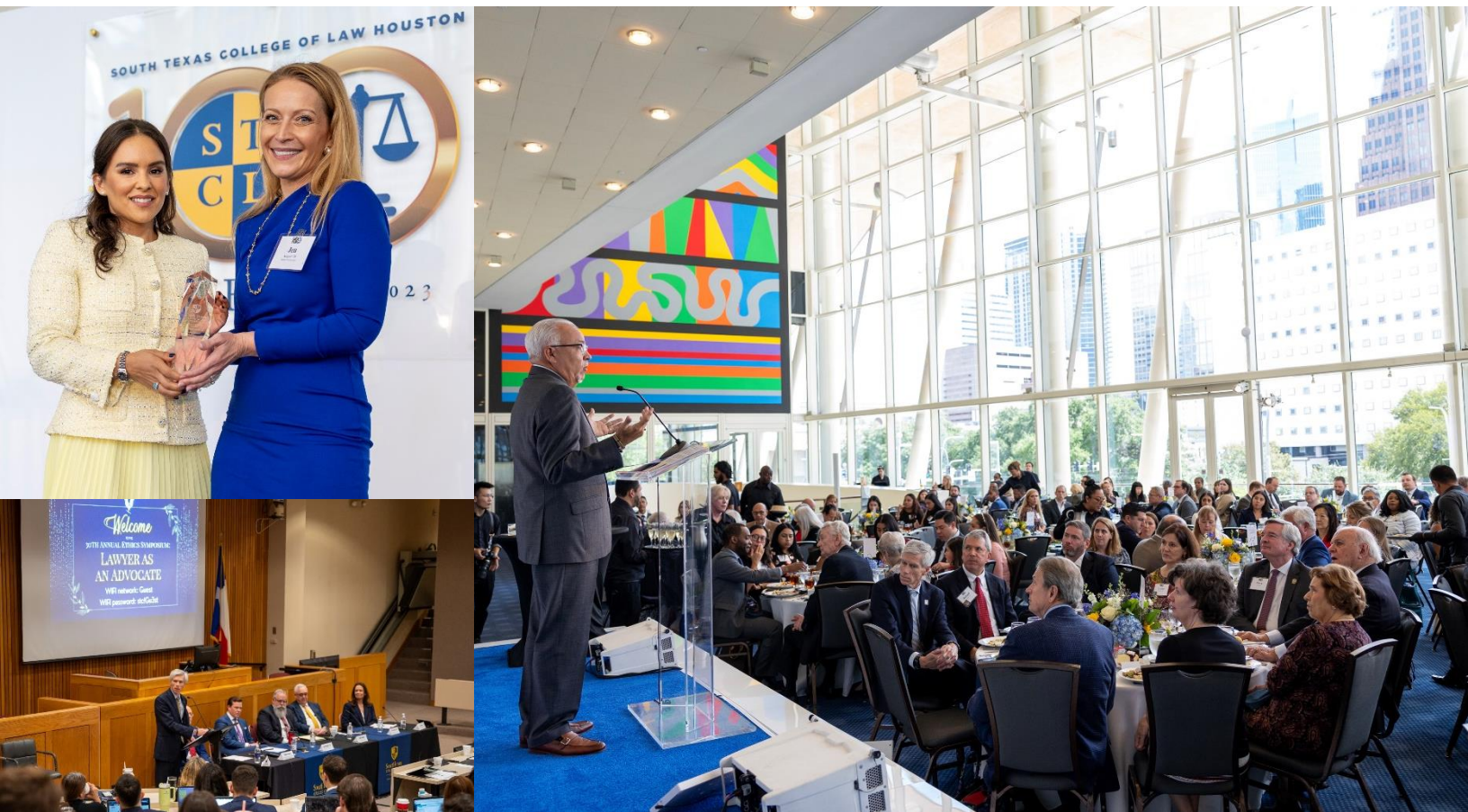
Capacity to be a successful fundraiser and to adapt to changes in the philanthropic landscape; understanding of the education marketplace and the academic and co-curricular expectations of students and families; and understanding of the forces driving law school enrollments and how those forces are manifested at standalone private institutions.

Communication

Ability to build trust through communication, transparency, and collaboration across a diverse community; capacity to engage, inspire, and connect with varied audiences, including but not limited to students and family, faculty and staff, and alumni and other friends of the law school; ability to listen skillfully and to lead authentic conversations; and capability to serve as a vigorous and compelling spokesperson and advocate for STCL Houston and its students.

Personal qualities

Strong core values, including impeccable integrity, sound judgment, and appropriate transparency; intellectual curiosity; genuine interest in students and their development and welfare; a secure and confident sense of self; comfort with being the face of the law school and with giving credit to others; ability to ask serious and insightful questions; comfort with complexity and critique; energy and stamina to commit to the intensity of the work with grace and tact; exceptional relationship-building skills; boldness with a balance of warmth, confidence, hospitality, and humility; approachability, personal accessibility, and eagerness to engage with others, especially students; seriousness of purpose but not of self; and a sense of humor.



About South Texas College of Law Houston



Overview

STCL Houston plays a vital role in the Houston community by developing skilled and ethical graduates who are committed to the highest ideals of the legal profession. Founded in 1923, the law school has more than 50 full-time faculty and 60 adjunct faculty who teach approximately 1,000 students annually, with over 16,000 proud alumni.

The law school is one of the largest in the nation, with a challenging curriculum and outstanding opportunities for both full-time and part-time students. STCL Houston's faculty regularly produces substantial high-quality scholarly work, evidenced by the publication of more than 125 books and 250 articles in a wide variety of well-respected law reviews and journals over the last decade. The law school also is devoted to maintaining a faculty and student body that reflects the rich diversity of the local community. STCL Houston students represent a broad spectrum of interests, skills, abilities, and cultural and professional backgrounds.

STCL Houston's mission is to provide this diverse body of students with the opportunity to obtain an exceptional legal education, preparing graduates to serve their communities and the profession with distinction.



STCL Houston is emerging as a leader in student quality and graduate outcomes and enjoying historic highs in post-graduate employment rates.

Other highlights of STCL Houston's successes include:

- A robust experiential education curriculum dedicated to practice-ready education and skill development:
 - The nationally ranked **Advocacy Program** allows students to develop the litigation skills required of successful lawyers. Named the “Best of the Decade,” STCL Houston's Advocacy teams currently hold 141 national championships and more than 20 Scribes brief awards. Additionally, the Advocacy Program offers an academic concentration in Texas Advocacy for students who want to set themselves apart in the field of litigation.
 - **The Frank Evans Center for Conflict Resolution** allows students to engage in negotiation, mediation, and arbitration training and competitions. STCL Houston students have won 25 national or international Dispute Resolution competitions since 2011.

- **The Randall O. Sorrels Legal Clinics** allow students to practice law under the supervision of attorneys in 20 clinic areas that are much needed in the Houston community. STCL Houston offers one of the nation's most comprehensive legal clinic programs. Over the year, the law school offers approximately 20 clinics addressing unmet civil legal needs of poor Texans, including Access to Justice — Landlord/Tenant; Access to Justice — Expunctions/Nondisclosure; Animal Law; Asylum/Human Trafficking; Domestic Violence; Estate Planning; Family Law: Advanced; Family Law: Basic; Guardianship; Immigration; Low-income Taxpayer; Medical-Legal Partnership; Patent; Probate; Trademark; and Veterans, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance.



- **The Legal Research and Writing Program** is one of the few in the nation with only tenured and tenure-track faculty, developing skills that turn students into some of the country's best legal writers.
- **The Harry L. Reed Oil and Gas Law Institute** offers students a curriculum that mirrors present-day legal work in mineral title examination, transactional practice, energy litigation, and other relevant practice areas.
- **The Transactional Practice Center** gives students firsthand experience completing complex corporate, energy, international, or real estate transactions. It was the first program in Texas where students can complete a multi-course sequence toward an academic concentration in transactional practice and earn a certificate.



- A comprehensive **Academic Success and Bar Readiness program and the Legal Writing Center support** South Texas students from orientation through the bar exam. This support system ensures that law students not only navigate the challenges of law school but also develop the skills necessary for success in the demanding field of law. These programs help lay a strong foundation in study skills, legal analysis, and academic excellence, ensuring long-term success for South Texas students.
- South Texas College of Law Houston has partnered with the Mays Business School at Texas A&M University and the Cameron Business School at the University of St. Thomas to offer **dual-degree programs** leading to the conferral of the Doctor of Jurisprudence degree and the Master of Business Administration degree. Both dual-degree programs allow students to earn both degrees in four years rather than the five years it would ordinarily take to earn both degrees independently.



- The **Online JD program** reflects the law school's commitment to innovation, accessibility, and inclusivity in legal education. This program, launched in the fall of 2023, continues the College's century-long academic excellence and adaptability tradition. By offering an American Bar Association-accredited JD degree online, the school is addressing a crucial need for flexible legal education aimed at benefiting working professionals and those with familial or community commitments. This initiative addresses the challenge of limited legal representation in underserved areas of Texas and elsewhere by widening access to an exceptional legal education.



- The **Benny Agosto, Jr. Diversity Center** offers the internal and external STCL Houston community an opportunity to engage in sustained dialogue and education to increase the depth of understanding about diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and social justice in the legal profession. It focuses on four key areas: 1. Education and professional development training, 2. Internal campus culture and climate, 3. External community engagement, and 4. Diversity representation. Among its many initiatives and programming are the monthly Professional Development DEI Workshop Series and the highly regarded annual Agosto Lecture featuring nationally recognized guests, including past speakers John Quiñones, veteran ABC and 20/20 news correspondent, and Derrick Johnson '97, NAACP President and Executive Director.

- South Texas has conducted a **Summer Abroad Program** for law students in Prague, Czech Republic. The program gives the students opportunities to travel abroad and take courses with a comparative or international focus, as required by ABA criteria for foreign summer programs. The classes take place at the Faculty of Law at Charles University, the Czech Republic's premier law school and the oldest law school in central Europe, founded in 1348. Students earn academic credit and gain a global perspective while engaging in activities inside and outside the classroom. The program typically runs for four weeks with long weekends built in, which allows students to travel to many cities in the Czech Republic and nearby countries.
- **The Wellness Program** serves as comprehensive support for the student community. The program is designed to address mental health concerns and other personal matters. Dedicated professionals are the primary liaison, providing direct and individual assistance and a vital link to essential resources, including local, state, and national services. The program features a proactive approach that includes educational workshops aimed at bolstering academic achievement, professional development, and overall well-being. Strategic advocacy efforts have secured approval for a dedicated wellness space on campus, offering students a designated environment for improving and maintaining wellness. By collaborating with various departments, the program ensures the integration of wellness tools and resources, creating a cohesive network within the larger campus community.

Additionally, STCL Houston has been recognized for the following:

- Best Law Schools for Hispanic Students 2023-24, *preLaw*
- Most Diverse Law Schools 2024, *preLaw*
- Top Schools for Online Offerings 2024, *prelaw*
- Leader in Tax Law Fall 2023, *prelaw*
- The law school has won 15 American Bar Association National Appellate Advocacy Championships, more than any other law school nationwide.
- The law school placed 3rd in the nation on the American Bar Association’s 2022-23 Competition Champions list.
- The Texas Access to Justice Commission awarded South Texas the 2022 Access to Justice Law School Commitment to Service Award in recognition of the law school’s extensive pro bono service. STCL Houston has received this prestigious award, which is open to all accredited law schools in Texas, *four times* in the 11 years it has been presented.





The Community

The Law School

South Texas was founded in 1923 by some of Houston's most visionary and forward-thinking community leaders, to meet the legal needs of burgeoning oil, timber, and banking businesses that were taking root in the city. First operating as part of the YMCA's educational commitment to communities, South Texas Law has been an independent institution of higher learning since 1964. The law school has grown from offering part-time courses at night taught by a part-time faculty to providing a robust full-time and part-time curriculum taught by an exceptional and committed full-time and adjunct faculty.

For more than a century, South Texas has been a law school that makes a difference—preparing more than 16,000 South Texas graduates who are ready to serve the citizens of Houston, the State of Texas, and every state in the country in the judiciary, governmental agencies, public offices, corporations, and law firms.

Houston, Texas

Houston is a can-do city where people can dream big and succeed. It is the fourth largest and most diverse city in the nation. Houston is an economic juggernaut that leads the nation in job creation, which drives one of the largest legal markets in the country.

An ideal location, the law school sits in downtown Houston, within walking distance of the city's courts, law firms, and Fortune 500 companies, and just a short drive from the Texas Medical Center and Houston's Energy Corridor. Legal professionals make up 1.6 percent of the population in Houston, which has more than 4,700 law firms. The proximity of the law school to the courthouses, law firms, and Fortune 500 companies provides an exceptional opportunity for South Texas students seeking internships, externships, and other real-world legal experience.

Energy corporations, equipment manufacturers, and suppliers make Houston the world's energy capital. Houston's Texas Medical Center is the world's largest healthcare and medical research complex. Houston is home to NASA's Johnson Space Center and is a leading center for groundbreaking work in nanotechnology, biotechnology, computing, and electronics.

More than 750 foreign firms are represented in Houston, and the city has the nation's third-largest number of foreign trade offices. The Port of Houston is the largest in the nation in terms of international tonnage handled and third in cargo value.

Houston is known not only for its thriving industry but also for its culture. It is one of the few U.S. cities with resident companies in theater, ballet, symphony, and opera, with exciting performances all year. Located downtown, the 17-block Theater District has eight performing arts organizations and more than 12,000 seats. Only New York City has more seats concentrated in one geographic area.

Houston also shows its devotion to the arts through a full complement of art museums and critically acclaimed galleries. The city is filled with unique, world-class museums and cultural landmarks. Houston's Museum District includes 18 institutions within walking distance of one another, offering a range of museums, galleries, and art and cultural institutions.

Professional sports teams provide a culture of a different kind, with the Astros (baseball), the Rockets (basketball), the Texans (football), and the Dynamo (soccer) all calling the city home. Houston regularly hosts major sporting events such as the Super Bowl, NCAA Final Four, MLB All-Star Game, NBA All-Star Weekend, USA Olympic qualifying events, international soccer matches, and USGA and PGA Tour events.

For those who love nature, Houston has much to offer. Houston has more parks than any other top-10 metropolitan area. The Houston Zoo is the second most visited zoo and is annually ranked among the top ten nationally. Excellent biking, hiking, camping, fishing, hunting, water sports, and nature treks are nearby and can be enjoyed year-round.

The New York Times says Houston is "one of the country's most exciting places to eat." Houston has over 10,000 restaurants representing more than 70 countries and American regions. There is a spectacular range of exceptional ethnic cuisines, fantastic seafood, and great barbecue.

On the personal finance front, a paycheck goes farther in Houston than in any other major metropolitan area. Housing is more affordable, and when considering the cost of living, Houston leads the nation in average pay per employee. Plus, Texas does not have a state income tax.

According to Charity Navigator, Houston sits near the top among major U.S. metropolitan areas in total philanthropic assets, the percentage of income given to charity, and the financial health of its largest charities. In 2015, Houston ranked number one for overall philanthropic culture.

Beautiful neighborhoods, churches, civic clubs, and schools are found around the city. Houston is a welcoming community that values the contributions of all its citizens. It is also a resilient community that knows how to work together when important tasks are at hand.

In short, Houston is a great place to live, work, and play.

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 STCL Houston in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by October 7, 2024.

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

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

STCLHoustonPresident@wittkieffer.com

STCL Houston is an equal employment opportunity institution and encourages applications and nominations of all qualified candidates. STCL does not discriminate based on sex or gender, sexual orientation, age, race, color, religion, national and ethnic origin, or disability in its hiring and employment practices, or in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other school-administered programs.