Invitation to Apply for the Position of

Dean

Washington and Lee University
School of Law

Washington and Lee University, one of the nation’s oldest, private, liberal arts institutions of higher education, located in Lexington, Virginia, is seeking an exceptional leader to become the next dean of the Washington and Lee University School of Law in the summer of 2012. W&L Law School is an exceptional, highly ranked, selective law school, committed to providing an extraordinary and innovative educational program, sustaining first-class legal scholarship, and enriching the public discourse of American and global society. The Dean will be expected to nurture, lead and inspire a community of faculty, students, staff, and alumni to pursue excellence in research, teaching, practice and service.

Since its founding in 1849, W&L Law School has been one of the most selective and well regarded law schools in America. Currently its 410 students represent 43 states and 14 foreign countries, and the school offers a remarkable student-to-faculty ratio of 9.5-to-1. Ranked nationally in the top 15% of all private and public law schools, W&L Law School has been a leader in the reform of legal education. The W&L Law School is committed to scholarship and teaching and preparing its students for a rapidly changing global environment, and it is seeking a Dean who shares that commitment and has the capacity and desire to assume a leadership role in its implementation.

The successful candidate for Dean will have the experience, intelligence and stamina to lead W&L Law School, build its resources, implement its vision for a rigorous and relevant legal education and nurture the unique and valuable sense of community that pervades the law school campus and makes W&L Law School stand out among its peer institutions.

The W&L Provost has engaged an 11-member Search Committee, composed of six faculty members, two staff members, two trustees and an alumni/ae leader, to conduct an extensive search to identify the most qualified candidates for the faculty’s and administration’s consideration. W&L has retained the executive search firm of Isaacson, Miller to provide consulting services for this critical search for W&L Law School’s Dean. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in strict confidence to
the firm as indicated at the end of this document. Additional information about W&L Law School can be found at its web site: http://law.wlu.edu.

The Washington and Lee Community

*I chose W&L Law because of its community, and what this strong sense of connection amongst both students and faculty would mean for my law school experience.*

- Negin Farahmand, 2L

Founded in 1749, Washington and Lee University has a history that predates that of the United States and the public service of both George Washington, who favored the college (then known as Liberty Hall) with an endowment in 1796, and Robert E. Lee, who served as the president of Washington College (as it was then named) following the Civil War. After Lee’s death in 1870 and his interment on the campus, the school was renamed to honor both these early leaders who were committed to scholarship and learning as vital elements in building a stronger nation.

Today W&L awards the degrees of Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Juris Doctor and Master of Laws, and carries an enrollment of 1,759 undergraduates in the College of Arts and Sciences and the Williams School of Commerce, Economics and Politics and 410 students in the School of Law. For its small size, the university boasts an impressive endowment of over $800 million. W&L is in the midst of a very ambitious $500 million capital campaign, one of the largest in the nation for a private liberal arts institution, with $324 million already raised.

The School of Law, also one of the first in the nation, was founded (as Lexington Law School) in 1849 and annexed to the university in 1866 during Lee’s tenure as president. Seven former presidents of the American Bar Association were graduates of W&L Law School, including Supreme Court Justice Lewis F. Powell, Jr., Democratic presidential nominee (1924) John W. Davis, and Robert J. Grey, Jr., a member of the Search Committee.

Currently W&L Law School has 35 full-time professors and 25 adjunct professors, and a student-to-faculty ratio of 9.5 to 1. The present first year class had a median LSAT score of 166 and consists of 144 students from 27 different states and 95 different undergraduate institutions. Thirty-seven percent of this class are women and 24% are minorities. Approximately 90% of students at W&L Law School receive financial assistance and about 60% receive some form of merit scholarship. The strengths of W&L Law School result in consistently high rankings. The latest *U.S. News and World Report* law school rankings place W&L Law School at the 30th position out of 200 ABA-accredited schools.

Washington and Lee University is located in the heart of Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley between the Blue Ridge on the east and the Allegheny Mountains on the west in the small, historic town of Lexington. The university is about a three hour drive from Washington, D.C., and a 45-minute drive from Roanoke. The state capital at Richmond is
about 135 miles away and Charlottesville is a 75-minute drive from Lexington. Several highly regarded institutions of higher education lie in close proximity to W&L and Lexington, including Virginia Tech, Virginia Military Institute, James Madison University, Mary Baldwin College, Sweet Briar College, Radford University, Hollins University, and the University of Virginia.

One of the distinguishing features of Washington and Lee University, including the law school, is the Honor System, which has been in place for over a century, and is enforced by the students to whom this responsibility has been delegated by the Trustees. The Honor System shapes the community and connects today’s students to their predecessors, forging a common bond that alumni/ae cite as remarkable and significant in their growth as scholars and citizens. In fact, many students choose W&L Law School over peer institutions primarily because they already observe the tenets of the Honor System and want to be part of a community that shares values of individual and collective responsibility, ethical behavior, and fundamental respect for others. In many ways, W&L represents an intellectual and ethical oasis where scholars teach and learn from each other, where honesty is the currency of exchange and where people care about the success of their colleagues. A successful Dean will have to understand and nurture this sense of community and respect by becoming part of it, physically, intellectually, and emotionally.

**W&L Law School as a Leader in Legal Education**

Among the top-tiered law schools with which W&L Law School is ranked, W&L stands out in several respects. First, it is the smallest law school in terms of enrollment compared to the other top-thirty ranked law schools. This means students know each other, faculty members know the students within the first few weeks of the first year, and over the course of three years of study, the bonds among students and professors become strong and long-lasting. The law school staff, who are responsible for admissions, financial aid, career placement, library resources, and student services, also have close connections with the students. The students and faculty are engaged in a learning experience that can be individualized and tailored for each student.

Second, unlike most of its peer institutions, W&L Law School is not in a large metropolitan area. It is not an urban law center. While far from being isolated, W&L Law School is a central part of a small university and intellectual community within a small and vibrant town of 7,000 people. The setting is beautiful and inspiring. The law school community is focused on its mission, and its energy is not depleted by the struggles of commuter congestion and pollution. W&L is an ideal spot for a rich learning experience.

Neither is W&L Law School an adjunct or simply one additional professional school within a large, complex university. The law school at W&L is the university’s only graduate school, and as such it holds special rank and place in the W&L community, as do its students and faculty and its dean. In many ways, the W&L Law School is a liberal arts law school within a liberal arts university. Its focus is on critical thinking, individual achievement, and life-long learning. No two students graduate from W&L Law School
with the same academic profile, and learning happens both within and outside the formal classrooms.

As a result of its small size, non-urban location, and status within an exceptional private liberal arts university, W&L Law School nurtures a campus culture of collegiality, cooperation and friendliness. Instead of the legendary intense competition and stress that characterize the law school experience for many students, the students at W&L Law School are encouraged to collaborate to ensure that all succeed. Their development as scholars and legal professionals is also shaped by a broad range of activities in several clinical and externship programs. They include the much heralded Black Lung Benefits Clinic for coal miners, the Tax Clinic, the Community Legal Practice Clinic, the nationally recognized Virginia Capital Case Clearinghouse, and the Criminal Justice Clinic.

The intellectual life of the law school is vibrant and engaging. W & L Law School faculty participate – at the highest levels – in debates over national and international policy and law reform, and also undertake cutting-edge interdisciplinary research. W & L law professors publish books with leading presses, including Oxford, Cambridge and Duke, along with trade presses and educational presses, not to mention many articles in leading law reviews and peer-reviewed journals. In recent years, the scholarship of several faculty members has won prestigious awards or commendations from a variety of organizations, including the Association of American Law Schools, the American Society of International Law, and the International Association of Penal Law. Faculty are deeply involved in national policy initiatives such as health care, frequently are consulted in media outlets, testify before legislators, serve as experts in litigation (including complex corporate matters), and their work has been cited by an array of courts, including the Supreme Court of the United States, various Circuit Courts of Appeal, the Supreme Court of Canada, and the United Kingdom High Court. Eight faculty members – roughly one quarter of the total teaching faculty – have been elected to the American Law Institute. Many serve leadership roles in a wide array of professional associations, and by invitation travel world-wide to present their research and recommendations.

The law school’s intellectual mission is enriched by two multi-faceted programs. The Transnational Law Institute prepares students for a globalized legal practice through internships, externships, guest lectures, and interactions with visiting professors, as well as classroom course work. The Frances Lewis Law Center also supports conferences, an energizing and robust invited speakers’ series, and symposia at the school, including in the past year widely lauded events on international treaty arbitration and the law of restitution.


W&L is not only “punching above its weight” in terms of the depth and breadth of legal education it offers its students, but, perhaps unexpectedly, for such a small law school,
W&L is leading the way in the reform of legal education in the 21st century as well. Virtually all the leading law schools in America are debating and pondering measures to modernize legal education to ensure that it meets the needs of the students, prospective employers, the larger legal community and society at large. W&L Law School has taken a bold step in that direction by redesigning the third year curriculum for its students. This reform, which collaterally impacts the first and second year curricula as well, was considered carefully by the faculty and a distinguished group of external advisors from the judiciary, the practicing bar, business, journalism and the academy.

Committed to a liberal arts model of legal education, W&L Law School was one of the first law schools to introduce small-section legal writing classes and to require an administrative law course, a professional responsibility course and a transnational law course in the foundational first year of law school. During the second year, students broaden their knowledge of the law, selecting from a wide array of more specialized and rigorous courses, and author a substantive research paper. This sets the stage for the school’s groundbreaking third-year program, which combines the demanding study of legal doctrine and analysis with simulated and actual practice experience, a trail-blazing innovation that has been hailed by many in the legal profession and the legal academy.

The new third year curriculum is driven by educational considerations and designed to integrate legal theory, legal doctrine, and the development of professional judgment, ethical sensibilities and a sense of professional identity. The curriculum reform has upgraded the quality of the third-year experience in every respect, including intellectual content and rigor, intensity of evaluation and feedback and professional development. As a result, W&L Law School graduates will be better prepared intellectually, ethically and experientially for legal practice and the profession of law.

Challenges and Opportunities for the Dean

W&L Law School is strong and innovative with all the necessary elements – distinguished faculty, top students, active alumni and dedicated staff – to enhance its standing and impact in the world of legal education. Radical change is not needed or desired for the school, but there are five significant challenges and opportunities that require intelligence, energy, perseverance and creativity from the next Dean. Common to all five of these challenges and opportunities is the need for a leader with the experience and innate capacity to build strong, mutually rewarding relationships that benefit the institution. Relational skills, derived from exceptional emotional intelligence and commitment to the common mission, are sine qua non in meeting these challenges and securing the promise of these opportunities.

**Fund-raising.** The demand for financial resources for scholarships, faculty hires, library acquisitions, student services, support for faculty research, travel, conferences and symposia, and the maintenance and improvements in the physical structure and infrastructure will require increased revenues. Securing these enhanced revenues by increasing the student census or raising tuition costs and student fees is not a desirable option. The Dean needs to be prepared experientially and emotionally to engage in the
kind of robust fund-raising efforts that can provide immediate support as well as secure the school’s long-term viability. To meet this challenge the successful Dean will be expected to build relationships with alumni and other individual donors and with foundations and other institutional donors who share W&L Law School’s vision and support its mission.

Promoting Career and Professional Development for Graduates. In recent years, there has been a contraction in the legal marketplace, resulting in a loss of jobs and a reduction in the hiring of new law school graduates. In 2011, there was a decrease in the number of applicants to law schools. These changes will pose challenges for all law schools. W&L Law School expects its new Dean to be sensitive to these changes and do everything possible to ensure that despite these changes the quality of students attending Washington and Lee continues to improve, and the employment prospects and opportunities for students upon graduation are enhanced. While the Dean cannot change the course of the national economy or the responses to economic changes by the legal profession, the Dean can prioritize student career placements and engage in deliberate strategies to develop those opportunities. Again, the success of the Dean in meeting this challenge is dependent on her/his capacity to build relationships with alumni of the law school and the larger university who care deeply about W&L and its graduates, with judges, and with leaders in the legal profession at large and small law firms, in government and in the independent, nonprofit sector.

Faculty Development, Retention and Recruitment. The W&L law faculty is committed to a scholarly environment that is intellectually vibrant and wide-ranging in fields of study and interdisciplinary perspectives. It is also committed to producing and supporting work that has a strong impact on national and international law reform, research and policymaking. The Dean must share these commitments and actively support and encourage the development of faculty members in their roles as scholars, teachers and clinicians. The Dean will also have the opportunity to participate in the hiring of a substantial number of new faculty members who embrace a commitment to scholarly excellence as well as rigorous teaching and professional development. To build the faculty needed to ensure W&L Law School’s future strength, the Dean must make faculty retention a priority, leading the effort to provide an environment in which faculty flourish individually and collectively and in which faculty members are committed to the law school.

Collaborative Leadership. Sustaining and nurturing a strong, cohesive law school community within, and as an integral part of, the larger university by synthesizing the talents and contributions of the faculty, administrators, students, alumni and donors are critical challenges for the next W&L Law School Dean. The law school needs a leader who can implement the plans and strategies formulated over the past few years, and reconnect all elements of the school, ensuring that all stakeholders succeed. In the words of a student, “I want a dean who cares about my success.” W&L thrives on a collegial, consensual and shared governance model where faculty input is encouraged before critical decisions are made. The administrative and support staff are looking for a team builder and leader who appreciates their commitment to the university and helps them
succeed. And the alumni and other contributors seek an attachment to the school that transcends their role as donors. The next Dean has an unparalleled opportunity in this regard to build on the W&L tradition. She or he will succeed in meeting this challenge by listening to students, consulting with faculty, collaborating with university colleagues, and working with alumni leaders to strengthen the bonds those stakeholders have for the law school. Obviously, candidates with exceptional, proven skills at building relationships are most compelling for this role.

**Communicating the “W&L Narrative.”** As any reader of this Invitation can readily observe, there is a rich and very compelling narrative about Washington and Lee and its School of Law. The themes of history, community, scholarly excellence, innovative legal education reform, stewardship and service create a rich narrative that resonates with the best of the American liberal arts tradition within the context of a professional academy. The challenge for the Dean of the W&L Law School is in delivering this narrative to various constituencies from prospective students to rising stars in the legal academy to philanthropists and to the legal profession in general. The Dean should have the experience, skills, energy and motivation to exploit this exceptional story. Without being boastful or competitive, the future Dean should be bold and assertive in promoting the school so that when a potential donor or student, employer or faculty member thinks about any of those thematic elements, she or he immediately thinks of W&L. To succeed in meeting this challenge the next Dean has to know how to build relationships that provide her or him with opportunities to convey the W&L narrative. In addition, recognizing that a single person, no matter how talented, cannot do this on her or his own, the Dean needs to educate and inspire others on the faculty, development staff, students and alumni to use every opportunity to tell the story – from broadcasts to blogs. This is especially true in discussing the curriculum innovations. These important, deliberate reforms should be explained by the Dean and other W&L emissaries, not simply by external observers. A Dean who confronts this challenge as a campaign to define the law school would be exceptionally successful in meeting this and all the other challenges as well.

**Qualifications and Experience**

W&L Law School is looking for a Dean with exceptional academic leadership credentials who can meet the challenges cited above and inspire others to excel and do their best work. The Search Committee understands that no single candidate will have all of the qualifications listed below, but it is seeking candidates with a strong and impressive combination of the following experiences, attitudes and abilities:

- A strong commitment to academic excellence that inspires and supports the scholarship of others.

- Excellent fundraising skills and experience and the capacity to attract philanthropic investments in the academic enterprise.

- Capacity to identify, recruit and retain distinguished faculty for the school.
• A collegial orientation that values community, consensus and commitment to the success of students, faculty, staff and the common educational mission.

• An understanding of and commitment to developing a creative, rigorous, and relevant legal education that prepares students for the highest levels of professional competence in the practice of law in a global environment.

• Capacity to collaborate effectively with university administration, trustees, and alumni, as well as with colleagues in the academic universe, and the local, national and international legal community.

• A commitment to the value of diversity and the capacity to develop and nurture an inclusive community for all students, faculty and staff.

• Superior communication skills and the capacity to promote the mission, achievements, and promise of W&L Law School among a variety of audiences.

• Ability to manage human and financial resources wisely with the capacity to encourage input and make decisions in a transparent and equitable manner.

• Stamina, energy and a work ethic that models expectations for all stakeholders.

• Highest standards of integrity, honesty, and professional ethics.

• An approachable, engaging and optimistic personality.

Application Procedure

Please send a current *curriculum vitae* and cover letter in strict confidence to:

Tim McFeeley, Vice President
Gail Gregory, Managing Associate
Isaacson, Miller

Email: [4254@IMSearch.com](mailto:4254@IMSearch.com)
1875 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 710
Washington, D.C. 20009
Phone: (202) 682-1504
Fax: (202) 682-1272

Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

*Washington and Lee University is an equal opportunity employer and is strongly committed to building a diverse and inclusive community.*