



Vice President for Legal Affairs & General Counsel Profile

January 2026

University of
La Verne

Executive Summary



The University of La Verne (ULV) invites nominations and applications for the position of Vice President for Legal Affairs & General Counsel (VPLA & GC). The VPLA & GC will join a campus culture that reflects a deep and abiding dedication to students, to one another, and to the broader community, and will find the University to be a rewarding and fulfilling place in which to work. This position offers an exciting opportunity to serve a thriving university 35 miles east of Los Angeles that provides a distinctive and relevant educational experience to a diverse population of students, preparing them for successful careers and a commitment to lifelong learning across the liberal arts and professional programs.

The University of La Verne is seeking an experienced and forward-thinking legal executive who is eager to provide strategic counsel and leadership in a dynamic environment,

while balancing competing demands and advancing institutional priorities. Reporting directly to President Risa Dickson, the VPLA & GC will be a trusted advisor who works closely with senior leadership and key stakeholders to support the University's mission, strategy, and operations. The VPLA & GC will play a central role in guiding legal strategy and risk management, providing oversight and counsel across a wide range of matters including governance, compliance, contracts, employment, real estate, litigation, and regulatory affairs.

The ideal candidate will bring the judgment, integrity, and collaborative approach necessary to support the University of La Verne's long-term success and values, along with the ability to lead and mentor others and to work effectively within a shared governance environment.

The University of La Verne – An Overview



About the University

Founded in 1891, the University of La Verne is composed of the [College of Arts and Sciences](#), the [College of Business](#), the [LaFetra College of Education](#), the [College of Health and Community Well-Being](#), and the [College of Law and Public Service](#), [several regional campuses](#) across Southern California, and robust [online offerings](#). Scholastic opportunities abound, thanks to more than 60 undergraduate programs, more than 20 master's degrees, six doctorates, and over 20 credential and certificate programs.

Across all of the colleges, ULV's approximately [4,700 traditional-age and adult learners](#) help make the federally designated Hispanic-Serving Institution one of the most diverse universities in the nation. Nearly half of the traditional undergraduates are first-generation students – the first in their immediate families to attend College. More than 70 percent of University of La Verne students receive some form of financial aid. University of La Verne employs more than 200 full-time professors and has a 14:1 student-to-faculty ratio. The average class size is 16 students.

The University is also a pioneer in adult education, offering accelerated programs for adult learners at the La Verne Campus, [regional campuses](#), and [online](#).

University of La Verne is dedicated to the belief that a quality, values-based education enriches the human condition by engendering community engagement, scholarly accomplishment, and professionalism. Along with encouraging diversity, the University focuses on the individual as evidenced by its small class sizes. Professors are personally engaged and committed to helping students achieve their academic and professional goals.

University of La Verne is home to 85,000 alumni worldwide and is ranked 7th for social mobility by *U.S. News & World Report*. The University was also named an "Opportunity University" in 2025 by the Carnegie Foundation, a designation reserved for institutions who combine high levels of access to low-income and underrepresented students with strong alumni earnings outcomes.

The University of La Verne has been accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges – Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) since 1955. The most recent WSCUC Commission actions were in February 2024 and May 2025, for which ULV submitted an Interim Report to the WSCUC Commission on November 1, 2025. The next Offsite Review will be in Fall 2027 with an Accreditation Visit in Spring 2028.

The University of La Verne – Mission & Values



Mission and Values

The University of La Verne offers a distinctive and relevant educational experience to a diverse population of traditional-age, adult, and graduate learners, preparing them for successful careers and a commitment to life-long learning across the liberal arts and professional programs.

Core Values of the University of La Verne:

- **Ethical Reasoning:** The University affirms a value system that actively supports peace with justice, respect of individuals and humanity, and the health of the planet and its people. Students are reflective about personal, professional, and societal values that support professional and social responsibility.
- **Diversity and Inclusivity:** The University supports a diverse and inclusive environment where students recognize and benefit from the life experiences and viewpoints of other students, faculty, and staff.
- **Lifelong Learning:** The University promotes intellectual curiosity and the importance of lifelong learning. It teaches students how to learn, to think critically, to be capable of original research, and to access and integrate information to prepare them for continued personal and professional growth.
- **Civic and Community Engagement:** The University asserts a commitment to improving and enhancing local, regional, and global communities.

Diversity Statement

The University supports a diverse and inclusive environment where students recognize and benefit from the life experiences and viewpoints of other students, faculty, and staff. Diversity is an active and intentional practice that supports difference and multiplicity to expand knowledge, educate capable citizens, develop the whole person, and serve our local and global communities. Promoting and sustaining diversity is a commitment to educational quality and the creation of positive, respectful learning communities.

The University of La Verne – An Overview

Academics

At the University of La Verne, one's education extends far beyond the classroom and even graduation. Through experiential learning, ULV students continue to grow personally and professionally years after degree completion. [Academic programs](#) are offered at the main campus in the city of La Verne, online, and at regional campuses at both traditional and accelerated paces, so students can pursue degrees in a variety of formats and time frames.

The average student-faculty ratio is 14:1 and 66 percent of classes typically have no more than 19 students, which allows professors to focus on putting the student first. La Verne faculty are experts and renowned scholars that work closely with students, many times one-on-one, to provide personal attention.

There are five colleges at the University of La Verne:

- [The College of Arts and Sciences](#) offers over 50 majors, minors, and certificates.
- [The College of Business](#) offers several undergraduate majors and minors, as well as seven masters programs and a doctorate in Business Administration (DBA).
- [The LaFetra College of Education](#) includes several undergraduate and master's degrees, as well as doctorates in educational and organizational leadership (EdD).
- [The College of Health and Community Well-Being](#) offers 10 degree options, including four undergraduate programs, five masters' degrees, and the doctorate in clinical psychology (PsyD).
- [The College of Law and Public Service](#) offers the Juris Doctor (JD) degree at its campus in Ontario, CA, and includes [dual-degree options](#) with business administration, public administration, and educational leadership. Master's and doctoral (DPA) degrees in Public Administration are also offered through CLPS.



In addition to the main campus, University of La Verne also has [regional campuses](#) in Bakersfield, Santa Clarita, and Naval Base Ventura County. Classes at regional campuses are accelerated and flexible, with most courses meeting in the evenings and on weekends. Many programs are also offered [online](#), giving adult learners even more options to earn a degree while still working.

Academics at ULV are centered around theory and practice. That's why professors give students the opportunities to apply concepts in real-world scenarios. The University strives to achieve educational excellence by continuously strengthening resources and enhancing facilities and technology to give students hands-on learning experiences.

Furthermore, using one's education to give back to the community is a core value at the University of La Verne. Students donate time and academic expertise to the community, helping local businesses and others in need.



The University of La Verne – An Overview

Inclusive Excellence and Mission Integration

The University of La Verne prides itself in being reflective of the diversity of Southern California. Approximately 80 percent of the University's nearly 4,700 students come from diverse backgrounds, and the U.S. Department of Education has designated the University as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). With more than 85,000 alumni, the University fulfills a critical community function in educating students from underserved populations, many of whom are the first generation in their family to attend College.

Diversity is an integral part of the University of La Verne. It is highlighted both in the University Mission Statement and is one of its four Core Values (Diversity and Inclusivity).

The [Office of Inclusive Excellence and Mission Integration \(OIEMI\)](#) leads and supports initiatives that foster a mission-driven culture at the University of La Verne. It creates opportunities to define, assess, and advance the University's core values—Ethical Reasoning, Diversity and Inclusivity, Lifelong Learning, and Civic and Community Engagement.

OIEMI champions programs and activities that educate and inspire the campus community to value diversity of thought and lived experience. Through these efforts, the office cultivates cultural engagement, fosters a strong sense of belonging, challenges systems of privilege and oppression, and builds intercultural competence.

Guided by an equity-centered and mission-focused approach, OIEMI develops initiatives that deepen shared understanding of, commitment to, and action in support of the University's distinctive mission and its designation as a Minority-Serving Institution (MSI). The office works to strengthen equity and inclusion, enhance collaborative relationships, and create an environment that affirms diverse cultures. It also advocates for policies, procedures, and opportunities that ensure equity and belonging across the University of La Verne community.



The University of La Verne – An Overview



Board of Trustees

The [Board of Trustees](#) is the governing body of the University of La Verne. As stewards of the institution, the board approves the budget to fulfill the University's educational mission and ensure its future.

Leadership

The 20th President of the University of Laverne, [Risa E. Dickson](#), PhD, brings nearly four decades of experience in higher education. Prior to joining the University of La Verne as interim provost in 2024, Dr. Dickson held executive roles at California State University, San Bernardino, The University of Hawai'i System Office, Palo Alto University and the University of Toledo.

Dr. Dickson has been in leadership in many different types of higher education institutions: a regional comprehensive public institution, a state system office, a small primarily graduate-focused institution, a large research university, and now a mid-sized private institution. Her work has focused on building sustainable organizational and financial structures, strategic planning, collaborative governance, and student

success geared toward supporting first-generation and underrepresented student populations. An American Council on Education Fellow in 2008-09, Dr. Dickson spent the year at Pitzer College where she explored consortial models, advancement, and alumni relations and development.

Dr. Dickson earned her Master of Arts and PhD in interpersonal and organizational communication from the University of Southern California, and her bachelor's in communication theory from California State University, Northridge.

University of La Verne typically operates on an annual institutional operating budget of \$200 million. Approximately \$69.7 million in Institutional Financial Aid is awarded annually to students. Ninety-eight percent of students receive institutional grant aid, and 93 percent of those who applied demonstrated financial need. The average institutional grant aid exceeded \$8,742 per student for the Fall 2025 cohort. Merit awards range from \$8,500 - \$30,500 for 2024-25 and are awarded to select, highly qualified students in each class.

The University of La Verne – An Overview

Athletics

Approximately 30 percent of traditional-age undergraduates participate in intercollegiate athletics annually. An NCAA Division III member, ULV's athletic program is dedicated to developing scholar-athletes who demonstrate a commitment to academic and athletic success. Intercollegiate athletics are an integral part of the overall college experience, engaging the campus community and establishing a sense of spirit and pride while promoting a healthy lifestyle and fitness of mind and body.

Additionally, ULV Leopards or “Leos” engage in significant and qualitative community service, while earning academic results that meet or exceed those of the general student population. A member of the Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, ULV fields 18 teams (nine men's, nine women's).



La Verne and Southern California

At the University of La Verne, students enjoy a small town experience on the edge of one of the most vibrant communities in the world. The city of La Verne provides students a safe and calm oasis for concentrated learning; at the same time, the cultural activities, natural wonders, and career opportunities of Southern California lie only a short car, bus, or train ride away.

The city of La Verne (founded 1887) and the University of La Verne (founded 1891) grew up together, nestled in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. We're located in the heart of a quaint downtown (“D Street”) where students can enjoy pleasant restaurants and cafes just steps from campus. Larger shopping centers can be found about a mile away.

Students can engage with nature easily; local trails abound in the foothills and nearby regional parks. SoCal's famous beaches are located about an hour away, and desert exploration to the east and snowball fights to the north are easily accessible with a short drive along historic Route 66. Just be sure to pack your hiking gear.

Downtown Los Angeles is about 35 miles away, and students without cars can use the nearby Metrolink train line to travel to L.A., San Diego, Santa Barbara, and all points in between. Tour Downtown La Verne [here](#).

The Role of Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel



As the University's chief legal officer and a member of the President's Cabinet, the Vice President for Legal Affairs & General Counsel will shape and safeguard the University of La Verne's mission-driven culture by:

- Delivering proactive, strategic counsel on complex legal, regulatory, and policy matters.
- Partnering with internal clients—President, Board of Trustees, Provost and other members of senior leadership, Deans, HR, Student Affairs, Title IX, Finance, Facilities, Research—to anticipate and manage legal risk.
- Leading the Office of General Counsel (including a paralegal) and, when needed, coordinating cost-effective litigation defense with outside counsel.
- Championing a culture of preventive law: designing training, policy frameworks, and compliance programs that reduce disputes and reinforce ethical decision making.
- Joining a culture that reflects supreme dedication to students, each other and the broader society. The VPLA & GC will find the culture to be one that gives rise to a rewarding and fulfilling place in which to work.

Leadership Agenda

A Value-Added Strategic Partner

The VPLA & GC will offer strategic advice and partner with the Board and President's Executive Cabinet to advance University initiatives that reflect due consideration of legal issues associated with such actions. The VPLA & GC will assist in risk management and mitigate the likelihood of litigation with an eye toward best policies and best practices. As the VPLA & GC manages a variety of legal matters and transactions, they will quickly become viewed as a candid, value added partner.

Preventative and Compliance-Oriented Legal Advice

The VPLA & GC will serve as a resource for constituent groups across campus in areas such as Human Resources, Grants and Contracts, Title IX, and Student Affairs to ensure that policies and practices are compliant with all legal and regulatory obligations and applied in ways that are clear and consistent. As needed, the VPLA & GC will provide updates on changes in California or federal law that could impact the university's operations.

Stability and Efficiency

The University is emerging from a period of significant leadership transition. The VPLA & GC will contribute to institutional stability by ensuring that the General Counsel's office is responsive, effective at representing the University during administrative or judicial proceedings, and able to work closely with outside counsel in ways that serve the interests of the University while containing overall legal costs. Additionally, contract approval and management are areas where the VPLA & GC will have an opportunity to assist with policy development and process streamlining. Finally, the VPLA & GC will have the opportunity to assess the need for technological and other investments that will make the office more efficient.

External Relations

The VPLA & GC will facilitate the establishment and continuance of appropriate and cooperative relationships between the University and external organizations by serving as the University's liaison with counsel for other universities, city, state and federal agencies, and foundation and community partners.

The Role of Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel



Specific Duties

Strategic Counsel & Governance

- Advise President, Cabinet, and Board on major decisions (governance, finance, crisis response, public relations)
- Prepare quarterly reports for Trustees on litigation, risk, and compliance.
- Monitor California legislative and regulatory developments; recommend policy responses.
- Provide preventive legal advice and guidance.

Policy Development, Risk Management & Compliance

- Draft, review, and update policies, handbooks, and governance documents (e.g., conduct code, Title IX, ADA, FERPA, faculty handbook).
- Oversee enterprise risk assessments, compliance audits, and investigations. Advise on breach response plans, vendor agreements, business and IT governance policies.
- Coordinate with IT on risk mitigation and incident response.
- Design and deliver training on preventive law: non-discrimination, wage/hour, privacy, ethics.

Contracts, Licensing & Intellectual Property

- Negotiate and review contracts, MOUs, leases, construction, purchasing, and sponsored-program agreements.
- Manage trademarks, copyrights, software licenses, technology transfer, and IP commercialization.
- Advise on procurement law and real-estate transactions.

Litigation & Outside Counsel Management

- Oversee pre-litigation and claim mitigation.
- Oversee defense of claims (employment, civil rights,

student/faculty disputes, ADA, Title IX) with insurers.

- Select, supervise, and budget outside-counsel engagements.
- Represent the University in administrative and arbitration proceedings.

Employment Law & HR Partnership

- Counsel on faculty/staff employment, organized employee relations, performance management, terminations, workplace investigations, ADA and workplace regulations and laws.
- Ensure compliance with California and federal statutes: FLSA, FEHA, Title VII, FMLA, Cal-OSHA.

Cross-Campus Collaboration & Communications

- Serve as legal resource for Student Affairs, Athletics, IT, Facilities, Finance, and Sponsored Programs.
- Partner with Strategic Marketing and Communications on public-facing legal messaging.
- Build rapport with community stakeholders and regulators.

Special Projects & Other Duties

- Staff ad-hoc Presidential or Trustee committees.
- Lead targeted initiatives as needed.
- Contribute to the overall success of the University by performing other duties and responsibilities as assigned by the University President.

Qualifications

Minimum Qualifications

- Juris Doctor from an accredited law school
- Membership in good standing in the State Bar of California or the ability to be admitted within one year of employment.
- Minimum 7 years of experience in legal affairs within higher education or similarly complex organizations, including some familiarity with California law.
- Ability to develop and implement effective strategies for handling complex University legal issues.
- Demonstrated expertise in risk assessment, policy drafting, and compliance training.
- Excellent oral advocacy, negotiation, and written-communication skills.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality, exercise sound ethical judgment, and build consensus across diverse constituencies.
- Knowledge of best practices in academic and corporate governance.
- Skilled in translating complex legal issues into practical guidance.
- Proven project-management capabilities and attention to detail.
- Track record of developing and delivering engaging legal risk training.
- Commitment to inclusive excellence, community engagement, and ethical leadership.



Preferred Qualifications

- 10 or more years of progressively responsible legal experience, including in-house counsel or general counsel roles at a private or public university.
- 5 or more years of experience with California law.
- Litigation experience in employment, student conduct, Title IX, ADA, or civil rights matters.
- Experience in contract review, development, and negotiations.
- Experience advising governing boards and senior executives.
- Experience leading preventive law programs and delivering engaging risk-management training.
- Experience supporting or advising on collective bargaining and labor relations.
- High emotional intelligence, political savvy, and interpersonal dexterity.
- Familiarity with gifts/development law, immigration issues, tax/payroll, and environmental/regulatory compliance.

Procedure for Candidacy



Compensation and Benefits

Salary Range

Minimum: \$250,000

Maximum: \$325,000

Benefits Summary

Applicants, please note that actual compensation is determined by several factors that are unique to each candidate, including but not limited to job-related skills, depth of experience, certifications, relevant education or training, and specific work location, among others. The offered wage or salary is only one aspect of an employee's total compensation.

Benefits include a comprehensive health and wellness plan, tuition remission program for employee, spouse, and dependent children, a generous contribution to the University's 403B retirement plan, and a generous time off plan.

Employment is contingent upon successful completion and clearance of a background check and employment verification.

Applications and Nominations

To apply for the position of Vice President for Legal Affairs & General Counsel, candidates are requested to submit:

- a resume or curriculum vitae
- a letter of interest that addresses the qualifications and leadership priorities in the profile
- contact information for five references (to be contacted at a later date with the candidate's permission)

Application materials should be submitted to the AGB

Search application portal: bit.ly/3JWKIMD

The search will remain open until filled.

Nominations and expressions of interest for the position of Vice President for Legal Affairs & General Counsel are encouraged. Please direct them to LaVerneGC@agbsearch.com or to the AGB search consultants listed below:

Frederick V. Moore, JD, MBA
Senior Executive Search Consultant
fred.moore@AGBSearch.com
712.299.2544

Kimberly Templeton, JD
Principal
kimberly.templeton@AGBSearch.com
540.761.9494

Elizabeth Alvarado
Search Associate
elizabeth.alvarado@agbsearch.com

To learn more about University of La Verne, visit: laverne.edu

In accordance with the requirements and prohibitions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX"), Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and other federal and California laws, the University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ethnic origin, ancestry, citizenship, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity and expression), marital status, age, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic characteristics, military and veteran status, or any other characteristic or status protected by applicable law as to the admission or enrollment of any student, or its educational programs and activities; the employment of any member of the faculty or staff; the selection and treatment of volunteers or unpaid interns; or to the election of any officer or trustee of the University.