

SEARCH PROFILE:

SYSTEM ATTORNEY



EASTERN
NEW MEXICO
UNIVERSITY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE OPPORTUNITY	3
ABOUT EASTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY	4
PORTALES, NEW MEXICO	6
LEADERSHIP	7
POSITION SUMMARY	7
LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND PRIORITIES	8
REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS	10
PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS	10
SALARY, BENEFITS AND WORK SCHEDULE	11
APPLICATION AND NOMINATION PROCEDURE	11



THE OPPORTUNITY

Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU) invites applications and nominations for the position of System Attorney (SA). This is a distinctive opportunity for an attorney interested in serving a public higher education system committed to student success, institutional collaboration, and service to the communities of eastern New Mexico.

The SA will provide legal and operational support across the ENMU System, working closely with university administrators, human resources professionals, campus leaders, and the institution's outside General Counsel. Reporting to the Executive Director of Governance and Compliance/System CHRO, the SA will play an important role in identifying and addressing legal and regulatory issues, reviewing contracts and institutional policies,

supporting employee and student relations matters when legal considerations arise, and helping the University navigate an increasingly complex regulatory environment.

This position offers an opportunity for an attorney to become deeply engaged in the operations of a public university system while developing broad experience across employment, contracts, policy, compliance, administrative matters, and higher education law.

The SA is an internal institutional resource and liaison but does not serve as the University's General Counsel. Matters requiring formal legal advice or representation are referred to and managed in coordination with ENMU's outside General Counsel.

The SA is expected to start January 4, 2027, or sooner.



ABOUT EASTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY

For more than 90 years, ENMU has prepared students for careers, advanced study, leadership, and service. ENMU is the state's largest regional comprehensive university and serves traditional-age students, adult learners, and organizations through undergraduate, graduate, online, and workforce-oriented programs.

ENMU combines the personal attention of a student-centered university with the academic opportunities of a comprehensive institution. The University emphasizes accessible and affordable education, strong relationships between students and faculty, and educational programs designed to help students achieve their professional and personal goals.

Affordability is central to ENMU's identity and mission. ENMU is among the most affordable four-year institutions in New Mexico and is positioned among the lower-cost public universities in the Southwest.

At the heart of ENMU is a conviction that education can transform individual lives, families, communities, and the region it serves.

EASTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY MISSION

Eastern New Mexico University's mission is to provide a high-quality educational experience across its programs of study within an engaging and supportive learning environment.

ENMU fulfills that mission by:

- Preparing students for careers and advanced study;
- Promoting citizenship, leadership skills, and values;
- Promoting primary and applied scholarship;
- Supporting excellence in teaching, learning, and research;
- Empowering students to respond successfully to a rapidly changing world; and
- Employing faculty and staff who value student success and organizational collaboration.

The University's vision emphasizes liberal arts education, freedom of inquiry, cultural diversity, whole-student development, excellent teaching, active learning, scholarship, cultural enrichment, and professional service.

ABOUT EASTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY (CONT.)

ENMU seeks to create a community in which faculty and staff treat one another with respect, collaborate to accomplish institutional goals, mentor students, and foster social and cultural awareness and responsibility.

THE EASTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

The ENMU System consists of three campuses:

ENMU-Portales

The University's main campus in Portales is New Mexico's largest regional comprehensive university and opened in 1934. It encompasses approximately 433 acres, offers more than 60 degree program options, and maintains a 17:1 student-to-faculty ratio. The Portales campus offers undergraduate and graduate education, together with significant online educational opportunities.

ENMU-Portales enrolled 6,002 students in Fall 2025, including 4,388 undergraduate students and 1,614 graduate students. Students come from across the United States and around the world. Approximately 40 percent of ENMU-Portales students identify as Hispanic, and ENMU is a federally designated Hispanic-Serving Institution.

ENMU-Roswell

Established in 1958, ENMU-Roswell is an academic and career-oriented institution serving southeastern New Mexico. The campus provides academic, career-technical, workforce, and community education and

maintains extensive partnerships with businesses and organizations throughout its region. ENMU-Roswell offers certificates and degrees across numerous academic and career-technical fields and serves thousands of students through credit and non-credit instruction.

ENMU-Ruidoso

ENMU-Ruidoso traces its origins to 1991 and became an ENMU branch community college in 2005. The comprehensive two-year institution offers associate degrees, career and technical programs, certificates, community education, customized training, and adult education.

Students also have opportunities to continue their education through upper-level and graduate coursework available through ENMU's distance-education programs.

Together, the campuses reflect the University's commitment to a "One Eastern" philosophy—a system designed to serve students, communities, employers, and the broader region collaboratively.

For the SA, this structure creates an especially interesting professional environment. The successful candidate will encounter legal, policy, employment, contractual, and compliance questions arising from institutions with different missions and operational environments while helping ensure consistency and appropriate coordination across the ENMU System.





PORTALES, NEW MEXICO

[Portales](#) is the county seat of Roosevelt County in eastern New Mexico, with a population of approximately 11,734. The City's motto is "Gateway to a Good Life," and they are a live, work, play community with a steady, diversified economy. The cost of living is low - about 10% below the U.S. average, and they have abundant recreational and cultural opportunities. Clovis, NM, is only 19 miles away, while Roswell, NM, and Lubbock, TX, are both about an hour and a half away, and you can reach Amarillo, TX, in under 2 hours.





LEADERSHIP

ENMU is led by a system-wide chancellor and president and campus-specific presidents, with oversight from the Board of Regents.

The Board of Regents consists of five members, one of whom is a member of the University student body. Except for the student regent, regents serve six-year terms.

Dr. James Johnston is the 12th president of ENMU and the 3rd chancellor of the ENMU System. Dr. Johnston has more than 20 years of administrative experience and a track record of success in leading enrollment growth, innovative programming, curricular offerings, and fundraising through traditional and innovative partnerships. As an administrator, he has dedicated his time, energy, and creativity to provide a supportive learning environment committed to student success.

POSITION SUMMARY

The ENMU System Attorney provides legal and operational support to the Eastern New Mexico University System.

Reporting to the Executive Director of Governance and Compliance/System CHRO, the SA assists with contract review and with the development, interpretation, and implementation of institutional policies to support compliance with applicable federal and state laws, including Open Meetings and Open Records Acts, Title IX, Clery, FERPA, and ADA/504 compliance. The position also

supports employee relations and student relations matters when legal considerations apply. The SA is expected to communicate regularly with the System President, Campus Presidents, and senior administrators. The SA serves as an internal resource to help identify legal issues, coordinate requests for legal review, and facilitate communication between University administrators and the institution's outside General Counsel. The SA serves as an important liaison, helping ensure that matters requiring formal legal advice are appropriately identified, referred, coordinated, and managed.



LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND PRIORITIES

The SA will join ENMU at a time when public higher education institutions face increasingly complex legal, regulatory, employment, contractual, and compliance environments.

The successful candidate will have an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution in several areas.

Serve as a Trusted Institutional Resource

The SA will develop productive relationships with administrators and colleagues throughout the ENMU System and become a trusted resource for identifying legal considerations and determining when to refer matters to outside General Counsel.

Success will require not only knowledge of the law but also sound judgment, discretion, responsiveness, and an understanding of how legal considerations intersect with the university's practical operations and educational mission. The position also requires regular, predictable attendance and a willingness to take on other duties as assigned.

Strengthen Contract Review and Coordination

Contracts and agreements touch virtually every aspect of University operations. The SA will review and analyze contracts, agreements, memoranda of understanding, and other legal documents and will help coordinate matters requiring legal review.

The successful candidate will help the University identify potential risks while facilitating timely and effective institutional decision-making.

Support Policy Development and Implementation

Public universities operate within a complex and changing network of federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and administrative requirements.

The SA will monitor changes in federal and state laws and regulations affecting employment and higher education operations, communicate relevant developments to institutional leadership, and identify legal risks related to institutional policy. The SA will also assist University leaders in developing, reviewing, and revising institutional policies and procedures to ensure alignment with current legal requirements and best practices.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND PRIORITIES (CONT.)

An important part of the role will be translating legal and regulatory developments into clear, practical guidance that administrators can understand and implement, including developing training materials and advising administrators on compliance, policy implementation, and emerging legal issues affecting the workplace.

Support Effective Employee and Student Relations

Working closely with System Human Resources and campus administrators, the SA will provide guidance regarding policy interpretation, procedural compliance, employee relations, and student relations when legal considerations are involved.

The SA may also assist with workplace investigations, documentation review, and preparation of materials related to personnel matters when legal considerations are present.

These responsibilities require excellent judgment, discretion, objectivity, and an unwavering commitment to maintaining the strict confidentiality of sensitive personnel, legal, and institutional information.

Coordinate Effectively with Outside Counsel

A central responsibility of the position is serving as an effective bridge between ENMU administrators and the institution's outside General Counsel for matters requiring legal advice or formal legal review.

The successful candidate will help formulate questions, assemble relevant information and documentation, coordinate institutional responses, track legal inquiries and document requests referred to counsel, and facilitate communication between counsel and University leadership. In coordination with outside counsel, the SA will also support the preparation of materials, summaries, and documentation related to agency complaints, administrative proceedings, or litigation.

The SA maintains the institution's legal budget, including outside General Counsel billing and reconciliation, in coordination with System business offices.

Advance a One-System Approach

Because ENMU encompasses campuses in Portales, Roswell, and Ruidoso, the SA must be comfortable developing relationships across the entire University System.

The successful candidate will appreciate the distinctive needs and operating environments of the individual campuses while helping advance consistent, legally sound policies and practices across ENMU.

The position therefore calls for an attorney who is collaborative, service-oriented, accessible, and interested in understanding colleagues' work throughout the institution.



REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

Candidates must possess:

- A Juris Doctor (J.D.) from an accredited law school;
- Admission to the bar in at least one United States jurisdiction; the ability to obtain admission in New Mexico; and
- At least 3-5 years of experience practicing law, preferably involving one or more of the following areas:
 - Higher education law;
 - Employment law;
 - Contract law;
 - Public-sector law; or
 - Administrative law.



PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will demonstrate many of the following professional qualifications and personal characteristics:

- Knowledge of federal and state employment laws and regulations;
- Understanding of the role of institutional counsel and the judgment necessary to appropriately route matters requiring formal legal advice to outside General Counsel;
- Familiarity with legal issues affecting public institutions and higher education environments;
- Ability to review, analyze, and interpret contracts, institutional policies, statutes, regulations, and other legal documents;
- Ability to identify relevant legal and regulatory developments and translate complex requirements into understandable and practical operational guidance;
- Strong written and verbal communication skills;
- Sound professional judgment and the ability to maintain strict confidentiality;
- Ability to establish effective working relationships with administrators, Human Resources professionals, campus leaders, and other University constituencies;
- A collaborative and service-oriented approach to problem-solving;
- Strong organizational skills and exceptional attention to detail;
- Ability to prioritize and manage multiple projects, inquiries, and deadlines in a fast-paced environment;
- Ability to distinguish matters that can be addressed through internal operational guidance from those requiring formal legal advice from outside General Counsel;
- Intellectual curiosity and an interest in developing broad expertise in the legal and regulatory issues affecting contemporary higher education; and
- Commitment to the mission of public higher education and to ENMU's emphasis on student success and organizational collaboration.



SALARY, BENEFITS AND WORK SCHEDULE

The SA will be based at the ENMU-Portales campus, but will be required to visit and occasionally work from the Roswell and Ruidoso campuses, as needed. The anticipated hiring range is \$130,000 to \$150,000,

commensurate with the successful candidate's knowledge, skills, qualifications, and experience. ENMU offers a comprehensive [benefit](#) package.

This is a full-time, exempt, 12-month position.

APPLICATION AND NOMINATION PROCEDURE

ENMU is being assisted in this search by Mary Kennard, Senior Consultant at Academic Search. Click [Apply](#) to apply for the position. Applications should consist of: (1) A substantive cover letter addressing the responsibilities and qualifications described in the profile; (2) a current resume or curriculum vitae; and (3) a list of at least five professional references, including each reference's name and title, telephone number, email address, and professional relationship to the candidate. References will not be contacted until later in the search, and only with the candidate's explicit permission. The position will remain open until filled. However, only applications received by **October 16, 2026**, at 11:59 p.m. Mountain Time will be guaranteed full consideration by the Search Committee.

Nominations and inquiries may be sent to ENMUSA@academicsearch.org.

Eastern New Mexico University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under federal, state, or local laws. If a reasonable accommodation is needed to participate in the job application or interview process, or to perform essential job functions, please contact the Office of Human Resources at (575) 562-2115. New Mexico is an open records state; therefore, ENMU complies with the Inspection of Public Records Act, NMSA 1978, Chapter 14, Article 2, from the Office of the New Mexico Attorney General. Any concerns regarding sex discrimination should be addressed to the Title IX Coordinator at either titleix.coordinator@enmu.edu, (575) 562-2235, or Curry Hall Office 127, 1500 S Avenue K, Portales, NM 88130. Requests for inspection of public records should be sent to planning.analysis@enmu.edu. For any other inquiries, please contact Human Resources at (575) 562-2115 or e-mail ENMU.HRrecruiter@enmu.edu.

ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting Eastern New Mexico University in this work. For 50 years Academic Search has offered executive search services to higher education institutions, associations, and related organizations. Academic Search was founded by higher education leaders on the principle that we provide the most value to partner institutions by combining best practices with our deep knowledge and experience. Our mission today is to enhance institutional capacity by providing outstanding executive recruitment services, executive coaching, and transition support, in partnership with our parent organization, the American Academic Leadership Institute.

