

# Chicago-Kent College of Law

**ILLINOIS TECH**

**Search for Dean, Chicago-Kent College of Law  
Illinois Institute of Technology  
Chicago, Illinois**

## **THE SEARCH**

Illinois Institute of Technology (Illinois Tech) is seeking a visionary, dynamic, entrepreneurial, and collaborative leader to serve as dean of the Chicago-Kent College of Law starting in the summer of 2025. The dean of Chicago-Kent will leverage the distinctive assets of this student-centered, forward-leaning law school, including its productive and engaged faculty and its position within one of the country's most innovative technical universities, to achieve its potential as an outstanding law school of the future. This leadership position at Chicago-Kent demands an energetic and creative leader who is committed to providing a legal education that prepares students for the practice of law in an increasingly complex and interconnected society. The opportunity to lead Chicago-Kent is unique and exciting.

Chicago-Kent is located in the heart of one of the world's most diverse and vibrant cities, with an innovative and expanding legal community that provides an unparalleled job market for its graduates. The law school is part of an internationally renowned teaching and research university, offering its students academic programs in science and letters, business, engineering, architecture, computing, and design, as well as law, and extraordinary career opportunities that contribute to solving important challenges facing society, including legal challenges that accompany these scientific and technological advances. Chicago-Kent's 53-member full-time faculty, which includes widely respected legal scholars, supplemented by nearly 100 highly skilled adjunct faculty, provides a future-focused, practice-ready curriculum for the school's approximately 700 JD students. In keeping with Chicago-Kent's history and Illinois Tech's commitment to being an engine of opportunity, many of those students are first generation and from underserved communities, for whom the access to a legal education is transformative for not just themselves but also their families and communities.

The overarching challenge for the next Chicago-Kent dean is to realize the law school's remarkable potential by building on Chicago-Kent's distinctive assets: a diverse and motivated student body; an accomplished corps of legal educators; a dedicated, caring, and hard-working staff; a handsome, easily-accessible building in downtown Chicago; a unique, revenue-generating legal clinic offering experiential learning as well as public service; an engaged army of alumni, including eleven trustees of the university,

who regularly contribute to the law school's success; and a dynamic and supportive university partner that values the many important contributions that Chicago-Kent brings to Illinois Tech and its students.

Illinois Tech has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. A list of the qualifications and characteristics desired, as well as instructions for submitting applications and inquiries, can be found at the conclusion of this document.

## **CHICAGO-KENT COLLEGE OF LAW**

Distinguished as a well-established law school connected to an innovative tech university and located in the third-largest legal market in the country, Chicago-Kent College of Law is positioned on the cutting edge of a rapidly changing legal industry. Founded in 1888 and the second-oldest law school in the state of Illinois, it offers students an outstanding legal education that combines academic rigor with numerous opportunities for hands-on practice. Chicago-Kent merged with Illinois Institute of Technology in 1969, recognizing the need for partnership between legal education and science and technology to prepare students to face the challenges of a complex society. Since then, the law school's reputation for developing creative approaches to the traditional tasks of legal education and lawyering has increased dramatically in scope and depth.

### **Academics**

Chicago-Kent students are part of an academic culture that combines the rigorous teaching of foundational legal skills and knowledge with extensive opportunities for hands-on practice. Chicago-Kent offers a JD program in both full-time and part-time evening formats, as well as LL.M. degrees.

Students gain real-world experience through Chicago-Kent's extensive externship program and its [unique clinical model](#) with 10 clinical practice areas, in which students work on the same types of cases as they would in a thriving private practice, instructed and supervised by experienced practitioners who are leaders in their fields. The school's [trial advocacy program](#)—ranked twelfth in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*—and award-winning moot court teams allow students to test their rhetorical and courtroom skills against the best competitors in the country.

Chicago-Kent's intensive [legal research and writing program](#) serves as a cornerstone for graduates' careers and as a model for countless other institutions. With 12 [J.D. certificate programs](#), including top-ranked programs in [intellectual property](#) and [labor and employment law](#), students with focused career paths are able to focus their law school studies.

Chicago-Kent's rigorous academics, combined with hands-on opportunities, ensure that students possess a strong skills-based foundation, significant practical experience, and extensive connections to Chicago's competitive legal market—all of which prepares them to be practice-ready upon graduation.

## **Students and Alumni**

Chicago-Kent students are hardworking, self-motivated, and creative. The first-year class in the fall of 2023 included 220 students across the full-time and part-time JD program. They come from 40 states and are citizens of 17 countries. Fifty-seven percent of students are women, and 31 percent are students of color. They represent varied backgrounds and interests, which is reflected in the more than 40 student organizations that are active on campus.

Graduates of the Class of 2023 obtained a first-time bar passage rate of 84.08% and an employment rate of 88.3% (163 in jobs requiring bar passage and 26 positions described as “JD-advantage”). They joined a vibrant community of more than 15,000 Chicago-Kent alumni who are shaping the legal profession in all 50 states and around the world. Chicago-Kent alumni work at law firms of all kinds, from the largest firms in the country to intellectual property boutique firms to solo practices to large personal injury firms; they work at businesses and nonprofits of every type; they work for governments at every level and some hold political office, including the current Illinois Attorney General; they are judges and academics.

## **Faculty and Research**

Chicago-Kent’s world-class faculty are recognized not just for their scholarship and achievements in practice, but also for their compassion for and mentorship of students. The faculty at Chicago-Kent comprise a collegial, mutually supportive community of serious scholars. The faculty have deep connections to Chicago’s dynamic legal community, providing students with an extensive externship and employment network.

Faculty are leaders of Chicago-Kent’s many institutes and centers with missions that range from conducting scholarly and practical research on legal and social issues to providing topical programming for the legal community to developing public interest initiatives. These include: the Martin H. Malin Institute for Law and the Workplace; the Center for Access to Justice and Technology; the Center for Empirical Studies of Intellectual Property; and the Institute on the Supreme Court of the United States, among others. For a full description, see: <https://kentlaw.iit.edu/law/faculty-scholarship/centers-institutes>

## **ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

Founded in 1890, Illinois Tech was built on the promise set forth in minister Frank Wakeley Gunsaulus’s “Million Dollar Sermon,” which centered on access, equity, and impact. This guiding mission and purpose—where students, including those underrepresented in technology, could prepare for meaningful roles in a changing industrial society and achieve professional and economic advancement—remains just as relevant today. Illinois Tech is home to a racially and socioeconomically diverse student body, where approximately 40 percent of incoming students are first generation, and 40 percent are eligible to receive a federal Pell Grant. Illinois Tech’s emphasis on social mobility lands it the

top spot in Illinois for lifting students from families in the bottom 20 percent of income to the top 20 percent according to Opportunity Insights (formerly the Equality of Opportunity Project). Opportunity Insights also names Illinois Tech No. 3 in the nation for upward mobility among highly selective private colleges. Illinois Tech graduates enjoy the highest 20-year net return on investment after financial aid of all Illinois private college graduates, according to Payscale. *The New York Times*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *The Princeton Review*, and *Fiske Guide to Colleges* name Illinois Tech an educational “Best Value.” In September 2023, *The Wall Street Journal* ranked Illinois Tech in the top 25 on the list of 400 best colleges in America and No. 1 in Illinois.

In 2023-24, Illinois Tech enrolled about 3,000 undergraduate students and more than 5,000 graduate and professional students across seven colleges, with an impressive year-over-year increase of 23 percent. The seven colleges include: [Armour College of Engineering](#), [Chicago-Kent College of Law](#), [College of Architecture](#), [College of Computing](#), [Institute of Design](#), [Lewis College of Science and Letters](#), and [Stuart School of Business](#). Illinois Tech has solidified its position as Chicago’s only tech-focused university by integrating data and computation into each degree program throughout the university. The university offers traditional bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral programs, professional master’s programs, dozens of certificate specializations, accelerated master’s and dual-degree programs, and short-term executive and professional programs. Over the past two years, Illinois Tech’s academic enterprise has embraced an entrepreneurial approach via innovation in educational offerings to address a much broader market of global learners and to ensure workforce readiness in its graduates, including through the launch of three master’s degrees and one undergraduate completion degree on the Coursera platform and other lifelong learning initiatives outside of the traditional student base. Illinois Tech is also home to a number of robust entrepreneurship centers, including the [Ed Kaplan Family Institute for Innovation and Tech Entrepreneurship](#). In addition to providing business consulting resources, education around rapid prototyping and enterprise creation, and university-wide commercialization resources, Illinois Tech has incubated some of Chicago’s biggest startup success stories due to its technology park and business incubator, as well as its wide-ranging resources and access to top-level tech talent.

## Leadership

In August 2021, Rajagopal “Raj” Echambadi became the 10th president of Illinois Institute of Technology. He received a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and a Master of Business Administration from Anna University in India and a doctorate in marketing from the University of Houston. Prior to joining Illinois Tech, Dr. Echambadi served as the Dunton Family Dean at D’Amore-McKim School of Business at Northeastern University and the Alan J. and Joyce D. Baltz Professor and the senior associate dean of strategic innovation at the Gies College of Business at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. A driving force behind the University of Illinois’s scaled online MBA (iMBA) program, Dr. Echambadi has been instrumental in helping to provide increased access to an innovative education for students across the globe. The iMBA program has been lauded as a breakthrough in graduate education and one of the best disruptive innovations of the past decade. A leading academic research expert in organizational strategic innovation, Dr. Echambadi has developed new and forward-looking academic programs

designed to empower student success in a dynamic marketplace. During his tenure at Illinois Tech, Dr. Echambadi has already strengthened the institution financially and positioned it as an internationally recognized leader in innovation, access, and industry-ready curriculum.

Kenneth T. Christensen serves as Illinois Institute of Technology's provost and senior vice president for academic affairs. Dr. Christensen joined Illinois Tech in November 2020 as the Carol and Ed Kaplan Dean of the Armour College of Engineering and assumed the role of provost in June 2023 after serving as interim provost since July 2022. Dr. Christensen has an extraordinary record of academic leadership, and proven successes in innovation, collaboration, and commitment to student success. Dr. Christensen helped to launch the Armour Academy for Experiential Learning and Student Success and helped pursue unique hands-on opportunities for students. Under his leadership as provost, Dr. Christensen has successfully guided the university through a period of sustained growth and enrollment, the launch of groundbreaking new degree programs, and the establishment of key research and workforce initiatives. Prior to joining Illinois Tech, he was the Viola D. Hank Professor and Department Chair of Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering at the University of Notre Dame and a faculty member at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for more than 10 years. Dr. Christensen received a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering from the University of New Mexico, a Master of Science in mechanical engineering from Caltech, and a doctorate in theoretical and applied mechanics from Illinois.

## **Finances**

As of 2024, Illinois Tech's endowment fund was valued at nearly \$300 million and in 2022 Illinois Tech launched a historic \$1 billion fundraising campaign. The campaign, [Power the Difference: Our Campaign for Illinois Tech](#), is focused on making Illinois Tech's long-term strategic plan a reality by helping the university grow its student body; invest in faculty, facilities, and educational programs; develop and deliver new, world-leading research programs; and serve as the premier technology-focused university in Chicago. The campaign has already raised more than \$430 million. Since the Power the Difference campaign began its leadership phase, Illinois Tech has seen the development of cutting-edge spaces, including the Trimble Technology Lab and the Adrian and Lorna Nemcek Lab. The last two years have also seen the creation of eight endowed chairs. Illinois Tech has updated its campus for the future of learning, recently completing a \$70 million, three-building housing project incorporating a commitment to environmental sustainability into student learning and living spaces. Prior to this campaign, Illinois Tech had two of its largest philanthropic years in its history in FY20 and FY21, raising more than \$221 million over a two-year period.

## **The Chicago Difference**

Illinois Tech draws on its urban identity, global population, and connectivity with the city of Chicago to unleash the collective power of difference. As the world calls for meaningful action against systemic racial injustice, Illinois Tech's purpose, history, and location put it in a unique position to create a more equitable, just, and sustainable world through technology. Diversity and inclusion are part of the day-to-

day experience, and inclusion is the centerpiece of the culture. Illinois Tech actualizes its commitment to diversity through The Chicago Difference to increase access and representation from underserved communities on Chicago's South and West sides. This effort aims to embrace and amplify the full potential of students and establish Chicago as the nation's most diverse technology hub.

The Chicago Difference is a personalized, multifaceted scholarship and community transformation program focused on increasing the representation, belonging, retention, and success of students from underserved communities in Chicago. This unique program provides support across the entire student journey: reaching into middle and high school STEM education, delivering mentoring for admissions processes, supporting the transition from high school to college, and offering wraparound support services during college, including an intensive focus on career placement and development. The Chicago Difference aims to nurture the genius in Chicago and keep world-class tech talent local.

### **THE ROLE OF THE DEAN**

Reporting to the Illinois Tech provost, the dean of Chicago-Kent will be the academic, administrative, operations, and strategic leader of the Chicago-Kent College of Law. Currently, the dean's core leadership team includes five associate deans (administration and strategic initiatives; academic affairs; scholarship and faculty development; diversity, equity, and inclusion; international programs), five assistant deans (career development and professionalism, admissions, administration and finance, student affairs, advancement), and twelve certificate program directors. As noted in the opening section of this prospectus, the dean's role is to engage and expand the human, financial, and other resources and assets of Chicago-Kent in the strategic pursuit of the school's mission.

Within the law school, the dean engages the faculty in shared governance concerning academic matters, including the adoption of curriculum for all degree and certificate programs, the recruitment, promotion, tenure, and retention of faculty, the creation and support of centers for scholarship and teaching, the operations of the clinics and other experiential programs of instruction and learning, and supporting opportunities for service both within and outside the law school and the university. The dean organizes the staff within the law school and with their assistance administers the budget for the law school, establishes policies and protocols (consistent with those of the university) related to staff, and develops programs that focus on public relations and marketing, fundraising and advancement, student admissions, registration, health and wellness, academic success, and career advising and support.

The dean serves a leadership role within Illinois Tech, implements university initiatives and policies at Chicago-Kent, and ensures that the law school is integrated into the academic and administrative priorities of the larger university. Since the law school is not physically located on the main campus of Illinois Tech, efforts to align and integrate the law school with the rest of the university require intention and creativity. Through collaboration and partnership across campus, the dean will embrace and exploit, in ways that are relevant to Chicago-Kent's mission and vision, Illinois Tech's new culture of academic entrepreneurship that is driving sustained success in other corners of the university.

Externally, the dean of Chicago-Kent will be expected to promote the law school to external audiences, including alumni of the law school, the broader Illinois Tech alumni community, the practicing law community in firms, corporations, nonprofit organizations, and government, and the state and federal judiciary. Fundraising is an important part of this promotion, as is facilitating connections between external actors and law school students and faculty for mutual enrichment and advantage. Chicago-Kent alumni are particularly eager to engage with the law school and the students.

Finally, and most importantly, the Chicago-Kent dean serves as a leader, role model, mentor, advocate, and enthusiastic motivator for Chicago-Kent students, ever mindful that student success both in law school and in their subsequent careers is the core of the law school's mission.

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN**

### ***Ensure Student Success: Focus on Bar Passage and Employment Outcomes.***

Most students come to Chicago-Kent expecting a meaningful career as a legal professional. Bar passage is the first post-law school hurdle, and Chicago-Kent's bar passage rates have steadily improved, with a first-time pass rate of 74.65% in 2021, to 78.05% in 2022, an 84.89% first-time pass rate in 2023, and a reported 90.57% two-year "ultimate" pass rate for the class graduating in 2021. The next dean will be expected to deploy resources to continue that upward trend.

As previously noted, about 88% of Chicago-Kent students graduating in 2023 had secured meaningful employment (jobs that require a JD or are described as "JD-advantage") within 10 months after graduation. The dean will direct human and financial resources at Chicago-Kent to support students in finding their first job as lawyers. In addition, the dean will directly promote the law school among the bench and bar and engage alumni and other leaders in helping law students secure employment.

Gains in both bar passage rates and employment results will contribute to improving the ranking of Chicago-Kent in comparison with other law schools. The elevation of the law school's ranking is an important priority for the university and all Chicago-Kent stakeholders. With an approachable presence on campus, the dean will fully engage with students and continue to commit to Illinois Tech and Chicago-Kent's shared mission of increasing access and representation from underserved communities. The dean will contribute to fostering an inclusive community where students feel seen and supported in reaching their full potential as future leaders in the legal industry and beyond.

### ***Distinguish Chicago-Kent as the Innovative Law School of the Future.***

Through a collaborative process with the Chicago-Kent faculty and staff, other Chicago-Kent stakeholders, and senior university leadership, the dean will develop and articulate a vision for the future of Chicago-Kent that distinguishes the law school from its peer institutions as an innovative, future-oriented school

of law. With an eye toward leveraging the college's advantages of being part of a world-class technical university that embraces a culture of academic innovation and being located in the dynamic legal market of Chicago, the dean will develop and continue innovative programs and entrepreneurial approaches that will position students on the cutting edge of a rapidly changing legal industry and will generate additional revenue for the law school.

***Raise Resources and Reputation to Advance the Mission.***

A skilled communicator and fundraiser, the dean will serve as a strong external ambassador for Chicago-Kent in the Chicago area and beyond. The dean will look for opportunities to further define and articulate the distinctiveness of Chicago-Kent and its graduates, strengthening existing relationships and forging new ones with alumni, employers, and community members. As the voice and face of Chicago-Kent, the dean will be responsible for communicating an exciting vision that both nurtures relationships with established donors and attracts the next generation of donors.

***Strengthen Collaboration Across the University.***

The dean of Chicago-Kent will strengthen collaboration and partnerships across Illinois Tech. The dean will support initiatives already in place, such as joint degree programs with Illinois Tech's Stuart School of Business and the Pre-Law Honors Program with Lewis School of Science and Letters, and will identify new multidisciplinary opportunities with other academic divisions at Illinois Tech. The dean will join an innovative academic leadership team that is committed to inclusive innovation and entrepreneurial approaches to learning and scholarship in ways that will position the college and university for a thriving future. The dean will find the balance of advocating for the interests of Chicago-Kent while serving as a strong and contributing citizen of the university.

***Recruit, Retain, and Support Exceptional Faculty.***

The faculty of Chicago-Kent are brilliant and productive scholars, accomplished and dedicated teachers, and resourceful and generous leaders in providing service to the law school, the university, and the larger community. The Chicago-Kent faculty has developed a rare and admirable culture of collaboration, inclusion, and respect. The dean will continue to foster this sense of collegiality and look for ways to further support faculty in their research, scholarship, teaching, and service endeavors.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

The successful candidate will present the following qualifications and experiences – or a substantial portion thereof:



- An earned JD degree from an ABA-accredited program or its equivalent.
- Teaching, scholarship, and service achievements in higher education that merit appointment at the rank of full professor with tenure, or, alternatively, experience in the practice of law or other professions that demonstrate equivalent, professional achievement.
- Leadership experience that includes management of professional staff and the administration of annual budgets in excess of \$1 million.
- A deep understanding of the current and evolving landscape and trends in legal education, in the practice of law, and in higher education.
- Experience in developing and implementing a strategic plan that requires collaboration with parties that may have competing priorities.
- Commitment to academic innovation and an entrepreneurial approach to growing Chicago-Kent in resources, stature, and impact.
- Commitment to high-quality teaching and excellent scholarship.
- Commitment to student success.
- An established record of advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Demonstrated fundraising success or the skill set to develop relationships that will result in fundraising success.
- Exceptional communication skills.
- A leadership style that incorporates transparency, inclusion, empathy, and collegiality.

#### APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. For full consideration, please apply by **October 1, 2024**.

All inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/illinois-institute-technology-chicago-kent-college-law/dean> Electronic submission is strongly encouraged.

Tim McFeeley, Partner  
Kelly McLaughlin, Managing Associate  
Isaacson, Miller

*Illinois Institute of Technology is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA employer committed to enhancing equity, inclusion and diversity within its community. It actively seeks applications from all individuals regardless of race, color, sex, marital status, religion, creed, national origin, disability, age, military or veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and any other protected class. All qualified applicants will receive equal consideration for employment.*