

Small Colleges Are Lawyering Up. Here's Why.

“Higher education is facing a tsunami of litigation. In addition to the standard docket of lawsuits claiming that a university discriminated against applicants who were denied admission or that a faculty member was unfairly turned down for tenure, a wave of high-profile cases have resulted in universities offering large settlements or having multi-million dollar verdicts returned against them,” reports Michael T. Nietzel in Forbes’ *Education*.

Thirty small “colleges reported they had hired someone to be General Counsel or to fill that role, but with a different title. In most cases, the position focused exclusively on legal representation, but in some institutions, the job was combined with additional responsibilities like Executive Director for Risk Management and Legal Affairs or Chief Policy Officer/General Counsel.”

“Smaller institutions may worry about the added costs of hiring a general counsel, but Coyle and Neal argue that going in-house ultimately results in substantial savings in contracted legal work. Because college general counsels often are able to resolve issues themselves, many proactively, they can be more conservative in their use of external counsel and the amount an institution spends on them.”

Read the article.