



Sheri Curran '93

General Counsel

Letting all voices be heard

Expressive freedom — what does free expression mean on a private Lutheran-affiliated college campus? Exploring how to communicate the elements of expressive freedom and its value in an educational environment, along with building the critical skills of civic discourse.

AI on college campuses

Leading the charge to identify and explain the implications of artificial intelligence and how Augustana can position itself to leverage AI opportunities.

Compliance with state and federal laws

Ensuring Augustana is in compliance with legal requirements, including Title VI and Title IX, which are federal laws that prohibit discrimination in education programs and activities.

Sheri Curran '93 was in third grade when she decided to be a lawyer. A big decision for any 8-year-old, but even more so for her because she would be the first in her family to attend college. When the time came, she chose Augustana. She lived at home and worked part-time at a non-profit, Equip for Equality — an agency that provides legal services to individuals with disabilities — while she attended college.

“It wasn’t a typical college experience, but it was life-changing,” she said.

After Augustana came law school, and eventually Lee Enterprises, a media company where she worked as employment relations counsel and then corporate counsel. In 2010, when a friend told her Augustana was searching for in-house counsel, a relatively new position, she felt drawn to return to the place that had made such a difference in her life.

“The mission of the college — to provide a transformational experience for students just as it was for me — is a critical part of my job satisfaction today,” Curran said. “Knowing that my work behind the scenes contributes to a student’s overall experience is important to me.”

She compares a campus community to a small city of constituents, each with specific responsibilities and distinct legal risks, but one overall goal. Besides the “normal lawyer work” of dealing with contracts, human resources policies, etc., she must know what campus-wide offices and departments do in order to help the college avoid a legal issue, and to respond appropriately when a matter surfaces.

“I’m always looking for possible landmines,” she said. “We try to be in front of them as much as we can.”

Topics on Curran’s current radar include free expression on campus; compliance with Title VI and Title IX, federal laws that prohibit discrimination in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance; AI policies for faculty and students; and presidential politics.

“I valued the liberal arts approach when I attended Augustana,” she said, “and I use many of the skills I learned during my four years here to make today’s student experience the best it can be.”

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Available for commentary on

- Non-discrimination in the employment and education setting; compliance with:
 - + Title VI: Prohibits discrimination in programs and activities based on race, color or national origin.
 - + Title VII: Prohibits discrimination in employment based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin.
 - + Title IX: Prohibits discrimination in education programs and activities based on sex.
 - + Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Prohibits discrimination based on disability.
 - + Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA): Establishes minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping and youth employment standards affecting employees in the private sector and in federal, state and local governments.
- Board of Trustees governance and fiduciary responsibilities
- Risk management
- AI on college campuses
- Human resources policies to maintain a respectful workplace
- Value of a liberal arts education

Professional experience

- Corporate Counsel; Lee Enterprises, Inc., Davenport, Iowa

Education

- Juris Doctor, Northern Illinois University,
- B.A., political science and public administration, Augustana College

Augustana College engagement

- Chair or co-chair of the search committees for VP Finance, VP Student Life, VP of Advancement
- Board liaison for presidential search (2020-2022)
- Sexual Assault Task Force 2017-2018
- An original and current member of the EIIA Stewardship Committee since 2020, managing litigation on behalf of all participating institutions that filed a lawsuit against insurers relative to COVID-19 insurance recovery

Board of Trustees work

- Lead college's Risk Management Program, tracking top risks, mitigation plans and board reporting
- Board secretary
- Administrative liaison for four of seven board committees: Audit & Risk, Good Governance, Compensation, and Board Representation
- Administrative liaison to several Board task forces:
 - Board Assessment Working Group (current)
 - Winter Task Force – examining Board Structure (2019)
 - Board Reorganization Task Force (2019)

Professional organizations

- National Association of College and University Attorneys; Washington, D.C. (2010-current)
 - Previously:
 - Association of Corporate Counsel
 - Illinois State Bar Association
 - American Bar Association

LinkedIn



[linkedin.com/in/sheri-curran-339a6143/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/sheri-curran-339a6143/)