

The Office of Counsel Website

Like many offices on campus, the Office of Counsel maintains a University website. That website's home page can be reached directly by entering the address (without the quotes) "www.uah.edu/edu/legal" into one's web browser or by going to the University's home page, left clicking first on "Faculty & Staff" and then on "Office of Counsel." There the option is presented to explore various sections of the website by clicking on the appropriate tab.

The Office Presentations section contains outlines and PowerPoint slides developed by members of the office for briefings and workshops, primarily (but not exclusively) on the campus, regarding such topics as sexual harassment, litigation, retaliation claims, contracts, etc. Those who are unable to attend one of these campus presentations should find that the appropriate outline or PowerPoint slides will provide elemental coverage of the topic.

The General Legal Developments section includes analyses of legislation, court decisions, and administrative rulings relating to higher education in general. Exploration of these developments often provides the impetus for proactive or preventive measures on campus designed to avoid legal problems and/or to insure compliance with new requirements for the institution. Topics covered include, for example, the potential liability of universities under federal statutes such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, the immunity to suit of public university officials, guidelines on the use of e-mail, new electronic discovery requirements in federal lawsuits, etc.

The UAH Legal Issues section focuses on legal issues that directly and currently involve the University. A series of articles has been posted here discussing the progress of the *Knight v. Alabama* case, the recently concluded desegregation lawsuit that spanned 25 years. There is also information regarding such matters as the authority to sign contracts on behalf of the University, the operation of the University's patent policy, the use of non-disclosure agreements, and implications of the Alabama Ethics Act for University employees and retirees. Faculty members will find a discussion of clauses that may be included in their syllabi and legal implications of letters of recommendation written on behalf of students.

While it is only a partial source, the UAH Policies section provides convenient access to a number of campus policies, including the Student Records Policy, Faculty Disciplinary Policies and Procedures, the Employee Occupational Injury Policy, the Vehicle Safety Management Program, and the Gift Policy and Procedure. As the title indicates, the UAH Forms and Checklists section contains documents intended to assist UAH employees with various tasks. A series of forms for use in administering the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (governing access to student education records), an affidavit for establishing a common law marriage, and a checklist regarding the use of the Contract for Professional Services may be found here. The Office of Counsel intends to add further documents to this section in the near future.

The information provided on the Office of Counsel website is not intended as a substitute for legal advice and is not meant to discourage UAH employees from calling or writing to obtain such advice. Any suggestions regarding materials or subject matter to be added to the website will be welcomed.