

## **GUIDANCE ON USE OF LEGAL CREDENTIALS BY PROFESSIONAL STAFF**

Indiana University is fortunate to employ many professional staff with advanced degrees, including persons who have earned Juris Doctorate (“JDs”) or equivalent degrees such as LLMs and LLBs. Many of our professional staff with JDs work in such diverse areas as Gift Development, Research Compliance, Human Resources, Student Affairs, and Environmental Health and Safety. This Guidance is not intended nor should it be construed to minimize the skills, background and value those individuals bring to their positions and to Indiana University.

Professional staff with JDs, including those that are admitted to practice law, are not authorized to render legal advice to Indiana University if those professional staff are not members of the Office of the Vice President and General Counsel (OVPGC). Communications between professional staff that are not members of the OVPGC and Indiana University constituents are not protected by the attorney-client privilege.

Only attorneys that are members of the OVPGC are authorized to render legal advice to Indiana University and only those attorneys are authorized to engage outside counsel to render legal advice to Indiana University. Communications between attorneys that are members of the OVPGC and Indiana University constituents may be protected by the attorney-client privilege as determined by the Rules of Professional Conduct.

In an effort to eliminate confusion on the part of both Indiana University constituents and outside third parties, professional staff should not use their legal academic credentials or other designations (J.D., Esq., etc.) in connection with their Indiana University identification (such as business cards, website profile, email salutations, name plates, or other outward facing displays) in any manner.

Used in communications with Indiana University constituents, the use of legal academic credentials and designations may create a misperception that the professional staff member is providing legal advice to that employee or engaging in an attorney-client privileged communication. Used in communications with third parties, the use of legal academic credentials and designations may create a misperception that the professional staff member is representing Indiana University as an attorney in the OVPGC.

This Guidance is intended to protect both Indiana University and affected professional staff from unintended consequences associated with the seemingly benign use of academic credentials and other designations in official identification/communication.

This Guidance is not intended to preclude the use of legal academic credentials in connection with biographical information, resumes, curriculum vitae, etc. or by faculty.

## FAQs

Can I have my law school diploma on my wall?

- Yes.

Can I use JD after my name if I publish an article?

- Yes.

Can I use JD after my name if my job duties include performing an investigation?

- No.

Can I use JD after my name if my job duties include negotiating contract terms with a third party, including a state or federal agency?

- No.

Can I use JD in my signature block or when otherwise signing my name and simply include a disclaimer beneath my name indicating that I am not acting as an attorney on behalf of Indiana University?

- No.

Can I include JD in my signature block to show that I am an alumnus of a certain law school and the year I graduated?

- No.

Can I use JD on my resume, curriculum vitae (CV), or on material that may be handed out when I am speaking at an engagement or presenting to a group?

- Yes.

If you have any questions, or for all other circumstances, please call OVPGC for guidance.