The Office of General Counsel provides information and related services to the Lone Star College System and its component campuses and centers. To best meet the needs of our complex constituency, our office assumes a variety of roles. The Office of General Counsel strives to provide timely and responsible legal advice regarding the expansive array of legal issues that face a thriving, modern, public community college system, such as Lone Star College System. Our office addresses existing and potential legal matters in order to help the System continue to be a premier institution of higher education.

All matters requiring legal advice or legal action should be referred to the Office of General Counsel through the appropriate Vice Chancellor or College President.

Did you know that the Lone Star College System Office of the General Counsel consists of eleven individuals within the areas of Legal Affairs, Contract Compliance, Public Records and Risk Management?

Duties of the General Counsel consist of -

- Represent the Board of Trustees, the LSCS and its component colleges
- Serve as Legal Advisor for the LSCS
- Serves as LSCS Privacy Officer
- Policy Interpretation
- Responsible for all legal services
- Handle and resolve all claims and lawsuits
- Duties as Assigned
- Administrative Accountability for the Offices of Public Records, Risk Management and Contracts Compliance

The Office of General Counsel duties and responsibilities consist of -

- Contracts and Conveyances
- Student/Faculty/Staff Matters
- Information Requests
- Intellectual Property (e.g. Copyrights, Trademarks, etc.)
- Employment Law
- Higher Education Law
- Real Estate
- Tax and Gifts
- Acquisitions
- Legislative Analysis

Texas Public Information Act

What is the Texas Public Information Act (“TPIA”)?
Under the TPIA, all information collected by a governmental body (e.g., LSCS) in any medium is presumed to be open to the public unless there is a specific exception to disclosure. Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”) applies to federal, not state agencies. FOIA and TPIA do not apply to private entities such as Kroger or Gallery Furniture.

How to Handle a TPIA Request:
The Texas Two-Step

Step One: Identify Whether it is a Public Information Act Request. What is considered a request under the TPIA?
- Two basic requirements: in writing; and
- seeks information or records that are already in existence.

Step Two: If it is a TPIA Request, Contact the Office of Public Records Immediately.

True or False: If it is information I can easily provide, I should go ahead and send the information to the requestor to save everyone time. False!

Criminal penalties established by the TPIA:
Releasing confidential information that is excepted from disclosure. Texas Government Code § 552.352(a).
Official misconduct punishable by up to six months in jail and/or a fine of up to $1,000.

All requests must be handled by the Offices of Public Records and Office of the General Counsel. See Section VII Legal Affairs LSCS Policy.

Brian Nelson, General Counsel and Chief Legal Officer
Shelby Boseman, Associate General Counsel