

The background is a solid teal color. On the left side, there is a vertical image of a pencil and three pens. The pencil is on the far left, and the pens are to its right. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the teal background to show through. Two diagonal teal lines cross the page: one from the top center towards the right, and another from the middle left towards the bottom right.

Inappropriate Conduct in Education

Investigations and Litigation

VENABLE LLP



Venable’s team advises educational institutions facing complaints of inappropriate conduct, sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, and other forms of harassment and discrimination.

Our clients include liberal arts colleges, large universities, law schools, teaching hospitals, medical schools, graduate schools, K-12 schools, and other student-serving organizations. We work closely with campus Title IX coordinators, general counsel, human resources, trustees, board members, and heads of school. Our focus is on the institution’s mission, growth, integrity, and reputation.

Our team includes a certified Title IX investigator and former New York state prosecutor who has vast criminal investigation experience.

Our Capabilities

Investigations

We conduct investigations into allegations of inappropriate conduct, sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, and other civil rights violations. After initial fact-gathering meetings, Venable collects and reviews the evidence, conducts witness interviews, prepares witness interview summaries, and delivers detailed final reports and/or presentations with its findings and recommendations to school administrators and boards of directors. In many cases, we recommended revisions to existing Title IX and anti-discrimination and harassment policies and procedures to ensure compliance with federal and state laws.

Litigation

We regularly defend educational institutions against discrimination, harassment, and retaliation claims in federal and state courts; and against charges before federal and state administrative agencies.

Policy and Procedure Reviews

We develop, review, and revise sexual misconduct, anti-harassment, and anti-discrimination policies for educational institutions in compliance with federal and state laws, including Title IX, FERPA, the Clery Act, and Article 129-B of the New York Education Law.

Training and Prevention

We provide training and presentations regarding structuring, planning, and conducting internal investigations, including how to preserve electronically stored information, gather evidence, conduct interviews, assess credibility of witnesses, analyze evidence, and properly document an investigation for a strong defense against potential claims and lawsuits.

Recent Representations

- A law school in New York in an Article 78 proceeding brought in New York State Supreme Court in connection with the school’s decision to suspend a student after Title IX investigators determined that the student had violated the school’s sexual misconduct policy
- A Baltimore university in an internal investigation stemming from allegations that a dean of the university created a hostile work environment for employees
- An international student-serving organization in connection with an investigation of allegations of sexual misconduct that occurred more than thirty years ago between a national director of the organization and an underage student of the organization
- A liberal arts college in connection with an Office of Civil Rights investigation related to Title IX and Title VI complaints
- A teaching college in connection with discrimination and sexual harassment complaints by a union-member employee
- A liberal arts college in connection with an investigation of allegations that a faculty member was sexually assaulted by another faculty member at an off-campus professional conference
- A law school in connection with allegations that a student sexually assaulted another student on campus, and a related Title IX hearing
- An art school in connection with allegations that the director of the school’s residency program made sexually and racially motivated harassing comments toward students and threatened and intimidated students and faculty
- The trustees of a liberal arts college in connection with its legal exposure and strategy following an investigation into alleged misconduct in the college’s athletics department
- A law school in New York in a federal litigation involving discrimination and retaliation claims under Title IX, Title VI, and other state and federal laws, as well as common law fraud and state deceptive practices claims, arising from a complaint of a physical incident occurring on campus between two students
- Various law schools and liberal arts colleges in revising sexual misconduct policies and student, faculty, and employee handbooks

Contact Us



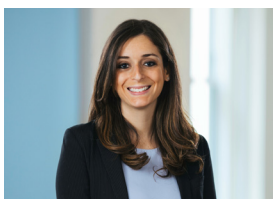
Michael Volpe, Partner | +1 212.808.5676 | mvolpe@Venable.com

Michael Volpe is the chair of Venable's nationwide Labor and Employment Practice Group, regularly representing educational institutions. Mike has represented private K-12 schools, colleges, universities, and law schools in Title IX investigations and hearings. He often serves as advisor to boards of directors, counseling on investigation findings, litigation risk management, and ongoing strategy. He was lead counsel in a series of putative actions against law schools involving allegations of fraud stemming from post-graduate employment prospects. He also represents colleges, universities, law schools, and medical schools in government investigations, EEOC complaints, and labor and employment counseling.



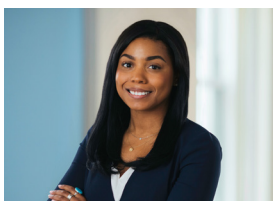
Doreen Martin, Partner | +1 212.983.1179 | dmartin@Venable.com

Doreen Martin, a former New York state prosecutor, is a litigator with extensive experience representing educational institutions in internal investigations and related litigation in state and federal courts. As a former New York State prosecutor in the Domestic Violence Bureau, Doreen handled significant cases involving domestic violence and sexual assault. Doreen is skilled in conducting investigations in a discreet and sensitive manner while maintaining impartiality throughout the investigative process. Doreen has conducted many investigations for educational institutions involving allegations of sexual misconduct and violations of Title VI and Title IX. She has developed and revised policies and procedures for educational institutions in compliance with federal and state laws, including Title IX, FERPA, the Clery Act, and Article 129-B of the New York Education Law.



Allison Gotfried, Associate | +1 212.370.6227 | abgotfried@Venable.com

Allison Gotfried has experience with higher education and private primary and secondary educational institutions, including conducting investigations into allegations of sexual misconduct and violations of Title VI and Title IX, and defending educational institutions against administrative charges and lawsuits alleging sexual harassment and discrimination, successfully settling, or receiving dismissal of, such claims. Allison has also drafted and revised Title IX and sexual misconduct policies for colleges and universities, and has counseled clients on compliance with Title IX and other related federal and state laws.



Danielle A. Lawrence, Associate | +1 212.370.6281 | dalawrence@Venable.com

Danielle Lawrence represents educational institutions at all levels. Danielle regularly advises educational institutions on compliance-related issues regarding Title IX, FERPA, and the New York State Education Law, among others, and issues associated with admissions and enrollment. Recently, she drafted a submission on behalf of an independent pre-K-12 school that favorably resulted in a vacated temporary restraining order. She also assisted in the successful representation of a law school in connection with a lawsuit brought by a student alleging violations of Title IX, the Clery Act, and Article 129-B of the New York State Education Law.