

Overview

Steptoe & Johnson Higher Education Team attorneys have held leadership positions at both colleges and universities or served as members of governing boards at the state and institutional level. With substantial experience and knowledge, our higher education attorneys understand the challenges college and university leaders face, and strive to provide groundbreaking solutions.

With new technological developments, aging infrastructures, and enhanced regulatory and policy concerns, the landscape of higher education is undergoing significant changes. Higher education leaders predict that many institutions will cease to exist unless their current business models are materially altered.

As higher education institutions operate under a complex maze of statutes, regulations, and agency guidance, our attorneys understand how imperative it is to remain up-to-date on continually evolving policies and principles.

Representative Experience

- Advised institutions on COVID-19 health and safety protocols and employment considerations pertaining to COVID-19
- Counseled clients on reductions in force, program reductions, and financial exigency
- Advised institutions on cybersecurity and data privacy
- Advised boards on various governance issues
- Conducted multiple internal investigations on numerous issues including financial improprieties, personnel issues, and Title IX program effectiveness
- Drafted sexual misconduct policies to comply with Title IX guidelines
- Provided a full range of Title IX services, including Title IX investigations and training
- Evaluated multiple issues arising under federal financial aid statutes and regulations

- Advised clients on employee benefits matters, including retirement plan changes
- Reviewed and revised institution policies, including faculty and student handbooks
- Evaluated multi-state regulatory compliance obligations associated with distance learning initiatives
- Drafted fundraising policies
- Evaluated UPMIFA issues
- Drafted restricted gift agreements
- Addressed both programmatic and regional accreditation issues
- Drafted licensing agreements for intellectual property rights
- Regularly counseled multiple higher education institutions regarding the release of information and compliance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Defended colleges and universities, as well as affiliated organizations, in grievances, faculty tenure matters and employment matters

Areas of Focus

- Accreditation
- Bankruptcy
- Charitable Giving
- Clery Compliance Audits
- Complex Litigation
- Construction Law
- Corporate Governance
- Employee Benefits/ERISA
- Enterprise Risk Management
- Environmental
- Equipment Leasing and Finance
- Government Relations
- Insurance Law
- Intellectual Property
- Labor and Employment Counseling
- Mergers and Acquisitions
- Nonprofit Taxation
- Public Finance
- Real Estate and Land Use Planning
- Student Financial Aid
- Tax and Estate Planning
- Title IX Enforcement Issues



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