

## People



## LaKeisha C. Marsh

Chair, Government Affairs and Public Policy Practice Group  
Chair, Higher Education and Collegiate Athletics Practice

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LaKeisha Marsh serves as the chair of Akerman's Government Affairs and Public Policy Practice Group. She leads a bipartisan team of professionals providing strategic counsel on policy and regulatory issues in the United States. With a comprehensive legal background serving the higher education sector, including as an NCAA staff member, LaKeisha also serves as the chair of Akerman's Higher Education and Collegiate Athletics Practice. She represents colleges, universities, and related institutions on federal and state regulatory compliance, accreditation, state licensure, institutional governance, and collegiate sports and NCAA compliance-related matters. She has structured and executed a broad range of transactional, restructuring, finance, and corporate governance matters for educational institutions.

She regularly advises clients on issues such as Title IV, Title IX compliance including complaints and investigations, student discipline, student accommodations, FERPA, Clery Act and collegiate athletic issues, including name, image, and likeness (NIL). She brings vast working experience and knowledge of the laws, regulations and informal guidance that together govern institutional participation Title IV federal student aid programs. She has managed all facets of student litigation, representing an institution when dealing with the U.S. Department of Education, and federal and state cases.

Advocating on behalf of clients before federal, state, and local governments and agencies, LaKeisha counsels her national clients on various legislation. She advises clients on Small Business Administration (SBA) matters, including PPP applications, eligibility, affiliation, good faith certification, and caps for corporate organizations. She provides assistance to higher education clients with obtaining federal funds and the development of policies and procedures for the use and distribution of federal funds.

In addition to her expansive practice, LaKeisha previously served as an executive at an entrepreneurial, not-for-profit educational system, where she managed the legal department responsible for

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### Areas of Experience

Government Affairs and Public Policy  
Higher Education and Collegiate Athletics  
Sports  
Cannabis

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### Education

J.D., Loyola University Chicago School of Law, 2005  
B.A., Clark Atlanta University, Political Science, 2000

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### Admissions

#### Bars

Illinois

#### Courts

U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois

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### Related Content

What Every College and University Should Know About the National Labor Relations Act and its Impact on Campus Life  
March 19, 2024

Akerman Lawyers Receive 2024 Burton Award for Distinguished Legal Writing  
March 18, 2024

Dartmouth Basketball Players Have Voted to Unionize  
March 07, 2024

corporate governance, compliance, transactions, mergers and acquisitions, and litigation management.

She frequently speaks on higher education topics including Title IX, sexual misconduct and student-athletes, collegiate athletics, and transgender issues. As a former member of the NCAA staff, in the Academic and Membership Affairs department (formerly Membership Services), LaKeisha has firsthand knowledge of the NCAA bylaws and rules for Division I, II, and III athletics. She has handled NCAA certification, compliance reviews, infractions and appeals, student-athlete eligibility and waivers, and Title IX and gender equality matters.

### **Notable Work**

#### **Title IX and Other Student Related Privacy Investigations:**

- Advise and counsel numerous private colleges regarding Title IX sexual harassment investigations, including working with the Title IX officer on various complaints
- Successfully defend medical institutions against Title IX matters regarding their Title IX processes and decisions

#### **Discrimination, Retaliation, Harassment Arbitration Matters:**

- Successfully resolve single plaintiff matters for gender, age, and disability discrimination cases at summary judgment stage both in litigation and arbitration
- Successfully arbitrate single plaintiff (staff employees) gender, age, and disability discrimination arbitration matters for private colleges

#### **Labor and Employment:**

- Successfully represent higher education clients in labor negotiations and against complaints from the Equal Opportunity Commission (EEOC) related to race, gender, and age discrimination
- Successfully defend higher education clients against employee litigation regarding wages, benefits, and tenure

#### **Litigation:**

- Successfully defend higher education clients against Federal Trade Commission complaints related to the use and sharing of student record information
- Successfully represent higher education clients against complaints from the Illinois Attorney General's office related to Freedom of Information Act requests and Open Meetings Act requirements for public bodies
- Represent higher education clients in litigation stemming from Title IX complaints
- Represent institutions and their employees in litigation matters involving the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA)
- Represent institutions at the Appellate level regarding FERPA and student privacy issues
- Defended medical school from student claim of fraudulent misrepresentation, unfair competition, false advertising, and fraudulent concealment. Akerman substituted into the case as it neared trial and the parties entered into a Stipulated Dismissal

- Represent higher education institutions and athletic associations in concussion and other complex litigation

#### Regulatory and Compliance:

- Advised higher education clients on navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, including the eligibility, use, and reporting of emergency relief funds under HEERF I, II, and III; drafting and amending contracts with third party vendors regarding COVID-19 testing and vaccine efforts; drafting policies and procedures related to working/delivering instruction remotely, as well as safety protocols and return to work
- Represent institutions in investigations, audits, and compliance reviews involving the department of education, specifically the Office of Civil Rights and the Office of Inspector General
- Represent higher education institutions in enforcement process
- Conduct athletic compliance reviews and audits
- Development of higher education institutions NIL policies
- Represent higher education institutions in connection with the preparation and negotiation of corporate sponsorship and licensing agreement

#### Mergers and Acquisitions:

- Serve as regulatory counsel for merger and acquisition transactions for both nonprofit and for-profit institutions
- Served as regulatory counsel to Adtalem Global Education, Inc. in its \$1.48 billion acquisition of Walden University

### Related Professional Experience

- Northwestern University, School of Professional Studies, Adjunct Professor, Master of Arts, Sports Administration Program, 2022
- TCS Education System, Associate Vice President & Senior Counsel, 2008-2014
- National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Assistant Director of Academic & Membership Affairs, 2006-2008

### Published Work and Lectures

- The Burton Awards, *Law360* Distinguished Legal Writing Award, Law Firm Recipient for Co-Authoring, “What You Need to Know About Brand Protection in NIL Deals,” 2024
- NACUA Annual Conference, Speaker, “Athletics Forum: Student Affairs and Athletics,” May 26, 2023
- *The Trademark Lawyer Magazine*, Co-Author, Issues 2, “The Many Faces of IP in Name, Image, and Likeness,” 2023
- NACUA Spring 2023 CLE Workshop Discrimination Law, Speaker, “Gender Equity in Athletics,” March 23, 2023
- NACUA New York Attorneys Affinity Group, Speaker, “Implications of the New York Adult Survivors Act,” March 1, 2023
- 2023 Tulane Women in Sports Law Symposium, Panelist, “Immigration Hurdles for International Student Athletes: Strategic Considerations from College to Retirement,” January 27, 2023
- NBCSL, 46th Annual Legislative Conference, Panelist, “HBCUs: Our Crown Jewels in American Education – The Future of Funding, and Preparing the Next Generation of Talent,” December 1, 2022

- *Law360*, Co-Author, “NIL Profit Considerations for Historically Black Colleges,” September 19, 2022
- Northwestern University School of Professional Studies, Speaker, “The Evolution of College Athletics,” March 24, 2022
- *Law360*, Quoted, “Adidas Tests Waters With Novel Name, Image Deal Program,” March 23, 2022
- Known Live, Speaker, “Be Heard: Career Positioning and Developing Your Voice,” November 5, 2021
- Loyola University Chicago, Different STEM (Sport Technology Entertainment Media) Conference, Speaker, “Diversity & Inclusion Through Sports,” November 4, 2021
- *Wall Street Journal*, Quoted, “Law-Firm Clients Demand More Black Attorneys,” November 2, 2020
- University of Mississippi School of Law, Entertainment and Sports Law Society’s GLO Conference, Speaker, “Influence Her: Marching to the Beat of Her Own Drum,” October 26, 2020
- *Bloomberg Law*, Featured, “Black, Female Lawyer Team Led Atdalem’s 1.48B Walden Deal,” October 9, 2020
- American Bar Association, Forum on Entertainment & Sports 2020 Virtual Conference, Speaker, “Disruption in College Sports: The Evolution and Issues Surrounding Student-Athletes’ Name, Image and Likeness Rights” and “From Play to Platform: Civil Rights and Social Justice Issues and Responsibilities in Sports,” October 2020
- Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), Speaker, “New Title IX Regulations and Academic Medicine,” July 2020
- National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA) 2020 Virtual Conference, Speaker, “Athletics Forum,” June 2020
- *Law360*, Quoted, “Illinois Legislation To Watch In 2020,” January 1, 2020
- Higher Ed Lawyers of Illinois, Speaker, “Board Governance,” October 2019
- National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA) Annual Conference, Speaker, “NCAA and Litigation Updates, Sports Wagering, and the E-sports Phenomenon and Emerging Trends,” and “Trends in College Athletics,” June 22, 2019
- National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA), Speaker, “College Athletics,” June 23, 2018
- National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA), Speaker, “Athletics Compliance,” November 16, 2017
- Coalition of Women’s Initiatives in Law, Speaker, “Diversity Matters: Real Talk About Real Issues and Solutions,” October 2017
- DRI, Products Liability Conference, Speaker, “Sports Concussion Litigation,” February 2017
- American Bar Association, Forum on Entertainment & Sports 2016 Annual Meeting, Speaker, “Hot Topics in College Sports,” October 2016
- National Association of College & University Attorneys’ (NACUA), Speaker, “Navigating Legal Issues Involving Transgender Students,” and “College Athletics 101: What Every University Lawyer Should Know,” June 2016
- Michigan Community College Business Officer’s Association, Speaker, “Gainful Employment,” March 2015
- Association of Michigan Independent Colleges & Universities, Speaker, “Sexual Misconduct and Internal Investigations,” March 2015

- Association of Corporate Counsel, Speaker, “Emotional Intelligence for Lawyers in Unique Situations,” March 2015
- Opportunities for Underrepresented Scholars (OURS), Program of The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Speaker, “Legal Issues in High Education,” April 2015
- Lewis University, Speaker, “Sexual Violence and Athletics,” April 2015
- Southern Gas Association Legal Roundtable, Speaker, “Ethics: Who’s the Client - In-House Counsel Serving Multiple Roles,” July 2015

## Affiliations

- Economic Club of Chicago, Member
- Girls in the Game, Board Member
- National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA), Member
- NCAA Division II Infractions Appeal Committee, Chair
- Posse Foundation, Chicago Leadership Council
- Corporate Counsel Women of Color, Member
- National Bar Association, Member
- American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)

## Honors and Distinctions

- *The Best Lawyers in America*, 2023-2024, Listed in Illinois for Government Relations Practice
- *Crain’s Chicago Business*, 2018, 2020, 2022, 2024, Listed as one of “Chicago’s Notable Women Lawyers”
- *National Law Journal*, 2022, Listed as one of the “Sports/Gaming/Entertainment Law Trailblazers”
- *Corporate Counsel*, 2022 Women, Influence and Power in Law Awards, Recognized for “Thought Leadership”
- *Savoy Magazine*, 2022, Listed as one of the Country’s “Most Influential Black Lawyers”
- *Crain’s Chicago Business*, 2022, Listed as one of “Chicago’s Notable Gen X Leaders in Accounting, Consulting and Law”
- *Crain’s Chicago Business*, 2019-2020, Listed as one of “Chicago’s Notable Minorities in Accounting, Consulting & Law”
- *Emerging Lawyers*, 2017, Listed for School Law