

Press Release

Akerman Continues Rapid Growth in Chicago with Higher Education Lawyer LaKeisha Marsh

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Akerman LLP, a top 100 U.S. law firm serving clients across the Americas, today announced the continued expansion of the Chicago office with the addition of partner LaKeisha Marsh in the Government Affairs & Public Policy Practice Group. She is experienced in corporate matters and broadens the firm's capabilities in regulatory compliance within the higher education industry.

“The need for experienced legal counsel and proactive services for higher education institutions has been increasingly evident as they face mounting financial pressures and stringent regulations,” said Richard Spees, chair of Akerman's Government Affairs & Public Policy Practice Group and office managing partner of the Washington, D.C., office. “LaKeisha is an exceptional lawyer who brings years of dedicated practice within the higher education community. Her experience in a broad range of corporate and regulatory compliance matters will provide significant value to clients seeking to navigate the myriad laws and standards that govern higher education institutions and their business strategies. We are privileged to have LaKeisha join our team, as we continue to build a robust presence in the Chicago market.”

Marsh focuses her practice on the higher education

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industry, representing various institutions including colleges and universities in a wide range of topics including federal and state regulatory compliance, accreditation, state licensure, distance education programs and collegiate sports. As former senior counsel for an entrepreneurial educational system, Marsh also has experience representing educational institutions with respect to the structuring and execution of a broad range of transactional, restructuring, finance, and corporate governance issues, mergers and acquisitions and litigation management.

She regularly advises clients on matters involving student discipline and accommodations, Title IX compliance including complaints and investigations, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Clery Act and the Program Integrity regulations. She brings vast working experience and knowledge of the laws, regulations and informal guidance that together govern institutional participation in the programs of student financial assistance under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. She has managed all facets of student litigation, representing an institution when dealing with the Department of Education and federal and state cases. As a former assistant director with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and as the sitting chair of the NCAA Division II Infractions Appeal Committee, Marsh has firsthand knowledge of the NCAA bylaws and rules for Division I, II and III athletics and has handled an array of NCAA compliance-related matters.

Marsh's experience in the higher education sector complements Akerman's existing practice in Washington, D.C., with long-served clients across the entire spectrum of postsecondary education in various federal and state regulatory compliance, accreditation, state licensure and corporate governance issues.

Marsh joins Akerman during a period of sustained growth in the Chicago market. The team has

welcomed 10 lawyers from various law firms within the last five months, including Jeffrey Sharer, co-chair of Akerman's Data Law Practice; partner and national trial lawyer Dean Dickie; commercial litigation partners Jeffrey Mayer and Catherine Miller; labor and employment litigation partners John "Pete" Morrison and John Roache, and international patent litigation partner John Gresens, among others.

About Akerman LLP

Akerman LLP is a leading transactions and trial law firm known for its core strengths in middle market M&A, within the financial services and real estate industries, and for a diverse Latin America practice. With more than 600 lawyers and government affairs professionals and a network of 20 offices, it is ranked among the top 100 law firms in the United States by *The American Lawyer* (2015). Akerman also is ranked among the top 50 law firms for diversity in *The American Lawyer's Diversity Scorecard* (2015).

Akerman's Government Affairs & Public Policy Practice Group includes a bi-partisan team of lawyers and public policy advisors located in Washington, D.C., Illinois and Florida. The group is experienced in appropriations, transportation, hospitality, healthcare, education, Native American Affairs and local government representation.