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Former Univ. of Missouri System General Counsel Joins Husch Blackwell

STEVE OWENS REENTERS PRIVATE PRACTICE AFTER 14 YEARS OF SERVICE WITH THE UM SYSTEM

Husch Blackwell is pleased to announce that Steve Owens has joined the firm's Kansas City office as senior counsel in its Higher Education practice group. Owens arrives at the firm after serving as the general counsel of the University of Missouri System for the past 14 years. He is the only person in the university's history to serve as the UM system's general counsel, interim UM System president, and interim MU chancellor at different points during his tenure.

Owens' work heading up the MU System's legal department has been lauded for its forward-thinking approach and ability to implement key changes through consensus building. During his tenure, Owens oversaw the implementation of solutions addressing an array of key areas, including crisis management and crisis communications, diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, campus safety and reporting and Title IX issues, athletic department operations and athletic conference realignment, capital projects, litigation, academic medical center operations and governance, intellectual property transfers and transactions, internal investigations, and system-wide governance issues, among a score of other vital areas of focus. Owens has also frequently represented parties in civil mediations, and he has completed training as a mediator conducted by the University of Missouri Center for the Study of Dispute Resolution.

“For well over a decade, Steve has been one of the most respected university GCs in the country,” said Hayley Hanson, a partner with Husch Blackwell’s Higher Education team. “He has demonstrated an ability to solve difficult legal, cultural and operational issues. Our clients will benefit greatly from Steve’s broad experience—he integrates legal know-how with an executive-level understanding of the challenges that today’s institutions of higher education face.”

Owens has twice served as a member of the board of directors of the National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA) and currently serves as NACUA’s Treasurer and on its four-member Executive Committee. He was also the former chair of NACUA’s Council on Diversity and Inclusivity.

“I couldn’t be happier than to reenter private practice alongside the great team that Hayley and others have built at Husch Blackwell,” said Owens. “Among the university general counsel community, it is no secret that this firm is viewed as a national leader in higher education law, and I look forward to working closely with such a talented group of colleagues.”