HUSCH BLACKWELL

Elizabeth S. Samples

SENIOR COUNSEL

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OVERVIEW

Elizabeth is a trusted advisor to her educational institution clients, bringing nearly 20 years of experience to her work providing day-to-day counsel, conducting investigations and reviews, training, and advising on policy and system development.

Elizabeth is a recognized leader in conducting internal investigations, often engaged by colleges, universities, and schools to navigate complex compliance landscapes and foster safer, more equitable environments. She is frequently called upon to lead teams in high-stakes internal investigations involving student, employee, or leadership conduct as well as employment, athletics, and discrimination matters. Her investigative work is thorough, impartial, and sensitive to key issues, and it demonstrates a deep understanding of the unique challenges faced by organizations responding to reports of misconduct.

With her background as an attorney for the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), Elizabeth offers guidance on federal civil rights compliance, including Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act/Section 504, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

> *"Elizabeth is very well informed, educated and has a great preparedness to respond to our questions."*
>
> — Title IX Workshop Attendee

Industry

Education

Services

Collegiate Athletics
Higher Education
K-12 Education
Title IX
Workplace Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

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Elizabeth has extensive experience in dispute resolution, including as a mediator and informal resolution facilitator. She has mediated early complaint resolutions at the U.S. Department of Education in civil rights cases and has served educational institutions as an informal resolution facilitator in discrimination matters. With her background in civil rights mediation, her advanced mediation skills and a strong background as a practitioner, Elizabeth is an effective and impartial facilitator and mediator.

Elizabeth serves as a reliable advisor on many institutional compliance matters, providing both daily guidance and broader audits and reviews to offer practical suggestions for reducing risk and improving policies and systems. She also plays a key role in training and policy development, helping administrators, faculty, and staff gain the knowledge and resources necessary to support nondiscrimination principles and ensure regulatory compliance. Clients appreciate her clear, tailored training sessions covering a range of complex topics such as nondiscrimination, investigations, and other compliance issues.

Elizabeth is passionate about helping her clients adopt proactive, preventative measures that reduce legal exposure and empower them to focus on their missions.

Experience

INVESTIGATION AND ADJUDICATION

- Conducted dozens of civil rights compliance investigations related to complaints of sex, race, and disability discrimination and harassment.
- Conducted multiple investigations under institutional Title IX policies, regarding allegations of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.
- Conducted multiple investigations related to athletic teams and departments, stemming from individual complaints or related to broader climate issues.
- Conducted multiple climate and policy reviews regarding sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking, and reporting options and resources.
- Conducted faculty and staff employee grievance investigations.
- Advised administrators and panel members regarding adjudication and appeal processes and outcomes.

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Experience

COMPLIANCE AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- Conducted dozens of trainings for clients regarding Title IX, sexual harassment, informal resolution, athletics, race discrimination, pregnancy and parenting, Clery Act, FERPA, investigation best practices, and promoting equity and inclusion. Clients include public and private universities, research institutions, proprietary schools, publicly traded education companies, and multiple state affinity groups for higher education.
- Presented webinars and trainings for Husch Blackwell on various higher education legal topics.
- Conducted Title IX Equity in Athletics audits for multiple clients.
- Obtained insufficient evidence finding on behalf of multiple clients from the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights on matters alleging discrimination and harassment.
- Negotiated several Resolution Agreements with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights on behalf of institutions and assisted with required action items and monitoring reporting.
- Advised on preventative and responsive actions related to digital accessibility and other issues related to effective communications and compliance with Federal disability laws.
- Provided college and university Boards of Trustee updates regarding specific matters or education related to regulatory updates.

EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

- Prepared position statements and successfully resolved EEOC complaints on behalf of clients.
- Drafted and reviewed employee policies and employee handbooks.
- Provided employee-specific trainings on issues related to discrimination and harassment.

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Education

- J.D., University of Wisconsin Law School
  - *Wisconsin Journal of Law*, Gender & Society, 2006-2008
- B.S. & B.A., Saint Louis University
  - *summa cum laude*
  - Phi Beta Kappa

Admissions

- Missouri
- Kansas

Clerkship

- The Hon. Richard D. Greene, Kansas Court of Appeals

Community Leadership

- Catholic Education Foundation, Board Member, 2016-2023
- Saint Louis University Kansas City Alumni Club, President, 2009-2020

Title IV Federal Student Aid & Student Funding

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