

Press Release: Bowditch Taps Civil Rights Expert to Help Lead Its Higher Education Group

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Boston, Framingham, and Worcester, MA – January 25, 2022 – Bowditch & Dewey has bolstered its Higher Education Group, which comprises a diverse group of attorneys dedicated to representing the interests of more than 30 colleges, universities, and private schools, by hiring civil rights expert, Brigid Harrington, as Of Counsel in the firm's Employment and Labor practice. Brigid will partner with attorney Chelsie Vokes to spearhead the firm's sexual misconduct and discrimination practice, including Title IX counseling, training, compliance, policy making, investigations, and service on hearing panels.

This will be a banner year for education policy. The Biden Administration is expected to unveil major civil rights proposals, revise sexual misconduct rules, and create new protections for transgender students. It also marks the 50th anniversary of Title IX, which bars discrimination based on sex.

"Our education clients will benefit greatly from Brigid and Chelsie's expertise, as they navigate the Biden administration's expected new policies," says Tim Van Dyck, Practice Area Leader for the firm's Employment and Commercial Litigation practices. "Brigid and Chelsie have thoroughly prepared for this transition and there is no question that the two of them, along with the rest of our experienced Higher Education team, are poised and ready to provide our clients with the kind of advice, counsel, training, and investigative expertise that they will need at this critical juncture."

Brigid brings a depth of experience involving higher education, helping clients comply with a wide variety of civil rights laws and regulations related to discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. She has conducted numerous Title IX and other civil rights investigations, helped institutions draft non-discrimination and harassment policies that comply with federal and state law, and trained faculty, staff, and students on their obligations under these laws. Certified by ATIXA in Title IX Administration and Title IX Athletics Compliance, she also has received training in Title IX compliance from the Student Conduct Institute at SUNY.

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“I am thrilled to join a firm with such a tremendous reputation among institutions of higher education,” said Brigid. “I look forward to using my 16 years of investigative expertise to guide our clients through this complex legal terrain.”

Prior to joining Bowditch, Brigid was the Director of Civil Rights at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, where she managed a staff of investigators and deputy coordinators and implemented a new Title IX Policy and sexual and gender-based harassment process to ensure that policies, investigations, and trainings were fully compliant with federal and state law. She also worked at Harvard University as an Investigator for the Office of Dispute Resolution. At Harvard, Brigid conducted investigations involving multiple allegations and complex issues including matters related to faculty conduct. Brigid regularly interacted with administrators and outside attorneys and maintained standards of sensitivity and discretion.

Brigid is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania (B.A., *magna cum laude*, 2002) and Boston College Law School (J.D., *cum laude*, 2005). Prior to her work in higher education, Brigid was an Assistant District Attorney in New York City.

ABOUT BOWDITCH & DEWEY LLP

Bowditch is a highly regarded law firm handling sophisticated transactions, challenging litigation and complex regulatory issues for businesses, families and institutions throughout Massachusetts, the region and beyond.

With more than 60 lawyers seamlessly connected in three strategic Massachusetts offices – Boston, Framingham and Worcester – Bowditch is a preeminent law firm, deep in the areas of business and finance, real estate and environmental, litigation, employment and labor, and estate and tax planning, delivering outstanding client satisfaction and big-firm quality legal services.

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