

Higher Education

Terri leads the firm's Higher Education Group where she counsels colleges and universities on a variety of higher education legal issues, including academic affairs, student affairs, labor and employment matters, Title IX and Enough is Enough compliance, and civil rights (including sexual misconduct) investigations and complaint resolution.

Terri knows higher education institutions from the inside. She began her legal career at HSE as an associate in 1989 but left us in 1992 to explore opportunities in higher education. Before returning to the firm in 2000, Terri taught at Monroe Community College (Rochester, NY) and spent seven years at the State University of New York College at Brockport as a faculty member, academic administrator, Director of Affirmative Action, and Associate Director of Human Resources. As the Director of Affirmative Action, she worked directly with the President of the College and was responsible for ensuring the College's compliance with certain labor and employment laws and policies. Her responsibilities also included key areas of student affairs, including Title IX and Section 504. In this role—more than 20 years ago and long before the Office for Civil Rights' current focus on conducting discrimination investigations—Terri investigated complaints of discrimination made by students, faculty, and staff, including sexual harassment. (She has also conducted such investigations in the private sector, at the highest levels of for-profit organizations.) In addition, Terri is fully trained as a civil rights investigator and Title IX Coordinator, and regularly conducts investigations of alleged sexual harassment and misconduct. Upon her return to HSE in 2000, Terri's legal advice and guidance to our higher education clients called upon these real world, on-campus experiences. This experience was further deepened when Terri represented a client in connection with a high-profile Title IX investigation commenced by OCR and worked on that campus full-time for the 2014-2015 academic year as special counsel in its newly created Office of Title IX Programs and Compliance. During her time on campus, Terri worked on and was involved with every aspect of Title IX compliance, training, outreach, and programming, including:

- Developing Title IX-compliant policies and procedures
- Conducting training—for faculty, administrators, staff, and students—regarding policy compliance and responsible employee status
- Overseeing the Title IX investigation process
- Conducting “Trauma-Informed Title IX Investigations” training for internal and external investigators



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Admissions

New York
New York State courts
U.S. District Court for the Western
District of New York

Education

Georgetown University Law Center,
cum laude
SUNY Brockport, *summa cum laude*

- Guiding students and parents through the investigation and complaint resolution process
- Facilitating campus discussions with faculty, staff, and students regarding community values and their reflection in institutional policies
- Serving as a resource to working groups of faculty, staff, and students studying and making recommendations regarding policies and protocols
- Developing resource guides and related materials for students associated with confidential and non-confidential supports and resources available on- and off-campus
- Building internal and external relationships with on-campus and off-campus individuals and offices committed to combatting sexual violence, including off-campus law enforcement, SANE nurses, and rape crisis counselors
- Presenting at parent orientation sessions regarding Title IX
- Selecting and administering a sexual assault campus climate survey

Areas of Focus

- Federal and state regulation and higher education and non-profit entities
- College and non-profit legal risk management and corporate governance

History of HSE's Commitment to the Higher Education Sector

On August 2, 2016, HSE offered its first daylong higher education legal conference, hosted by Nazareth College in Rochester, NY: "Higher Education Institute: Avoiding Compliance Pitfalls Across Your Campus-From Admissions to the Title IX Office to the Board Room." Terri conceived of and led a team in the development and organization of the Higher Education Institute. [Learn more about the Higher Education Institute here.](#)

The Higher Education Institute laid the groundwork for the HSE Institute. Our HSE Institute evolved out of years of sharing legal updates and insight with our clients and, more broadly, with members of the higher education, business, and non-profit community. We heard from attendees that there is great value in sharing knowledge and that the roundtables, workshops, and training sessions we have offered over the years have fostered meaningful connections among clients, colleagues, and peers across industry groups and functional areas. With these goals and outcomes in mind, we created our HSE Institute tagline—Inform. Connect. Share.

The third daylong HSE Institute conference, this one focusing on higher education, was held on August 3, 2017 on the Nazareth College campus in Rochester, New York: "Title IX and Enough is Enough: A Mandate and a Microscope—Preparing You for Next Year. [Learn more about the 2017 program here.](#)

The Institute's earliest predecessor was the Higher Education Roundtable. Terri developed the Roundtable in 2009, in collaboration with two higher education institutions. This luncheon series was devoted to legal issues in higher education and was designed to keep college and university administrators up-to-date on the critical and dynamic legal issues they face. The sessions were held in Geneva, NY and Rochester, NY, making them easily accessible to campuses across New York State. The panelists addressed numerous legal issues, in a practical, problem-solving format, including Title IX and sexual misconduct, higher education litigation updates, crisis and emergency preparedness, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and governmental oversight and investigations.

Labor and Employment

Terri is also a member of the firm's Labor and Employment Group where she counsels private employers, colleges, not-for-profit organizations, and municipalities on a variety of issues in labor, employment, and human resources law. As previously stated, she served as the Associate Director of Human Resources at the State University of New York College at Brockport and brings this hands-on experience to her labor and employment practice.

Areas of Focus

- Collective bargaining, contract negotiations, and compliance with the National Labor Relations Act
- Defense of discrimination and sexual harassment charges, including representation before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the New York State Division of Human Rights
- Employment contract claims and employment-related torts
- Grievance and arbitration/dispute resolution
- Leave issues, including compliance with the FMLA, ADA, and Workers' Compensation Law
- Mergers and acquisitions
- Personnel policies and practices, and compliance with New York and federal laws
- Representing management before federal and state agencies
- Wage and hour issues

Professional and Civic Affiliations

- Member, National Association of College and University Attorneys
- Member, Board of Trustees, The Aquinas Institute
- Member, Board of Directors, State University of New York College at Brockport Foundation
- Former Member, Board of Trustees, Community Place of Greater Rochester
- Former Member and Vice President, Board of Trustees, Geva Theatre Center
- Former Member, Board of Trustees, Greece Montessori School
- Former Member, Board of Directors Family Services of Rochester
- Former Member, Zoning Board of Appeals, Town of Clarkson
- Former Member, Environmental Commission, City of Rochester

Honors and Awards

- Named by *The Daily Record* as one of Rochester's Attorneys of the Year, 2016
- Recipient, "Top Women in Law" Award, *The Daily Record*, 2013
- Selected to the Upstate New York Super Lawyers list, 2012-2019 in the field of Schools & Education

Publications

- Contributing Author, *White New York Business Entities*, Not-for-Profit Corporation Law
- Co-Author, "Graduate assistants have collective bargaining rights," *Buffalo Law Journal*, September 12, 2016

News

- Featured, Discovery - A Q&A, in brief, "Theresa Conroy gives it up for *Hamilton*, wit, secretive singing and a questionable sandwich," *Super Lawyers Magazine*, 2017
- Featured, "Higher-ed focus reaches beyond Title IX issue," *Buffalo Law Journal*, August 29, 2016

Presentations

- Co-Presenter, "An Employee Walks into Your Office to Make a Complaint: Investigation Tips and Techniques," Harter Secrest & Emery's Labor and Employment Law Conference, April 30, 2019
- Co-Presenter, "How to Prevent a Title IX Lawsuit: Institutional Efforts to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence," 3rd Annual Title IX ExecuSummit, July 24, 2018
- Organizer and Presenter, "Can a Different Kind of Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Program Change Your Workplace?" Harter Secrest & Emery Labor and Employment Law Conference, April 26, 2018
- Co-Presenter, "Sexual Harassment Complaints: What Can HR Learn from the Student Side?" College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA) Spring Conference, April 9, 2018
- Co-Presenter, "Sexual Misconduct Investigations and Resolution: Legal and Best Practice Standards" series, Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse, NY, February 27, March 6, and May 8, 2018
- Presenter, "The Headlines Continue: The Epidemic of High Profile Sexual Harassment Claims," Harter Secrest & Emery, November 3, 2017
- Organizer, Presenter and Co-Presenter, Harter Secrest & Emery's Higher Education Conference "Title IX and Enough and Enough: A Mandate and a Microscope—Preparing You For Next Year," August 3, 2017
- Co-Presenter, "Title IX's Impact on College Campuses," Eyes on the Future Radio Show, Greater Rochester Enterprise, July 2017
- Presenter, "Title IX: Training, Information Sharing, and Discussion," Rochester Institute of Technology, April 11, 2017
- Organizer and Presenter, "The Epidemic of High Profile Sexual Harassment Claims: Solutions and Strategies to Create a Working Environment Where Harassment Can't Take Hold," Harter Secrest & Emery's Labor and Employment Law Conference, April 5, 2017
- Co-Presenter, "Clery and VAWA—Title VII vs. Title IX: The Employment Side of Combatting Sexual Assault on College Campuses," Eastern Association of College and University Business Officers (EACUBO) 2016 Annual Meeting, October 16-19, 2016
- Co-Presenter, "Title VII or Title IX: What's the Difference and Why Does it Matter?" College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA) Annual Conference and Expo, September 25-27, 2016
- Organizer, Presenter and Co-Presenter, Harter Secrest & Emery's "Higher Education Institute: Avoiding Compliance Pitfalls Across Your Campus—From Admissions to the Title IX Office to the Board Room," August 2, 2016. Presentations and training sessions included:
 - Conducting Trauma-Informed and Legally-Compliant Investigations, Hearings, and Appeals
 - Writing Investigative Reports and Outcome Letters

- Student and Employee Training Requirements under Title IX, Clery/VAWA and New York's "Enough is Enough"
- Title VII vs. Title IX/Clery/VAWA: What's the Difference and Why Does It Matter?
- Co-Presenter, "Title IX Case Update," University of Rochester, May 2016
- Presenter, "Title IX: Lessons Learned," Title IX Workshop, LeMoyne College, March 3, 2016
- Co-Presenter, "Enough is Enough Update," Title IX Workshop, LeMoyne College, March 3, 2016
- Presenter, "Title IX: Opportunities for Innovation and Collaboration," Upstate New York College Collaboration, October 6, 2015
- Co-Presenter, "Trauma-Informed Title IX Investigations: Conducting Compassionate and Effective Investigations," Nazareth College, August 4, 2015
- Co-Presenter, "From Trusting Our Judgment to Questioning Our Commitment: The Evolution of OCR's Title IX Enforcement," Higher Education Roundtable hosted by Hobart and William Smith Colleges, May 2014

Terri has presented before the Eastern Association of College and University Business Officers (EACUBO), the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA), Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA), the SUNY Registrars Association (SUNYRA), the SUNY Field Administrators Consortium, the New York State Organization of Bursars and Business Administrators (NYSOBBA), Rochester Area Colleges (RAC), and the Upstate New York College Consortium (UNYCC).

Terri has been asked to speak at higher education conferences, on many college campuses, and in many workplaces. Presentation and training topics include the following:

- Higher Education Topics
 - Preventing and addressing sexual harassment and sexual misconduct on campus
 - Title IX and Enough is Enough
 - Title IX and athletics
 - Title IX and on-call first responders
 - Conducting trauma-informed Title IX investigations
 - The Clery Act, campus safety, and emergency preparedness
 - FERPA
 - Legal issues in academic advising
 - Legal issues in college admissions
 - Legal issues associated with internships and field placements
 - The accommodation of disabilities in higher education
 - The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act
 - College and university diversity initiatives and the law
 - The fiduciary obligations of members of Boards of Trustees
- Labor and Employment Topics
 - Conducting Title VII investigations
 - Conflict resolution
 - Criminal background checks

- Employment law for managers
 - Improving employee performance
 - New York Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Act
 - Preventing and addressing sexual harassment in the workplace
 - Reductions in force
 - Religious exemptions under the New York State Human Rights Law, Title VII, and Title IX
 - Supervising for success
- College Instructor, "Legal Issues in Higher Education" (graduate-level program)
 - Instructor, Certificate Program, Cornell School of Labor and Industrial Relations, "Human Resources and the Law"

