



September 16 & 17, 2025

Nashua, NH

NASPA and Stetson Law’s Center for Excellence in Higher Education Law & Policy are proud to present the first ever *Student Affairs Law & Policy Training Symposium* for student affairs professionals. Join us for two days of training and take a deep dive into two hot-button issues (free speech and Title VI) with our expert panels of speakers.

Day 1: Free Speech



Michelle Deutchman

Executive Director of the UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement
University of California - Irvine



Neal Hutchens

University Research Professor
University of Kentucky



Kristen Shahverdian

Program Director of Campus Free Speech
PEN America

Do you feel like there is never enough time to discuss free speech and how it impacts life on campus? Do you have questions you want to discuss with leading experts and with your student affairs colleagues? If the answer is ‘yes,’ please join us for a day of conversation and learning.

This session will provide participants an overview and review of the legal “basics” of campus free speech and academic freedom and will connect these principles to the mission and day-to-day life of higher education. Throughout our time together we will dive deeply into some of the pressing and challenging expression issues confronting student affairs professionals including: upholding institutional commitments to free speech *and* to access and belonging; creating and applying time, place and manner regulations; considering the role of protest, and exploring how institutions engage in campuswide discussions and education about these issues. This workshop will use case studies and small working

groups. Participants will leave with strategies and promising practices to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will be able to better articulate and communicate to stakeholders why the values of open expression and academic freedom are foundational to higher education, and how they interact with other values such as belonging and access.
- Participants will review and refine their understanding of how legal principles about the First Amendment, open expression and academic freedom inform decision-making.
- Participants will be able to apply both legal and non-legal principles to complex scenarios including how to respond to student demands without contravening institutional values.
- Participants will have the opportunity to interact with, learn from and collaboratively identify promising practices to share with colleagues.

Day 2: Title VI



Martha Compton

**Regional Director of Client Relations
and Engagement**
Grand River Solutions



Brigid Harrington

Senior Attorney
Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP



Omar Torres

**Coordinator and Director Services,
Hazing & Student Conduct**
Grand River Solutions

As colleges and universities face increased attention to discrimination based on race, national origin, shared ancestry, and ethnic identity, higher education professionals must be equipped with the tools to address complex issues at the intersection of law, campus climate, and institutional values. This session will explore colleges' and universities' obligations to address discrimination and harassment under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, with a focus on contemporary challenges, including changing government enforcement, and addressing issues of Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and racialized speech.

Panelists will examine how federal law requires institutions to assess and investigate Title VI issues and discuss balancing obligations to prevent and respond to discrimination and harassment while also allowing for free expression. Participants will learn how to evaluate policies and practices, identify legal

and reputational risk factors, and implement coordinated responses to reports of discrimination. Through case studies and practical scenarios, participants will practice responding to complaints, identifying and assessing strategic considerations, and learn tips for conducting investigations and facilitating campus-wide or targeted responses to prevent and remediate the effects of discrimination on students and employees.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify and analyze emerging Title VI issues impacting campus climate, including complaints related to race, national origin, shared ancestry, and ethnic identity. Participants will develop a nuanced understanding of how contemporary campus controversies (including those involving antisemitism, Islamophobia, and racialized speech, and how they are framed and investigated under Title VI).
- Evaluate institutional responsibilities under Title VI to prevent and respond to discrimination, harassment, and hostile environments. Participants will learn how to assess institutional policies and practices for compliance, including recognizing when speech or conduct may trigger legal and reputational risks.
- Apply best practices in responding to Title VI complaints through coordinated campus responses, equitable investigation practices, and proactive education and training. Participants will explore case studies and develop skills for managing investigations, facilitating dialogue, and implementing effective resolution strategies aligned with federal guidance and current legal standards.

SPEAKER BIOS:

Brigid Harrington

Senior Attorney

Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP

Brigid is a member of Hunton Andrews Kurth's higher education team. She has extensive experience in Title IX, VAWA, ADA, Title VI, Title VII, and athletics compliance, and guides clients through complex issues of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. Brigid excels in developing non-discrimination and harassment policies, conducting Title IX investigations, and training university communities on compliance obligations.

Before entering private practice, Brigid was the Director of Civil Rights at the University of Massachusetts. There, she led a team of investigators and deputy coordinators in implementing comprehensive processes surrounding Title IX policies and sexual and gender-based harassment and ensured such policies, investigations, and trainings were in compliance with federal and state law. She also served as an Investigator at Harvard University's Office of Dispute Resolution. Prior to her work in higher education, Brigid was an Assistant District Attorney in New York City.

Omar Torres

Coordinator and Director Services, Hazing & Student Conduct

Grand River Solutions

Omar is a seasoned higher education professional with over 20 years of experience working at various colleges and universities. As a subject matter expert in student conduct, hazing prevention, and Title VI compliance, Omar brings extensive knowledge and strategic insight to navigating complex campus issues. In addition to expertise in student conduct and Title VI, Omar has significant experience providing support and technical guidance on Title IX and Clery Act compliance. Omar earned a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) from Northeastern University.

Martha Compton

Regional Director of Client Relations and Engagement

Grand River Solutions

Martha Compton is a Regional Director of Client Relations and Engagement at Grand River Solutions. Martha has over 20 years of experience in higher education, specifically investigating and resolving student conduct, sexual misconduct, and interpersonal violence matters. Martha is a nationally recognized expert in student conduct and has held leadership positions within the Association for Student Conduct Administration, including President. Martha has trained thousands of individuals across the country on program and policy development as well as conducting investigations, hearings, and informal resolutions.

Kristen Shahverdian

Program Director of Campus Free Speech

PEN America

Kristen Shahverdian is the program director of Campus Free Speech at PEN America. In her role she advocates for free expression and academic freedom in higher education and leads a team of educators who help campus leaders, faculty, staff and students uphold free speech and academic freedom while maintaining inclusive campuses. She regularly provides commentary and speaking engagements related to free expression in higher education and has authored numerous blogs, statements and articles including, “Campuses for All: How Free Speech Education Can Protect and Enrich Colleges and Universities” for *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, and “How campuses can protect free speech and student safety amid the Israel-Hamas war” in *Higher Ed Dive*.

Before joining PEN America, Shahverdian was a senior lecturer at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and an adjunct professor at Rowan University and Temple University. She received her BA from Hamilton College, her MFA from Temple University, and her MA in socially engaged art from Moore College of Art & Design. She spent twenty years as a practicing artist and teacher - both roles that led to her current role advocating for free expression in higher education. She is also a writer and editor for the Philadelphia-based online dance journal *thINKingDANCE*.

Neal Hutchens

Professor and Chair

University of Kentucky Department of Higher Education

Neal Hutchens is a University Research Professor and faculty member in the Department of Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation at the University of Kentucky. His research centers on topics dealing with the intersections of higher education law, policy and practice, with much of his scholarship centered on issues of free speech and academic freedom. Among his publications, Neal is on the author team for the seventh edition of *The Law of Higher Education: Essentials for Legal and Administrative Practice*, a leading treatise on higher education law. Alongside his academic writings, he has written for publications that include *The Conversation*, *The Hechinger Report*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *Inside Higher Ed*. He is regularly asked to comment on stories involving legal issues in higher education, including for *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *Inside Higher Ed*. Neal earned his Ph.D. in education policy from the University of Maryland and his J.D. from the University of Alabama School of Law.

Michelle N. Deutchman

Executive Director of the UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement

University of California - Irvine

Michelle N. Deutchman is the inaugural executive director of the UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement (Center). In this role, she oversees the Center's operations, programming and research including its multidisciplinary national fellowship program. Deutchman, a leading expert on expression in higher education, facilitates workshops for staff, students, administrators and law enforcement on First Amendment principles and how to safeguard free speech at universities while simultaneously maintaining a safe and inclusive campus climate. Her work to study and shape the discourse on expression and engagement touches all 10 UC campuses as well as the national conversation about higher education.

Before joining the Center, Deutchman served for 14 years as western states civil rights counsel and national campus counsel for the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), a non-profit organization that combats bigotry, prejudice and anti-Semitism. From 2014-2018, Deutchman taught a law seminar at UCLA School of Law on Contemporary Free Exercise Issues. She earned her Juris Doctor from the University of Southern California Gould School of Law, and is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate in Political Science from the University of California at Berkeley where she met her husband as an undergraduate. They now have two children and a dog named Berkeley.

Student Affairs Law and Policy Training Symposium: Schedule At a Glance

All times are in Eastern Time and are subject to change

September 16th - September 17th 2025

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9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Registration
10:00 AM - 10:15 AM	Welcome and Panelist Introductions
10:15 AM - 11:45 AM	AM Programming
11:45 AM - 12:00 PM	Break
12:00 PM - 12:45 PM	Working Lunch
12:45 PM - 1:00 PM	Break
1:00 PM - 1:30 PM	Lunch Debrief
1:30 AM - 2:45 AM	PM Programming
2:45 PM - 3:00 PM	Break
3:00 PM - 4:45 PM	PM Programming
4:45 AM - 5:00 PM	PM Wrap-Up