



CAMPUS COUNSEL

A legal blog written for administrators, HR professionals, in-house counsel, and deans at colleges and universities

Brigid Harrington Quoted in “Ohio University replaces a diversity program as complaints grow about such initiatives in higher education” in WOUB Public Media

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A complaint filed with the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) contended that a program at Ohio University’s Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine, which was only open to minority students, violated Title VI of the racial discrimination section of the Civil Rights Act. The program in question – The Cleveland Clinic Physician Diversity Scholars Program – paired medical students from underrepresented minorities with doctors in the Cleveland Clinic health system who could serve as mentors. Brigid Harrington discussed the complaint and the use of Title VI to challenge diversity initiatives in higher education with *WOUB Public Media*.

Brigid stated that the use of Title VI to challenge diversity initiatives like the Physician Diversity Scholars Program is a relatively recent phenomenon. She noted that the law hasn’t changed since it was passed, but the OCR has changed. “You saw a huge uptick of these (complaints about diversity programs) during the Trump administration, and that is when you saw OCR enforcing . . . Title VI and Title IX scholarship requirements to favor the majority groups.”

Although the Biden administration is now in charge of the Department of Education, there hasn’t been a noticeable change in policy regarding these complaints. OCR has been able to change the implementation of the law on its own because of its power.

“A school would have to be willing to lose their federal funding first in order to challenge an OCR decision. . . . You know, you’re talking about federal student loans. You’re talking about federal grants. You’re talking about all kinds of federal funding that colleges and universities are really dependent on, in addition to the legal cost,” Brigid said.

Continue reading “[Ohio University replaces a diversity program as complaints grow about such initiatives in higher education](#)” on the WOUB Public Media website.