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Offit Kurman Secures Legal Settlement in Virginia Federal Defamation Case

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Offit Kurman principal and the chair of the Title IX and Education Practice Group Kimberly C. Lau has successfully resolved a federal defamation lawsuit on behalf of our client, a PhD student at Virginia Tech. The case arose from an interaction between the male Virginia Tech PhD student and a female Virginia Tech counselor, ultimately leading to a wrongful sexual misconduct complaint and an unjust suspension on the heels of a disciplinary process plagued by evidence tampering and gender bias in favor of the female counselor.

The lawsuit, filed in federal court due to the parties residing in different states, presented compelling evidence that the counselor lodged the complaint to deflect accountability for expressing romantic interest in her patient. As a result, the PhD student suffered significant disciplinary action at Virginia Tech, severely impacting his academic future. Our client was attending Virginia Tech on an F-1 visa, so his immigration status was also placed in jeopardy during the pendency of the disciplinary action.

Lau filed legal action against the counselor, who, despite no longer being employed by Virginia Tech, was represented in this case by the university's general counsel. Before the discovery phase commenced, Offit Kurman achieved a very favorable settlement for the PhD student, including, without limitation:

- The formal retraction of the sexual misconduct complaint filed by the counselor.
- The complete expungement of the PhD student's disciplinary record at Virginia Tech.
- His immediate reinstatement as a student at the university.
- The reinstatement of his status as a student in good standing.
- The reinstatement of his international student status at Virginia Tech.

This resolution marks a significant legal victory, reinforcing the PhD student's rights and restoring his academic standing.

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- Kimberly C. Lau

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