

# Michael J. Vernick, Leading Higher Education and White Collar Defense Attorney, Joins Jenner & Block in Washington, DC

## News

January 20, 2026

Jenner & Block is pleased to announce that Michael J. Vernick has joined as a Partner in its Washington, DC, office.

A leading authority on federal grant regulations and False Claims Act (FCA) investigations, Mike is widely recognized for his work resolving issues related to research funding and cooperative agreements. He brings extensive experience advising universities, research institutions, and academic medical centers, as well as entities in the defense and life science sectors facing critical enforcement and oversight matters. He regularly guides white collar clients through the increasingly demanding legal and regulatory framework for scientific research funding, internationally sponsored projects, and disclosure enforcement.

"We are thrilled to welcome Mike to Jenner & Block, adding his deep understanding of higher education compliance and federal research funding to our well-established areas of strength in education, investigations and compliance, and regulatory matters," said Co-Managing Partners Ishan Bhabha and Randy Mehrberg. "Mike's ability to defend institutions while advancing best-in-class capacity building and training initiatives makes him an invaluable resource to our clients and will further enhance Jenner's robust offerings on behalf of organizations and institutions in the higher education and research sector."

Mike joins Jenner after leading the government contracts group at an AmLaw 25 firm. His addition comes amidst the continued growth of the firm's Education Practice. The practice advises institutions on matters ranging from large-scale issues involving significant legal, political, and reputational risk to the routine yet increasing challenges faced by colleges and universities.

"Mike is a nationally recognized authority on the legal framework governing federal research funding," said Partners Lauren Hartz and Terri Mascherin, Co-Chairs of the Education Practice alongside Ishan Bhabha. "His comprehensive understanding of government contracts coupled with his experience in research security and international collaboration compliance, positions him as an indispensable advisor to the higher education community. We are excited to add Mike's skillset to our robust practice and ongoing work supporting clients in the Higher Education sector."

Mike also works with institutions on issues related to conflicts of interest, civil rights compliance, export controls, and cybersecurity requirements applicable to federal contractors and grant recipients. His experience responding to government investigations and audits includes those of the Department of Health and Human Services, the National Science Foundation, and the Department of Defense.

"Jenner & Block has an exceptional reputation for handling sophisticated regulatory matters and high-stakes government investigations," said Mike. "The firm's collaborative approach and commitment to excellence align perfectly with my practice philosophy. I'm thrilled to be joining Jenner at this crucially important time for clients across the higher education, research, defense, and life science sectors."

Mike earned his JD from George Mason University School of Law, and his BA from Tufts University. After law school, he clerked for the Honorable Christine Miller at the US Court of Federal Claims.

## **Related Attorneys**

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## **Related Capabilities**

Congressional Investigations

Culture Risk and Sensitive Investigations

Education

Government Contractor Litigation and Compliance

Investigations, Compliance, and Defense

Life Sciences

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