

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Inquiries:** Judy Pino, 202-869-5218

**Watch: NCLA Sues James Madison Univ. and U.S. Dept. of Ed. over Weaponized Title IX Investigation**

*Alyssa Reid v. James Madison University, et al.*



Photo: NCLA client Alyssa Reid is suing JMU for lack of due process in a Title IX complaint filed against her.

**Washington, DC (May 3, 2021)** – Today the New Civil Liberties Alliance, a nonpartisan, nonprofit civil rights group, filed a [complaint](#) in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia against James Madison University (JMU) and the U.S. Department of Education (ED) on behalf of Alyssa Reid. NCLA also released a [video](#) outlining the case of Ms. Reid, a former employee in the JMU School of Communication Studies. Sadly, Alyssa’s saga provides yet another example of how Title IX has been hijacked and weaponized to exact revenge for a bad breakup. NCLA’s complaint argues that the actions of James Madison University, assisted by the Dept. of Education, deprived Ms. Reid of her rights and entitlements as protected by the constitutions of both the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia, as well as by Title IX itself.

Ms. Reid was a nationally recognized debater employed by JMU as a full-time faculty member and Assistant Director of the “Individual Events Team” to assist with coaching, tournament travel, and community outreach. She was on track to obtain her dream job as head coach of the team.

In December 2018, Ms. Reid’s ex-girlfriend, a fellow coach at JMU, lodged an unfounded and ambiguous “Title IX Statement” against Ms. Reid with JMU. That “Statement,” however, did not conform to JMU’s own written policies for intaking, investigating, and responding to Title IX complaints. Because of the obvious deficiencies in the document, JMU’s Title IX Director took it upon herself to define the nature of the accusations against Ms. Reid, thereby creating the claims of a non-consensual relationship out of whole cloth. JMU then pursued an unconstitutional process based on the wrong policies, depriving Ms. Reid of her foundational notice and due

process rights. JMU compounded the inadequate due process problems by failing to provide Ms. Reid with accurate information about the accusations against her, by punishing her prior to the hearing, by not requiring her accuser to attend the hearing in person, by prohibiting Ms. Reid from cross-examining or otherwise confronting her accuser, and by violating Ms. Reid’s constitutional right to a fair hearing.

JMU structured its Title IX hearings based on ED’s guidance, often referred to as the “2011 Dear Colleague Letter,” which was designed to enhance the likelihood that anyone accused of sexual harassment or misconduct would face discipline—regardless of guilt or innocence. As a result, Ms. Reid never had a full and fair opportunity to challenge the validity of the charges against her, with the JMU defendants applying standards that not only flouted due process, but that were not even in place at the time of the relationship.

Despite withdrawing its offending and infamous “Dear Colleague Letter,” the Department of Education has simultaneously sought to avoid responsibility for the harms its unlawful prior guidance has caused students and faculty subjected to these “kangaroo courts.”

**NCLA released the following statements:**

“JMU readily jumped in on the side of our client’s accuser, becoming an advocate for what appears to have been an act of revenge over a bad breakup between two consenting adults. When Ms. Reid sought JMU’s assistance under Title IX to stop her ex-girlfriend’s harassment and abuse, JMU never bothered to respond. Instead, these Defendants moved forward with a ‘sham’ hearing, shielding the accuser from cross-examination and from having to support her accusations. These Defendants must be held accountable for their actions and prohibited from violating anyone else’s due process and confrontation clause rights in the future.”

— **Harriet Hageman, Senior Litigation Counsel, NCLA**

“At minimum, Ms. Reid was entitled to know what standards applied at JMU before her professional life was destroyed by an unsubstantiated Complaint concerning her private life. A letter from a Washington bureaucrat should not be the catalyst for such an unfair and devastating process.”

— **John Vecchione, Senior Litigation Counsel, NCLA**

**ABOUT NCLA**

[NCLA](#) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit civil rights group founded by prominent legal scholar [Philip Hamburger](#) to protect constitutional freedoms from violations by the Administrative State. NCLA’s public-interest litigation and other pro bono advocacy strive to tame the unlawful power of state and federal agencies and to foster a new civil liberties movement that will help restore Americans’ fundamental rights.

###