

Compliance Today – May 2022 Meet Keith Henderson: Balance your priorities

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Keith Henderson (keithhenderson86@gmail.com) was interviewed by SCCE & HCCA CEO Gerry Zack (gerry.zack@corporatecompliance.org) in January.

GZ: Let's begin in the earliest stages of your career. You got an undergraduate degree in political science with a minor in chemistry before going on to law school. What was it about the law that attracted you to it over chemistry, or any other field for that matter?

KH: My interest in law developed during my time as a student at Howard University. I was very active in student government in the 1980s, when students were involved in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and the extension of the Voting Rights Act, the HIV/AIDS epidemic was just starting to be recognized, and the breakup of the Soviet Union was just beginning. These experiences nurtured my interest in wanting to advocate for justice. Consequently, I decided that the best way for me to continue in my interest as an advocate would be in studying law. I never lost my interest in chemistry and the sciences generally. That part of my educational experience has served to help my understanding healthcare compliance and research compliance in higher education. It makes issues surrounding research integrity and laboratory environments very relatable. I believe that the combination of the two concentrations has provided me tools that I can try to utilize to make a better contribution as a compliance leader.

GZ: Your career has seen you involved in multiple industries, including healthcare, IT, entertainment and television, and the financial services sector, prior to your current role in higher education. What are some of the common issues in compliance programs that you see, regardless of the industry?

KH: The common thread within the diverse business and academic compliance environments that I have had the privilege to support is the chain of issues and concerns that commonly flow among all of them. Issues such as ethics and codes of conduct, privacy and confidential information, information and data security, conflicts of interest, harassment and discrimination, labor and employment, and financial accounting and securities regulations cross over to multiple industries in compliance. These issues have been compliance challenges across many of the organizations in my past compliance roles. There is of course focused emphasis on some issues, like financial regulatory compliance in the financial industry, that are specific to an industry.

GZ: What is it about higher education that drew you to your current role?

KH: I was drawn to work in higher education by my interest in advocacy and learning. I have always had an interest in higher education. I greatly enjoyed my college and graduate education experience. I had professors and administrators who served as mentors and role models. Those relationships, in addition to my first role model, my father, who served as an educator for over 40 years, significantly influenced my interest in education as a career. Higher education was a natural transition for me. I have taught as an adjunct law professor, and I continue to currently develop and present legal education and compliance training programs for several



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international legal and compliance associations. Developing and providing training had also been a key part of my corporate compliance experience. So, when the opportunity came to serve as an administrator at Morehouse School of Medicine, I found myself in familiar space. I enjoyed the challenge of working with faculty, staff, students, and trustees on compliance issues facing an academic medical center. The diversity and complexity of issues were fascinating. Working in higher education is a rewarding experience that has provided me the opportunity to contribute to the mission of the university, advocate for compliance, and work to support the students' college experience. As I continue my journey in higher education, I am even more motivated to take on the challenges in compliance.

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