

Michael J. Kennedy

Partner
Toronto

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Year of Call: Ontario, 1993



Michael Kennedy is a labour and employment lawyer in Hicks Morley's Toronto office. He is counsel to a wide variety of broader public sector employers such as universities and municipalities as well as large private-sector employers.

Michael is the chair of the firm's University Practice Group and is the former chair of the Municipal Practice Group. He is a trusted advisor to organizations across the country.

Michael appears as counsel in labour and employment disputes involving the courts, arbitration, the Ontario Labour Relations Board and the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario. Michael is experienced in providing strategic bargaining advice and he has unique experience as counsel in interest disputes. He works with executive teams and boards to implement sophisticated planning strategies. He has a proven track record of working with employers and unions to resolve complex disputes in an efficient and timely manner.

Areas of Practice

Labour Relations, Employment Law, Human Rights

Industries

Education (Universities), Government Ministries and Agencies (Federal and Provincial), Hospitality and Gaming, Mining and Natural Resources, Municipalities and Municipal Agencies, Technology

Awards and Recognition

Canadian Legal Lexpert® Directory (2015–2023) – Labour Relations (Consistently Recommended);
Employment Law (Repeatedly Recommended)

The Best Lawyers in Canada™ (2017–2024) – Labour and Employment Law

Legal 500 Canada 2018 – Labour and Employment Law

Representative Work

Advisor to the Council of Ontario Universities on mandatory vaccination and pandemic regulatory compliance.

Lead bargainer to renew faculty collective agreement during CCAA proceeding.

Counsel to universities responding to sexual assault allegations.

Counsel to universities responding to allegation of systemic discriminatory pay practices.

Ongoing advisor to boards and councils on a variety of legal, regulatory and government relations issues including challenges with executive compensation, human rights and social media issues.

Strategic bargaining advisor to universities and municipalities.

Lead counsel on a team of 25 lawyers in seeking injunctions and cease-and-desist orders for a municipality during a lengthy strike.

Counsel to university boards and municipal councils on executive hiring and terminations.

Counsel on multiple cease-and-desist applications and injunction proceedings.

Counsel at arbitration successfully upholding video surveillance.

Counsel for university on appeal to Court of Appeal dismissing action brought by a faculty association.

Counsel to a university board at arbitration involving the intersection of board governance rules and academic freedom.

Counsel to university on complex pension governance arbitration.

Advisor to university boards in obtaining government approval of executive compensation program.

Select Publications and Presentations

“Drafting Collective Agreements for Full-Time Faculty: Guiding Principles” and “Annual Lawyers’ Panel – Case Law Update” 2022 Faculty Bargaining Services Annual Conference (November 3–4, 2022)

“COVID-related Topics Webinar” Faculty Bargaining Services (September 23, 2021)

“Arbitration vs. Mediation: Protecting Rights and Resolving Conflicts” The Osgoode Certificate in Labour Law (April 23, 2021)

“Operating in a Pandemic World” Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs Virtual Labour Relations Seminar (January 20, 2021)



“Attendance Management” Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs Labour Relations Seminar (January 30, 2020)

“The Fire Chief’s Survival Guide” Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs Labour Relations Seminar (January 29, 2020)

“Academic Negotiations: Strategies for Success” Faculty Bargaining Services (April 24, 2019)

“2018 Annual Conference” Faculty Bargaining Services (October 31–November 2, 2018)

“OMHRA Fall Conference 2018” Ontario Municipal Human Resources Association (September 19–21, 2018)

“Senior University Administrators Course (SUAC)” Extended Education, University of Manitoba (June 10–15, 2018)

“Bill 148 Bootcamp” Ontario Municipal Human Resources Association Conference, Niagara Falls (February 7, 2018)

“Arbitration vs. Mediation: Protecting Rights and Resolving Conflicts” The Osgoode Certificate in Labour Law (February 6, 2018)

“Fire, Police & Emergency Services Bargaining Trends/Case Law, Legislative Changes & Recent Arbitrations” Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs Labour Relations Seminar, Toronto (January 17–18, 2018)

“Drafting Collective Agreements for Full-time Faculty” Faculty Bargaining Services Conference (November 2, 2017)

“Arbitrators Address Off-Duty Social Media Comments” *Canadian Employment Law Today* (2014)

Memberships and Affiliations

Canadian Association of Counsel to Employers – Member

Canadian Bar Association – Member

Ontario Bar Association – Member

American Bar Association – Member

Education

University of Western Ontario, LL.B.

Queen’s University, B.A. (Hons.)