

U. TO BE REPRESENTED BY LEADING LAW FIRM IN MENTAL HEALTH LAWSUIT

By: Chitra Marti, Staff Writer – The Daily Princetonian

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The University hired an important law firm last week to represent it in a mental health lawsuit in which a student was allegedly forced to withdraw following a suicide attempt. The student, who is unnamed in court filings, sued the University in March and is representing himself.

The University is being represented by William F. Maderer, of the firm Saiber LLC, and Ryan E. San George, federal court documents show. Maderer and San George will also be representing the seven individuals named as defendants in the case, including Vice President for Campus Life Cynthia Cherrey, Executive Director of University Health Services John Kolligian and University President Emerita Shirley Tilghman.

Neither Maderer nor San George responded to requests for comment.

Maderer has represented the University in the past, most notably in a case in which University admission officials allegedly used applicants' personal information to gain access to their admission decisions from Yale back in 2002. Then-Associate Dean and Director of Admission Stephen LeMenager used applicants' names, birth dates and social security numbers from their Princeton admissions files in order to get into the Yale system and see the outcomes of their applications there.

Although Tilghman maintained at the time that there was no evidence that LeMenager intended to do anything other than test the security of Yale's website, she also said, "Violations of basic ethical principles of privacy and confidentiality are especially serious in a university that teaches these principles and counts them among its core values."

In that case, as a result, LeMenager resigned. Dean of Admission Fred Hargadon also retired later that year.

Maderer is a managing member at Saiber, specializing in fields such as higher education law and white collar criminal defense. His profile notes that in the past he had been retained by "a prominent university to conduct independent investigation regarding allegations of improper access to computer systems and files."

Maderer has also written several publications, most recently "Ensure You Have Safeguards for Charged Students" and "Uphold Conduct Codes While Respecting Students' Free Speech Rights" earlier this year.

In this particular case, a student alleged that he was forced to leave the University following a suicide attempt. The student initially filed a complaint with the Department of Education's

Office of Civil Rights and later sued the University and seven top officials for disability discrimination.

The student is seeking appropriate compensatory and punitive damages, as well as “injunctive relief” to prevent the defendants from discriminating on the basis of disability against the student or anyone else.

“As a direct result of [Princeton University’s] actions, he has experienced extreme embarrassment, continuing stress and mental anguish, as well as out-of-pocket expenses, foregone wages and reputational injury,” the court documents read. “Instead [of caring for the student’s best interests], Princeton sought to protect itself from adverse publicity or liability.”