



**Oklahoma State University  
Black Alumni Society**

June 19, 2020

Dear OSU Family,

On this Juneteenth, it is with great concern and exasperation that we, the undersigned board members of the Oklahoma State University Black Alumni Society (OSUBAS), must express our hurt, disappointment and embarrassment regarding the recent events involving the Oklahoma State University (OSU) head football coach and the African-American student athletes on the football team. It is unconscionable that our most high-profile campus individual would be so lacking in awareness, especially during these historic and tumultuous times. After 400 years, this is the very reason the conscious of our nation is again on display through the widely diverse and historic protests of the *Black Lives Matter* movement. As the head coach of a major university you must be "aware" of your role and influence on the development of the young men whose lives are being entrusted to you. Alas, make no mistake this is not about the coach, a t-shirt, the players' music or cultural accessories. This is much larger and strikes clearly at the injustice, lack of respect and equitable treatment afforded Black student athletes and Black people.

Since 1949, when the first African American enrolled at Oklahoma State University our enduring commitment to OSU has gone largely unnoticed and unheard. The "Four Pillars" of the OSU Black Alumni Society focus on support of Black students, faculty, staff and the general OSU university community while preserving the history and honoring the legacy of African American contributions to Oklahoma State. For 25 consecutive years, the OSUBAS has delivered \$10,000 in annual scholarships to support students continuing their education at OSU. We work across industry in the public and private sectors. We number in the thousands and are the families and community of black people past and present attending OSU. We are most concerned about the underlying issues negatively impacting Blacks at OSU that have been further exposed by the student athlete's complaints. This speaks to the leadership and culture of the University as a whole and its general lack of understanding, sensitivity, and awareness of the plight of young Black men and Black people. Also, it appears to be accompanied by a lack of accountability for those charged with properly educating and developing our students. The OSUBAS offers our assistance and seeks to be a true partner and collaborator with OSU in creating a healthy and thriving cultural environment for everyone.

At this point, it is our opinion the damage is done as we are now in the national discourse. It is time for leadership to correct the wrongs, reconcile, and bind together to heal the wounds and use this experience to get better through measurable accountability going forward. Again, let us be clear, this is not just a problem of the OSU Athletic Department, but one the Oklahoma State University leaders must own. To this end, we strongly recommend that OSU initiate the following measurable actions during the 2020-2021 school year to create the infrastructure and governance necessary to make OSU and its Athletic Department a positive and national model of diversity and cultural respect:

- 1) Institute contractual instruments that tie employment and pay for key college administrators and coaches to diversity conduct, standards and values.
- 2) Require all employees of the Athletic Department to undergo immediate and annual documented "truth telling" focused cultural awareness/implicit bias training regarding racial, ethnic, religious, and other issues of discrimination.
- 3) Require "truth telling" focused cultural awareness/implicit bias training for all faculty and staff during the hiring and onboarding process.



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- 4) Establish an independent and objective system for monitoring the "racial and cultural health" of OSU and its Athletic Department.
- 5) Survey OSU Black Alumni and others ethnic groups annually for feedback and to gauge the "racial and cultural health" of OSU and its Athletic Department.
- 6) Establish a diverse OSU and Athletic Department "Advisory Council" with majority independent and OSUBAS members to support, report, and improve cultural strategy and transparency.
- 7) Partner with the OSUBAS to create a personal and professional development program for Black student athletes designed to prepare them for post-college life, careers, and alumni retention. Also, the program would include assigned OSUBAS mentors.
- 8) Establish an annual program where Black student athletes at OSU have meaningful dialogue with members of the OSU Campus Police and the Stillwater Police Department to build relationships and proactively understand and address issues of law enforcement.
- 9) Support active Black student athlete involvement in OSU's African American Student Association and other student organizations to remove them from the "athletic bubble" to better integrate them into the general student population.
- 10) Require coaching staffs and key athletic administrators to lead by engaging in personal interaction with, and outreach to, the OSUBAS and Black student campus organizations.

The above recommendations are, by no means, all encompassing. However, we do believe that they represent a good starting point for making measurable changes and improving the accountability of OSU and its Athletic Department. Also, competing colleges and universities who hope to capitalize on this moment of failure by OSU are cautioned to take care if living in a "glass house". It will be a journey, but this is an opportunity for OSU to improve and we will get better.

Also, we fully support OSU students' call for the renaming of Murray Hall and the removal of any other relics that pay tribute to a racist society. Going forward, the OSUBAS should be a part of the process for renaming Murray Hall and any other Black cultural facilities and sites on the OSU campus.

Finally, we commend the courageous leadership of Canadian-borne Chuba Hubbard, and the young athletes of all races who exercised their democratic First Amendment right in support of young Mr. Hubbard's stand to make us better. They inspire us with their commitment to team and wear the shirts of true Cowboys. This gives us hope!

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Oklahoma State University Black Alumni Society**

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