

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING AT A
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE FACULTY SENATE, OCTOBER 23, 1969,
CONCERNING THE BLACK STUDENT INCIDENT

I should like to outline to you the sequence of events leading to the dismissal of 14 Black athletes from The University of Wyoming football team and to review the situation following the dismissal.

In a letter dated October 14, the Black Students Alliance of The University of Wyoming announced its opposition on moral and human grounds to the engagement by the athletic or any other department of this University in contests with teams or representatives from Brigham Young University.

In this letter, the Black Students Alliance demanded that: (and I quote)

1. University officials at Wyoming as well as other schools in the Western Athletic Conference (WAC) not use student monies and university facilities to play host to and thereby in part sanction those inhuman racist policies of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.
2. Athletic directors in WAC refuse to schedule and play games with BYU so long as the LDS Church continues such policies as outlined above.
3. Black athletes in WAC protest in some way any contest with BYU so long as the LDS Church continues such policies.
4. All white people of good will--athletes included—protest with their Black fellows a policy clearly inhuman and racist. The symbol of protest will be the black arm band worn throughout any contest involving BYU.

This letter, as I stated earlier, was dated October 14.

On October 15 a meeting of the University Special Services Committee was held. This Committee is concerned with assisting minority students at the University of Wyoming and with correcting inequities wherever they are found to exist and, in general, I feel is doing an excellent job. Membership consists of representatives of the Black, Spanish-American, and Indian groups as well as students, 5 faculty members, and administrators. At the October 15 meeting, the Black representative indicated there were some concerns in the area of athletics, but stated he did not want to go into them until the October 22 meeting when he would bring three athletes to tell the Committee of the problems. No mention was made of the BSA letter of October 14, nor did I at this time know of its existence.

On October 16, the BSA letter was released to the news media, and hand-delivered to my office and to Coach Lloyd Eaton's.

On Tuesday, October 14, the entire football team was reminded by the coaching staff of its regulation against players participating in protests or demonstrations. The reminder came at this time because of the announced demonstration in conjunction with the October 15 Viet Nam moratorium.

Following delivery of the BSA letter October 16, Coach Lloyd Eaton again informed the Black athletes that no team member or group could participate in the demonstration against BYU and the LDS church and that no team member or group could wear black arm bands in support of those who did join the protest. This reminder was given in the football practice area.

On Friday morning, October 17, at approximately 9:00 a.m., the 14 Black athletes appeared at the football office wearing black arm bands. Coach Eaton viewed this as a violation of two rules: 1) A rule that players not form themselves into groups or factions within the team but that they act as individuals. 2) A rule that banned participation in student demonstrations of any kind. He informed the players that they were no longer members of the

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Wyoming football team. The athletes maintained they were not demonstrating, but were seeking a meeting with Coach Eaton to determine the extent to which they might be permitted to participate in a demonstration against BYU.

Immediately after the dismissals, my office was contacted and Coach Eaton and his staff came to Old Main to review the incident with my staff and me in my office. My office was also contacted on behalf of the athletes and they were granted a hearing. Coach Eaton advised me that he would talk with the Black athletes as individuals but not as a group concerning reinstatement; however, the athletes declined to meet with the Coach except as a group.

Throughout the day we were in contact with Governor Hathaway, Jerry Hollon, President of The University of Wyoming Board of Trustees, and other Board members. A meeting of the Board was convened at 8:00 p.m. Friday to give the athletes and coaching staff yet another hearing. The meeting was held in executive session to permit the freest possible exchange of ideas. The athletes, BSA representatives, and the entire coaching staff appeared before the Board at various times throughout the evening. The athletes took the position, and advised the Governor and me, that they could not play in the game at all unless permitted to wear black arm bands and would not play for Lloyd Eaton. After hearing all sides during a 7 1/2-hour session, the Board agreed that the matter of team discipline is delegated to the coaching staff. Public announcement of the coaching staff decision to dismiss the athletes came at the end of the Trustee hearing.

On Saturday, October 18, the Student Senate of The University of Wyoming met in special session to review the incident and passed a resolution against the dismissal and strongly urged an open forum with the athletes and coaches. A special meeting of the Faculty Senate was scheduled for 3:00 p.m. Sunday, October 19.

At the Faculty Senate meeting, a resolution was adopted by a 37-1 vote

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stating, "that the Faculty Senate request that the administration change the dismissal of the 14 Black student athletes to a temporary suspension pending investigation, that the Executive Committee of the Senate appoint an ad hoc committee of Senators to be joined by representatives of the Student Senate to conduct a full investigation of the facts and to make recommendations for faculty action. The Senate urges that the hearings be started within the present week."

When there was later some misunderstanding concerning the intent of the resolution, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee issued a statement of clarification reading, "The action taken by the Faculty Senate of The University of Wyoming at the Sunday afternoon meeting by a vote of 37-1 was that of withholding opinion or judgment

until all the facts are ascertained by the ad hoc committee of the faculty and student senators relative to the dismissal of the 14 athletes."

Members of the joint faculty-student ad hoc committee are Clyde K. Edmiston, chairman, chemistry; Donald A. Anderson, statistics; Robert J. McColloch, biochemistry; James G. Hook, education; Oliver L. Peters, English; E. George Rudolph, law; Hoke MacMillan, ASUW President; Alan Kirkbridge, Vice President; Al Widerspahn, senator; Bob Schuster, law student; Dan Burke, law student; and Dwight James, premed student.

The ad hoc committee first scheduled an open meeting for 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, October 22. In an attempt to review the facts as quickly as possible they met with the athletes, then the coaching staff in the Board Room of Old Main Tuesday night, October 21. This meeting was recessed at 1:30 a.m. and reconvened at 11:00 a.m. Wednesday, October 22. At 12:35 p.m., the committee released the following statement:

"The committee is meeting continuously with all parties to work toward resolution of this incident. Therefore, we have postponed the open hearing set

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for this evening. The committee feels it is making substantive progress for the benefit of all concerned. The date for a hearing is pending."

At a press conference today Coach Eaton made the following announcement concerning the no protest rule:

"After re-evaluating the coaching staff rule on dissent as it relates to all students on campus today, we are altering the rule so it applies only to players while directly participating in team activities.'

'As I said to President William D. Carlson and members of the Board of Trustees the day of the incident, at the completion of the current football season each of the black athletes will have the opportunity to meet individually with the football coaches to review the opportunities of his returning to the Wyoming football program."

A meeting of the Faculty Senate was held at noon to hear the report of the ad hoc committee. The committee Chairman and members answered questions from the floor but stated that they were not yet ready to make a formal report. The Committee is to continue and report at a later date.

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