

March 3, 2020

President Harroz, Dr. Purcell, Dr. Rainbolt, Mr. Pierson, Mr. Albert, Ms. Shirley, Mr. Cawley, Mr. Keating and Mr. Stevenson

Dear University of Oklahoma Interim President and Board of Regents,

My familiarity and affinity for the University of Oklahoma runs deep as the majority of my family graduated from OU. My first two hires at Paycom, who went on to become our COO and CIO, are both from OU. Since then I have hired thousands, and am proud of the many OU alumni who work at Paycom. We support OU, its students and faculty who develop and shape the bright minds of our future.

I do not wish my comments to reflect poorly on the university as a whole, because I do not feel like its people are the problem. Let me be clear, the problem lies squarely with the members of the OU Board of Regents whose actions – or inactions – show their beliefs of racial injustice through meaningless statements through Interim President Harroz.

The disheartening response by the University of Oklahoma's leadership to its second racial comment in less than a month, has led us to the difficult, but necessary decision to pull our advertising from the university.

One of your duties as president and regents is to command appropriate behavior from your staff, including the professors and representatives who chose to use knowingly offensive words, and not the students who heard and were offended by racial prejudices.

The university's response, "We don't make decisions in a vacuum or based on ultimatums," reflects poor judgment and policy, especially when you consider the students' ultimatum was with merit and you had opportunity-after-opportunity to address these concerns. In five separate instances over five years, the university made national news, with the two most recent occurring in the last month. After each occurrence, you have stated you are rolling out diversity training, but to no avail.

Your inaction to implement appropriate employment practices tells the world of your continued effort to sanction unacceptable behavior. This situation has escalated today because your previous diversity training efforts failed because they assured free speech protection.

Additionally, your assertion that derogatory and offensive statements are protected by free speech inaccurately signals to alumni, employers, faculty and others that a professor, administrator or regent has the authority to say racially motivated and offensive words on campus because you have advised and assured them they are protected.

Our decision will remain in effect until the OU Board of Regents and the Interim President take meaningful action to transform the current destructive culture you created by sanctioning this behavior

with uncultured responses to one where everyone is respected and valued. It is time to replace words with deeds.

Those members of the OU Board of Regents who choose to hide behind free speech over deterring discrimination, and who cannot accept their past actions have not worked either, should resign or be outnumbered by the votes of the regents who stay.

We are advocating for solutions that put inclusion and diversity at the core for all Oklahomans, including the state's flagship institution, and as history has proven, that can only be achieved through a significant improvement in its current leadership.

Sincerely,



Chad Richison