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May 30, 2013

Dear Penn State Lettermen:

As each of you know so well, the culture of football at The Pennsylvania State University is embodied by unsurpassed excellence on the field and in the classroom, as well as by a commitment to service to the larger community. You should be proud that you did your part to distinguish yourself and Penn State during your time on campus.

Like you, we were upset when the NCAA and certain officials within the University administration characterized the reprehensible actions of one individual as arising from a “culture of reverence for the football program.” To quote from the NCAA’s “imposed” consent decree; the Association alleged that Penn State had a “culture in which a football program was held in higher esteem than the values of the institution, the values of the NCAA, the values of higher education, and most disturbingly the values of human decency.” The decree went on to conclude that this culture “allowed this activity to occur.”

Today we have taken the important and overdue step of commencing a lawsuit against the NCAA to challenge the Association’s unlawful and unprecedented actions, to reverse the erroneous and grossly unfair characterization of Penn State’s culture, and to set aside the unjustified sanctions imposed on Penn State. As former student-athletes, former coaches, and current Trustees and faculty, we seek to protect the legal rights of the entire Penn State community and fight for its honor. While some may criticize this action and urge us to simply continue to surrender our rights and values, we stand confident knowing that our claims are strong and our cause is justified.

The NCAA stepped well outside of its jurisdiction and authority, and then acted in manner that was wholly inconsistent with its own constitution and bylaws. The Association trampled on our rights and deprived us of the fairness and due process to which Penn State was legally entitled. The NCAA’s actions seek to deny our history, tarnish our collective legacy, and punish countless innocent people for years to come. Moreover, these unprecedented sanctions are based entirely upon the so-called Freeh Report, a fundamentally flawed and result-oriented investigation, for which the University paid a multi-million dollar ransom in legal fees.

Penn State is the only public institution playing major college football that has never been sanctioned for major NCAA violations in any sport. That is still true today, as the NCAA still has not cited any NCAA infractions in handing down its unwarranted sanctions.

Since the 1880s, Penn State student-athletes in all sports have done things the right way, and that is why the quest for truth and justice must finally begin. Most importantly, this legal effort seeks to defend every current and future Penn State student-athlete and coach in all sports from punishment for offenses they never committed. We must stand together and fight for their honor, for the honor of our alma mater, and for the future success that we will most assuredly see from Penn State graduates in the classroom, in competition, and in lives well-lived.

Equally important to us is that truth and fairness are also owed to the victims. They deserve to know the truth about what happened, whatever that is and wherever it may lead. The NCAA's rush to judgment prevented that from happening. Due process means a fair, full and transparent review of the facts. That process may take time and will present challenges, but only when the complete truth is brought to the surface may the real healing begin.

We intend to "Fight for Her Honor" and hope that you will be supportive of these efforts. The road may be long and the fight will be tough, but in the end we believe that we will do right for Penn State. Everyone involved deserves fairness, due process, truth and a just outcome – and that is our cause.

Thanks for your time and your commitment to our great institution in your days as a student and in your lives now.

Sincerely,

Al Clemens
Peter Khoury
Anthony Lubrano
Ryan McCombie
Adam Taliaferro
Trustees

Peter Bordi
Terry Engelder
Spencer Niles
John O'Donnell
Faculty Members

Bill Kenney
Jay Paterno
Former Coaches

Anthony Adams
Gerald Cadogan
Shamar Finney
Josh Gaines
Richard Gardner
Justin Kurpeikis
Patrick Mauti
Anwar Phillips
Michael Robinson
Former Players