



thelantern

ADVERTISEMENT

THE ONLINE MBA YOU PROBABLY CAN'T GET INTO



UNC
KENAN-FLAGLER
BUSINESS SCHOOL

Gene Smith mum on Ohio State cheer coaches fired after sexual harassment complaint

February 27, 2014
Kathleen Martini
Martini.35@osu.edu

Ohio State's cheerleading coach was fired in November after the athletic department found two former assistant coaches dismissed following sexual harassment claims continued to have access to the team members.

Three months later, at least three current cheerleaders appear to be working with one of those former assistant coaches at a private facility.

In an interview last month, OSU Vice President and athletic director Gene Smith declined to comment on why the head coach was initially retained.

"I'm not going to get into a personnel issue," Smith said in an interview with *The Lantern* Jan. 29. "It was a personnel issue, there are legal issues around it, so I'm not discussing it."

Former assistant coaches Dana Bumbrey and Eddie Hollins were terminated "for cause" May 23, following an OSU investigation of a sexual harassment complaint that mentioned the two men. The report alleged Hollins had specifically harassed male cheerleaders, while Bumbrey had specifically harassed female cheerleaders.

Head coach Lenee Buchman was initially kept on staff and received a salary raise in August, but was later fired Nov. 25. She had been OSU's head cheerleading coach since July 2009 and was terminated for "several serious lapses of judgment and leadership," according to an email Smith sent to Buchman Nov. 22 that was obtained by *The Lantern*.

Hollins said in an email Sunday he has "moved on from this."

"My job at Ohio State was only a part-time assistant," Hollins said. "This (coaching at OSU) has never been my full-time job."

Hollins is the founder of the Cheer Combine, a cheerleading academy in Dublin, Ohio, where three current OSU cheerleaders are listed as instructors, according to the Cheer Combine website.

An OSU athletics spokesman did not respond to multiple emails requesting comment about the possible employment of current cheerleaders at Hollins' business.

OSU's Sexual Harassment Policy defines sexual harassment as "unwelcome sexual advances" and "requests for sexual favors," and includes "other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature" when, among other conditions, it creates an "intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for working, learning or living on campus."

An Office of Human Resources report in October that discovered Buchman's lapses began after former cheerleader Cody Ellis said Buchman had retaliated against him by kicking him off the team for reporting sexual harassment.

Problems found through the report included a failure on Buchman's part to disassociate herself and the team from Bumbrey and Hollins after they were fired.

The HR report discovered Buchman participated in a cheer camp run by Bumbrey in August, more than two months after his termination.

"Though I know that the camp was not run by Ohio State, you took our students and brand there with you," Smith wrote to Buchman. "All the while, you knew the nature of the behavior Mr. Bumbrey had been engaged in, that Ohio State had dismissed him just a few months earlier and that the university had emphatically chosen to disassociate itself from him and his damaging behavior."

The HR report also determined, Smith wrote, that when Hollins unexpectedly showed up at a cheerleading practice Sept. 9, Buchman did not approach Hollins or ask him to leave.

"When an assistant that had been fired for sexual harassment shows up at a team practice, it is obvious what is expected of a head coach," Smith wrote.

Buchman was found innocent of retaliation against former cheerleader Ellis, though. Smith said he and Michelle Willis, OSU's executive associate athletics director for student services and sports administration, agreed Ellis' dismissal was warranted.

"We are both persuaded that the student's past behavior — including persistent derogatory and offensive conduct toward teammates and others, the student's negative attitude and other misconduct — all amply support the student's dismissal from the team," Smith wrote.

John Camillus, Ellis' lawyer, said OSU isn't doing enough, though.

"It is our view that the university community and all those who care about protecting victims of sexual harassment deserve an explanation from the university about how they could let what happened to Cody (Ellis) happen to him," Camillus said Feb. 20.

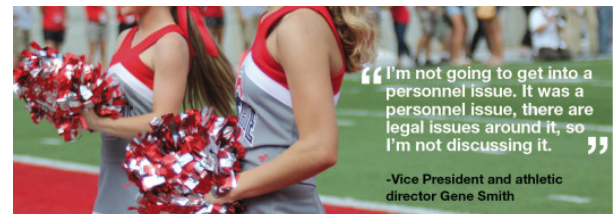
The likelihood of getting that explanation, however, is slim, he said.

"I suspect that the university community will not get any answers about that, because Ohio State doesn't have any good explanation that they can provide," Camillus said. "There's no justification for the way that Cody was treated."

Buchman and Bumbrey did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

Eric Seger contributed to this story.

Like 5 people like this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends like.



Click to expand.

The Lantern uses two-click social media buttons to protect your privacy. Click once to load the button, then again to share!



« Ohio State seeks to avenge loss to Nittany Lions
VIDEO: Week 8 Sports Recap »



© 2014 The Lantern. All rights reserved.