October 21, 2014

V. Burns Hargis, President of Oklahoma State University, statement regarding the joint statement issued today by the NCAA and Oklahoma State University, as well as the report of The Compliance Group concerning an inquiry into the OSU football program after Sports Illustrated published a series of stories alleging a number of serious improprieties.

“After serious claims were made in September of last year against our football program by Sports Illustrated, we announced that we would engage a recognized consultant to do a thorough investigation of the allegations. It ultimately was determined that the NCAA Enforcement Staff and the University’s consultant would jointly conduct the inquiry. If we had done something wrong or were doing something wrong, we wanted to know. We also pledged to act upon what we learned and take appropriate corrective steps.

“Over the next 13 months, the NCAA Enforcement Staff and our consultant, former NCAA Enforcement official, Chuck Smrt, undertook a very thorough review of the University’s football program. The inquiry focused on former and current recruiting activities and other aspects of our football program. The inquiry reviewed approximately 50,000 emails and documents, and included nearly 100 interviews of current and former administrators, coaches, staff, student-athletes, students and prospects as well as alumni and donors, a number of whom were mentioned in the SI articles. Based on that review, we learned that the Sports Illustrated claims of monetary payments for athletic achievements, improper academic assistance provided by our academic services staff, rampant drug use and inappropriate interaction with football players during recruiting trips were fundamentally unfounded

“During the extensive inquiry, a few situations were identified which led to three allegations in a Notice of Allegations from the NCAA where it appears we may have misapplied our drug testing policy and on-campus recruiting practices. While we question whether these matters warrant a Level II designation, as indicated by the Enforcement Staff in the Notice of Allegations, we have modified our policies and practices in these specific matters to ensure compliance. The institution will prepare a response to the allegations and appear before the NCAA Division I Committee on Infractions in the near future. The Committee on Infractions will review the positions of the Enforcement Staff and the University on the nature of each allegation. We look forward to our appearance before the Committee on Infractions to present our positions.

“We appreciate the Enforcement Staff’s professionalism and thoroughness throughout the inquiry.

“I also appreciate the work of our Vice President of Athletics, Mike Holder, and head football coach, Mike Gundy, to create a positive culture in our football program and build a consistently winning program the right way by adhering to the rules while promoting the welfare of our student-athletes.”