Washington State Association of Broadcasters

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Dr. Kirk Schulz, President
Washington State University
PO Box 641048
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Patrick Chun, Athletic Director
Washington State University
PO Box 641602
Pullman, WA 99164-1602

Via US Mail and Email (presidentsoffice@wsu.edu; athleticdirector@wsu.edu)

Dear President Schulz and Mr. Chun,

The Washington State Association of Broadcasters ("WSAB"), which represents over 260 radio and television stations across the state, and the Allied Daily Newspapers of Washington ("ADN"), which represents newspapers across our state, is writing to express its grave concern about the manner in which Mike Leach, coach of the Washington State University football team, addressed a member of the media following the Apple Cup on November 29, 2019.

While meeting with the assembled press corps after WSU's 31-13 loss to the University of Washington, Mr. Leach deflected a follow up question to his prior statement about recruiting class rankings and directed this comment at John Blanchette (representing *The Spokesman Review*): *"You run your little column and stuff like some sanctimonious troll, where you've never been fair or even-handed with us, so I really don't care what you think. OK, go ahead, because you're going to write some really nasty stuff like you always do. And I don't know which Coug way back when did something that offended you, but I don't really care about that either. If you can live your little meager life in your hole and write nasty things and that makes you feel even, you go right ahead."*

While Mr. Leach's offbeat and unusual behavior while interacting with the media is often viewed as humorous, the WSAB and ADN feel that his behavior following the Apple Cup crossed the line when he publicly singled out and attacked – or perhaps more accurately - bullied a member of the media.

Mr. Leach's behavior in this instance was boorish, unprofessional, uncalled for, and contributes to the unfortunate lack of decorum that is growing between public officials (elected and governmentally employed) and print and broadcast journalists across the country. The WSAB and ADN condemn the treatment of professional journalists in this manner, particularly by an employee representing a public institution of higher learning.

The Washington State Association of Broadcasters and Allied Daily Newspapers is asking you to address this issue with Mr. Leach, which may include training for proper interaction with accredited broadcast and print journalists. Furthermore, we ask that Mr. Leach offer a public apology to the reporter that was inappropriately singled out while simply performing his duty as a journalist.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have (541-419-0141 or kshipman@wsab.org).

The Fourth Estate of the state of Washington awaits your response.

Kindest Regards,

Keith Shipman (WSU '83)
President & CEO

kbs

cc: Rowland Thompson, Allied Daily Newspapers (Executive Director, via email)
WSAB Board of Directors (via email)
Eric Stahl, Davis Wright Tremaine (WSAB Legal Counsel, via email)
William Stacy Cowles, The Spokesman Review (Publisher, via email)
Joe Palmquist, The Spokesman Review (Managing Editor, via email)
Rob Curley, The Spokesman Review (Editor, via email)
Dan Shelley, RTDNA (Executive Director, via email)