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Highland Community College faces discrimination lawsuit

WICHITA, Kan. (AP) — A small community college in northeast Kansas directed its coaches to to recruit more white athletes and targeted black prospective students with excessive scrutiny such background checks before offering scholarships, according to a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Kansas.

The ACLU alleges in a federal lawsuit filed Thursday that Highland Community College instituted a plan six months ago to reduce the number of black students. It contends the college's strategy included expelling black students for minor or bogus infractions and singling them out for dorm room and vehicle searches, discriminatory surveillance and harassment.

Filed on behalf of four former and current students, the lawsuit names Eric Ingmire, vice president for student services, and Bryan Dorrel, the college's athletic director, as defendants. They did not immediately respond to email messages seeking comment.

Highland Community College has more than 3,200 students, 87% of whom are white. During the 2019 season, 104 of the 111 football players were black. The 2020 football recruiting class includes "a significantly lower number" of black athletes, the lawsuit alleges.

The lawsuit alleges Dorrel told coaches to recruit "more local kids" and "less Southern kids."

Associated Press