

Sunday, February 18, 2007

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**-MEDIA ADVISORY-
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**RECENT MASCOT DECISION IS ONLY A FIRST STEP:
CAMPUS ISSUES REMAIN UNRESOLVED**

PRESS CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

The University announced yesterday that "Chief Illiniwek" will no longer perform at athletic events on the Urbana-Champaign campus after February 21, 2007 in compliance with the NCAA ruling. The university's compliance implicitly acknowledges the NCAA's assessment of the mascot: the "Chief" is "hostile and abusive." Although this is clearly a first step, S.T.O.P. (Students Transforming Oppression and Privilege) maintains that the University must facilitate the clear, consistent, and unconditional removal of the entire logo, not just the removal of the athletic performance.

Retiring the chief must mean unconditionally retiring the trademark. It is unconscionable for the University of Illinois or any other private or public entity to continue to profit off of the mascot as an "honorable tradition." Neither should the trademark be transferred to any other public or private entity that considers the mascot an "honorable tradition." The University must ensure an end to the disrespect, mockery, racial stereotyping, and hostility perpetuated by the iconography.

In addition, the "Chief Illiniwek" regalia must also be retired. In the resolution released by the Oglala Sioux tribe on January 17, 2007, "Chief Illiniwek" perpetuates a degrading racial stereotype and violates the integrity of traditional Illinois tribes. To this date, the regalia has not been returned to the Oglala Sioux tribe as requested.

The educational, moral, and ethical grounds for ending the Illiniwek tradition have been clear for decades. This first step by the University absolutely cannot be separated from the issues of racism, privilege and power on this campus and the steps that remain to be carried out. Acts of intolerance and hate crimes repeatedly suffered by communities on this campus evidence the lack of a true climate of human rights and social justice at UIUC.

As stated in the February 1st S.T.O.P. demands, S.T.O.P. calls for the unconditional removal of "Chief Illiniwek" and all American Indian imagery, the elimination of the term "Fighting Illini", and the end of all "Chief Illiniwek" iconography including items for sale at the Illini Union Bookstore. However, this action is only one of the seven broad areas of critical change that S.T.O.P. has identified, in order to foster a campus climate in which all UIUC students may thrive.

S.T.O.P. is a broad coalition of students, faculty, and community members who remain committed to enacting critical changes on this campus that fully address the range of issues facing our community; this recent decision is a first but incomplete step.

WHAT: Press Conference to address the administration's due collective response to the S.T.O.P. demands presented at **Racism, Power, and Privilege** forum that took place February 1, 2007

WHEN: 12:00 p.m. Thursday February 22, 2007

WHERE: African American Cultural Center 708 S. Mathews Avenue Urbana, IL 61801

WHO: S.T.O.P. (Students Transforming Oppression and Privilege) Coalition

Source: Students Transforming Oppression and Privilege (STOP)
www.iresist.org

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