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May 20, 2004

Dear Esteemed Congressperson,

On Tuesday April 27th, 15 representatives from our coalition, comprised of students, faculty and community members of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, met with state congressional leaders and members of the Black Caucus. This meeting took place to discuss the problems associated with the university's mascot, "Chief Illiniwek," and the resulting hostility it creates on our campus. The purpose of this letter is not only to clarify these issues and explain why we felt it necessary to come to the Capitol, but more importantly, to garner your support in ensuring that our educational futures are not compromised by the politically motivated actions of others.

UIUC's official mascot and symbol, "Chief Illiniwek" is an inaccurate representation of Native people, created by non-Natives for the halftime entertainment and profit of non-Native people. It undermines Native American's right to self-determination by appropriating sacred aspects of Native political and religious culture. Every national Native organization that has taken a stance on the issue has called for the elimination of the "Chief," including: the American Indian Council of Illinois, the American Indian Education Association, the American Indian Movement, the Cherokee Nation, the Peoria Tribe, and the National Congress of American Indians. By blatantly mocking Native culture, the University of Illinois sets a dangerous precedent of open domination for all other social and ethnic groups on campus. For this reason, we believe the use of the mascot is racist and symbolic of institutionalized oppression.

This mascot also provides a hostile environment on campus where people of color have to face the effects of racism daily. For those of us who have publicly come out against the "Chief," there have been numerous instances of verbal and physical assaults and having our property damaged by animate pro-Chief students. We, as people of color, should not have to feel unwelcomed or unsafe at a public university, funded by our tax dollars. The manifestations of this negative environment reveal themselves in the poor retention rates for African-Americans, Latinos/as and Native American at the University of Illinois.

This year has been particularly frustrating for our movement. The Board of Trustees has met three times and at all three sessions a diverse group of students, faculty, and community members peacefully rallied for the elimination of the mascot. Yet each time the Board ignored them by either removing the issue from the agenda or by refusing to address it. Students and community members have also attempted to meet with Trustee members individually but to little or no avail. The Student Trustee Nate Allen decided that he would put the issue on the agenda for the April 15th meeting. However, in a blatant attempt to further silence us, the Chairmen of the Board, Lawrence Eppley, unilaterally cancelled the meeting citing the Board had no pressing issues to address.

This statement was made even though the university is in the midst of finding a new president and chancellor.

After 15 years of rallies, protests, petitions, dialogues and Board meetings to remove this mascot we came to a realization that we had exhausted every diplomatic avenue within the university and chose April 15th as the day to sit-in at the Swanlund Administration Building. The 33-hour sit-in sent a clear message to the Board of Trustees that we will not be silenced on this issue. We left the building partly because of assurances that we would meet with our state congressional leaders to gain their support and yours on these issues that affect our communities. Here is a list of four requests that we believe are crucial for the success of eliminating the “Chief” by the June 17th Board meeting in Chicago and reducing the racial tension on campus:

1. We ask that you sponsor legislation that will change the structure of appointing trustees to one where the people of Illinois elect trustee members. This was the previous election process for the Board of Trustees until former governor Jim Edgar restructured it. However until this is changed, we ask that you put pressure on Governor Blagojevich to appoint politically progressive people of color on the board. Of particular concern is the lack of representation for the African American, Latina/o, and Native American population within the University of Illinois system.
2. We ask that you allocate state funds specifically for the cultural houses and studies programs such as the Latina/o Studies Program, African American Studies Program, the Native American House, La Casa Cultural Latina, African American Cultural Program, Asian American Studies Program and the Asian American Cultural House.
3. After listening and/or reading our grievances, we urge you to contact Governor Blagojevich to push the board to retire ‘Chief Illiniwek’ and help make the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign a welcoming environment that is more conducive to education for all of its students.

Thank you for your time and attention in analyzing this pertinent situation. By helping resolve this explosive issue, you can positively influence the learning environments for future generations of students at UIUC. The time is now to directly counter the power structures that have maintained this racist tradition and to send a message of hope in the fight against such injustice.

Thank you,

Multicultural Coalition at UIUC

The United States Commission on Civil Rights

Statement on the Use of Native American Images and Nicknames as Sports Symbols

Issued: April 13, 2001

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights calls for an end to the use of Native American images and team names by non-Native schools. The Commission deeply respects the right of all Americans to freedom of expression under the First Amendment and in no way would attempt to prescribe how people can express themselves. However, the Commission believes that the use of Native American images and nicknames in schools is insensitive and should be avoided. In addition, some Native American and civil rights advocates maintain that these mascots may violate anti-discrimination laws.

These references, whether mascots and their performances, logos, or names, are disrespectful and offensive to American Indians and others who are offended by such stereotyping. They are particularly inappropriate and insensitive in light of the long history of forced assimilation that American Indian people have endured in this country. Since the civil rights movement of the 1960s many overtly derogatory symbols and images offensive to African-Americans have been eliminated. However, many secondary schools, post-secondary institutions, and a number of professional sports teams continue to use Native American nicknames and imagery. Since the 1970s, American Indians leaders and organizations have vigorously voiced their opposition to these mascots and team names because they mock and trivialize Native American religion and culture.

It is particularly disturbing that Native American references are still to be found in educational institutions, whether elementary, secondary or post-secondary. Schools are places where diverse groups of people come together to learn not only the "Three Rs," but also how to interact respectfully with people from different cultures. The use of stereotypical images of Native Americans by educational institutions has the potential to create a racially hostile educational environment that may be intimidating to Indian students. American Indians have the lowest high school graduation rates in the nation and even lower college attendance and graduation rates. The perpetuation of harmful stereotypes may exacerbate these problems.

The stereotyping of any racial, ethnic, religious or other groups when promoted by our public educational institutions, teach all students that stereotyping of minority groups is acceptable, a dangerous lesson in a diverse society. Schools have a responsibility to educate their students; they should not use their influence to perpetuate misrepresentations of any culture or people.

Children at the elementary and secondary levels usually have no choice about which school they attend. Further, the assumption that a college student may freely choose another educational institution if she feels uncomfortable around Indian-based imagery is

a false one. Many factors, from educational programs to financial aid to proximity to home, limit a college student's choices. It is particularly onerous if the student must also consider whether or not the institution is maintaining a racially hostile environment for Indian students.

Schools that continue the use of Indian imagery and references claim that their use stimulates interest in Native American culture and honors Native Americans. These institutions have simply failed to listen to the Native groups, religious leaders, and civil rights organizations that oppose these symbols. These Indian-based symbols and team names are not accurate representations of Native Americans. Even those that purport to be positive are romantic stereotypes that give a distorted view of the past. These false portrayals prevent non-Native Americans from understanding the true historical and cultural experiences of American Indians. Sadly, they also encourage biases and prejudices that have a negative effect on contemporary Indian people.

These references may encourage interest in mythical "Indians" created by the dominant culture, but they block genuine understanding of contemporary Native people as fellow Americans. The Commission assumes that when Indian imagery was first adopted or sports mascots it was not to offend Native Americans. However, the use of the imagery and traditions, no matter how popular, should end when they are offensive. We applaud those who have been leading the fight to educate the public and the institutions that have voluntarily discontinued the use of insulting mascots. Dialogue and education are the roads to understanding.

The use of American Indian mascots is not a trivial matter. The Commission has a firm understanding of the problems of poverty, education, housing, and health care that face many Native Americans. The fight to eliminate Indian nicknames and images in sports is only one front of the larger battle to eliminate obstacles that confront American Indians. The elimination of Native American nicknames and images as sports mascots will benefit not only Native Americans, but all Americans. The elimination of stereotypes will make room for education about real Indian people, current Native American issues, and the rich variety of American Indians in our country.

Presented by Commissioner Elsie Meeks, Adopted by The United States Commission on Civil Rights April 13, 2001

Black Faculty & Academic Professionals Alliance
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
100 Swanlund Administration Building, 601 East John Street,
Champaign, Illinois 61820
www.uiuc.edu/ro/BFAPA/

Kathy A. Perkins, Co-Chair
Michael Jeffries, Co-Chair

Dianne Pinderhughes, Co-Chair Elect
Teresa Savage, Co-Chair Elect

For an extended period of time, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (*UIUC*) has been embroiled in a bitter and escalating discussion regarding the existence of *Chief Illiniwek* as the official mascot of the campus. The Black Faculty and Academic Professionals Alliance (*BFAPA*) of UIUC urge the University of Illinois Board of Trustees to remove *Chief Illiniwek* as the official mascot of the University.

In submitting this letter *BFAPA* officially declares in unison with other individuals and organizations the need for action and urge the Board of Trustees to retire *Chief Illiniwek* as the official mascot of the University. As people of color, we view *Chief Illiniwek* as a racist symbol that divides the university and the local community at a time when both are striving to become more diverse. As people of color we have fought for the removal of racist and demeaning symbols. Native Americans have repeatedly voiced their desire for the University to remove *Chief Illiniwek* and we stand with them in full support. If the use of a symbol offends one person it was meant to honor, then that symbol dishonors all.

Although there are many people who do not feel that *Chief Illiniwek* should be retired, we respectfully disagree. Dissenting opinions are not new phenomena on college campuses; however, the continuing controversy surrounding the use of a Native American as a college mascot is specific to the University of Illinois. It has created a hostile environment, not only for Native Americans but also for all people of color and “persons of conscience”. We strongly urge the Board of Trustees to take the leadership on this important issue. *Chief Illiniwek* must be retired to a "respectful" place in University history and replaced by a symbol that unites rather than divides.

Respectfully,



Kathy A. Perkins, Co-Chair



Michael Jeffries, Co-Chair

The Black Faculty and Academic Professionals Alliance (BFAPA)

RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO NATIVE AMERICAN MASCOTS

Whereas, the National NAACP is committed to caring for and affirming the gifts of all people, with special regard to those oppressed or disenfranchised on the basis of race, national origin, and cultural origin; and

Whereas, the use of Native American people, images, symbols, and cultural and religious traditions as sports names, logos and mascots perpetuates racist stereotypes and undermines the self-determination and dignity of Indian people; and

Whereas, the National NAACP, as a nationally and internationally recognized protector of civil and human rights, is in the unique position to impact public and corporate policies and practices,

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the National NAACP call upon all members and friends to refrain from purchasing items with Native American sports team logos, and to cross out such logos on merchandise already in their possession.

Be It Further Resolved, that the National NAACP call upon member branches and State Conferences of Branches to inform themselves of and support local efforts to eliminate the use of Native American people, images, symbols, and cultural and religious traditions as sports names, logos and mascots.

Be It Finally Resolved, that the National NAACP call upon all professional sports teams, and public and private schools and universities currently using such names and images to reject the use of Native Americans, and all historically oppressed people and their cultural traditions, as sports mascots and symbols, and affirm their commitment to respectful racial and cultural inclusion in all aspects of their institutions.

Respectfully Submitted on April 28, 1999 by:

Cleveland Jefferson, President
Champaign County Branch

October 9, 1990

National Rainbow Coalition, Inc.
Reverend Jesse L. Jackson
President and Founder

The honorable Stanley Ikenberry
President, Board of Trustees
University of Illinois

Dear President Ikenberry:

I am addressing this communication to you, on the occasion of the meeting of the Board of Trustees, in the hopes that a fair and responsible decision will be forthcoming, regarding the issue raised.

All of us share the pride of academic and athletic achievement personified by the University of Illinois. This University, which has been so important in the lives of so many, is internationally recognized for the outstanding contributions its faculty and alumni have made to our nation and the world.

In light of this, it is a source of pain and embarrassment that the great University of Illinois football team maintains as a mascot a symbol of insult to the Native American community. Sometimes thoughtlessness or habit or what we may call "tradition" leaves us less than sensitive to such matters. Yet as one who was a resident of the State of Illinois for many years, I am sure we share a common appreciation of the indispensable contribution the American Indian community has made to our state and national life. In Illinois, as elsewhere, our rivers, lakes and towns are replete with names given them by the First Americans. A team mascot is not an appropriate way of expressing our respect for these and other contributions to our culture.

Given the history of broken treaties and wars of annexation, with all the carnage, suffering and subsequent injustices they have experienced at the hands of our government, all people of goodwill have a moral obligation not to perpetuate insulting stereotypes of Native Americans in our culture. I make this appeal to the board of trustees in recognition of the sense of fairness I know you possess. I hope the Board of Trustees will use its moral authority to select a new symbol for this University. This is a marvelous opportunity for this the highest center of leadership at the University to make a statement for justice and correct a longstanding mistake, that should not be continued.

Thank you President Ikenberry for receiving this letter in the spirit in which it is communicated. With all best wishes

Sincerely,
Rev. Jesse L. Jackson

PEORIA TRIBE OF INDIANS OF OKLAHOMA

118 S. Eight Tribes Trail (918) 540-2535 Fax (918) 540-2538

P.O. Box 1527

Miami, Oklahoma 74355

RESOLUTION R-04-04-00-C

"Request to University of Illinois to Cease Use of Chief Illiniwek as Mascot "

WHEREAS, the Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma is a federally recognized Indian Tribe organized under the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act of June 26, 1936, and is governed by its Constitution approved by the Acting Deputy Commissioner of Indians Affairs on August 3, 1997, and

WHEREAS, the Business Committee of the Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma is authorized to enact resolutions and act on behalf of the Peoria Tribe under Article VIII, Section 2, of the Constitution; and

WHEREAS, the Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma are descendants of the Kaskaskia, Peoria, Piankeshuw, and Wea tribes, a group of tribes known as Illiniwek, or Illini, or Illinois Nations whose members were removed from their homelands and forced to move first to Missouri, then Kansas and finally into the northeastern part of Indian Territory, now Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, the image portrayed by Chief Illiniwek does not accurately represent or honor the heritage of the Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma and is a degrading racial stereotype that reflects negatively on all American Indian people

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Peoria Tribe of Indians does not endorse or sanction the characterization of Chief Illiniwek as mascot for the University of Illinois and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma request the leadership of the University of Illinois to recognize the demeaning nature of the characterization of Chief Illiniwek, and cease use of this mascots.

Certification

The foregoing resolution numbered R-04-04-00-C, Request to University of Illinois to Cease Use of Chief Illiniwek" was presented and discussed at a duly called regular meeting of the Peoria Tribal Business Committee held on this **4th** day of **April, 2000**, with a recorded vote of:

3 For, 2 Opposed 0 Abstentions

By cast of majority vote, Resolution Number R-04-04-00-C does hereby **PASS**
Pass/Fail

Ronald Froman - Chief
Jo Goforth - Second Chief

Hank Downun - Secretary
LeAnne Reeves - Treasurer

Claude Landers - First Councilman
Emmett N. Ellis III - Second Councilman

Don E. Giles - Third Councilman

The INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL
of the FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES
Organized February 3, 1950

Resolution No. 2001 - 08

THE FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES INTERTRIBAL COUNCIL MASCOT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Intertribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes is an organization that united

the tribal governments of the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations, representing over 400,000 Indian people throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Intertribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes Education Committee is dedicated to promoting quality education for American Indian students that includes cultural awareness and a sense of diversity among America's student population; and

WHEREAS, the Five Civilized Tribes believe the use of derogatory American Indian images

such as mascots by public schools perpetuate a stereotypical image of American Indians that is likely to have a negative impact on the self-esteem of American Indian children; and

WHEREAS, negative images and stereotypes about American Indians as mascots contributes

to a hostile learning environment that affirms the negative images and stereotypes that persist in America about American Indians; and

WHEREAS, American Indians as mascots is a negative means of appropriating and denigrating

our cultural identity that involves the display and depiction of ceremonial symbols and practices that may have religious significance to American Indians; and

WHEREAS, to continue the negative use of American Indian's tribal names and images is an

offensive and disgusting practice that would be considered intolerable were other ethnic groups or minorities depicted in a similar manner; and

WHEREAS, on April 13, 2001, the United States Commission on Civil Rights issued a Statement

on the Use of Native American Images and Nicknames as Sports Symbols that

called for an end to the use of American Indian images and team names by non-Indian schools; that stereotyping of any racial, ethnic, religious or other groups when promoted by public education institutions, teach all students that stereotyping of minority groups is acceptable, a dangerous lesson in a diverse society; that schools have a responsibility to educate their students; they should not use influence to perpetuate misrepresentations of any culture or people; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Intertribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes joins the United States Commission on Civil Rights call to eliminate the stereotypical use of American Indian names and images as mascots in sports and other events and to provide meaningful education about real American Indian people, current American Indian issues, and, the rich variety of American Indian cultures in the U.S.

(Signed) (Signed) (Signed) (Signed) (Signed)
Bill Anoatubby R. Perry Beaver Chadwick Smith Jerry Haney Gregory E. Pyle
Governor Principal Chief Principal Chief Principal Chief Chief
Chickasaw Nation Creek Nation Cherokee Nation Seminole Nation Choctaw Nation

July 14, 2001

P.O. Box 948. Tahlequah, OK 74465 (918) 456-0671 Fax (918) 924-1150

RESOLUTION MID-GB-93-58

National Congress of American Indians (Est 1944)

Adopted by the Executive Council at the Mid-Year Meeting of the National Congress of American Indians, June 28-30, 1993.

Denouncement of the Use of any American Indian Name or Artifice Associated With Team Mascots by any Professional/Non-professional Sport Teams

WHEREAS, the American Indian and Alaska Tribal Government and people have gathered in Green Bay, Wisconsin for the Mid-Year Meeting of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) in order to promote the common interests and welfare of American Indians and Alaskan Native peoples; and

WHEREAS, NCAI is the oldest and largest intertribal organization representative of and advocate for national, regional, and local tribal concerns; and,

WHEREAS, the NCAI condemns the racist and condescending attitude of team owners, colleges and high schools, which continue to demean the members of our Nations; and,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI denounces the use of any American Indian name or Artifice associated with Indian mascots; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NCAI calls upon all reasonable individuals in decision making positions to voluntarily change racist and dehumanizing mascots

CERTIFICATION

(Signed)

S. Diane Kelly, Recording Secretary

March 24, 1998

President James Stukel

364 Henry Administration Building

MC-346

Dear President Stukel:

As you know, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Student-Faculty Senate met on March 9 and passed the following resolution by a vote of 97 to 29:

"The University Administration and Board of Trustees immediately retire Chief Illiniwek and discontinue licensing Native American Indian symbols as representations of the University."

I have enclosed the Report of the Equal Opportunity Committee that presented this resolution to the Senate and the minutes of the meeting that pertain to the consideration of EQ.97.04. These minutes contain the thoughtful remarks of students and faculty that were presented during the discussion. In addition, I have enclosed the statements of two faculty that were not transcribed in full into these minutes.

Some of the enclosed statements address specific concerns that you may have, for example, the potential effect of retiring the Chief on fundraising, faculty support for retiring the Chief, the prestige and image of the University of Illinois, as well as educational and ethical concerns.

In particular, I would like to call your attention to the poem, Change's Gonna Come, by Henock Erku, an undergraduate student. I hope you will avail yourself of this information as we look to you for informed leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Stephen J. Kaufman

Professor and Member of the UIUC Senate

Stephen J. Kaufman, Ph.D.
University of Illinois
Department of Cell & Structural Biology
601 South Goodwin Avenue
Urbana, IL 61801
tel:217-333-3521

Brussels, 26 January 1998

Honorable Ladies, Gentlemen,

As an international human rights organization, KOLA wishes to express its grave concern and its opposition to the use of racist mascots and names in the United States of America. For the past several years, there has been an increasing wave of controversy regarding the names of professional sports teams - mostly university teams - such as the Atlanta "Braves", the Cleveland "Indians", the Washington "Redskins", and Kansas City "Chiefs". The issue extends to the names of college teams like the Florida State University "Seminoles", the University of Illinois "Chief Illiniwek", and so on, right on down to high school outfits like the Lamar (Colorado) "Savages".

Also involved are sports teams adoption of mascots, replete with feathers, buckskin dress, beads, spears, warclubs ("tomahawks") and so-called warpaint, brought to life usually by a Euro-American (read "white") student before, during and after the sports games.

The use of such mascots and logos raises bitter feelings about the American Indian "holocaust" in the not very distant past. For example, "Redskins" refers to the bloody scalps of American Indian men, women, and children taken for bounty. Too many people do not realize the depth of feeling invoked in Native Americans by the hurtful use of those "symbols". Also, the inappropriate use of feathers, headdress and other "Indian" symbols which are sacred to Native people, is an expression of total ignorance of the beliefs and customs of First National people, as well as a total lack of respect. Disrespect in these cases is equal to racism. To illustrate this subtle form of racism, KOLA wishes to present "Chief Illiniwek", used as mascot and logo by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). Enclosed you will find letters from people - professors, students, American Indian human rights activists - opposing the use of this racist mascot. The enclosed material will, hopefully, convince you of the seriousness of this matter.

It is incomprehensible and totally unacceptable that academic institutions, whose primary goal is to educate the intelligentsia of the future, maintain such attitudes. Every business, athletic organization, and education institution should immediately and gracefully find a new mascot and logo. Every government agency - not exclusively in the United States! - and board of education should insist upon it. Every citizen - not exclusively in the United States! - respectful of others' feelings should demand change.

Since the Board of Trustees of UIUC is unwilling to do so, and the State of Illinois has never intervened in this issue, we saw ourselves obliged to take this matter further and bring it to your attention. What is desperately needed in this case, to set an example, is an intervention from outside political and human rights institutions. Any intervention from your part might bring changes to these racist practices: by personal letters, institutional letters, resolutions, and so forth.

Elise Herten
executive director KOLA

Jaak Vandemeulebroucke [seal E.P.],

Member European Parliament

Concerning: Use of Chief Illiniwek as a mascot by the UIUC

From Elsie Herten, head of KOLA international campaign office, I received information about the subtle racist use of Chief Illiniwek as a mascot for the UIUC.

I completely share the view of KOLA that it is unacceptable that academic institutions, whose primary role is to educate the intelligentsia of the future maintain such racist and ethnocentric attitudes. Every business, athletic organization, and education institution should immediately and gracefully find a new mascot and logo. Every government agency and board of education should insist upon that. Every citizen respectful of other's feelings should demand change.

As a Flemish Member of the European Parliament, I urge You to seriously consider these thoughts and take appropriate action.

Sincerely,

Jaak Vandemeulebroucke,

Member of the European Parliament

cc:

UIUC- Board of Trustees - Mrs. Gravenhorst
- Chancellor Michael Aiken
- President James Stukel
State of Illinois - Governor Jim Edgar
KOLA International Campaign Office - Elsie Herten

Organizations with Resolutions against the use of the Chief mascot:

South Asian Collective
NAACP
Progressive Resource Action Cooperative
Women's Direct Action Collective
Puerto Rican Students Association
Muslim Students Association
Latino Studies Student Association (?? check w/ manny...)
Black Faculty Alliance
Graduate And Professional Students of Color
UIUC Education Policy Studies
UIUC English Dept.
UIUC History Dept.
UIUC Anthropology Dept.
UIUC Spanish, Italian, Portuguese Dept.
UIUC Sociology Dept.
UIUC Psychology Dept.
UIUC Student Faculty Senate
UIUC Women Studies Dept.
UIUC College of Medicine
Champaign County Health Care Consumers
Graduate Employees Organization
McKinley Foundation (a local church)
American Indian Movement
National Coalition for Racism in Sports and the Media
Southern Poverty Law Center
American Indian Council of Illinois
Champaign County National Organization for Women
Illinois Disciples Foundation
KOLA International Campaign Office
Midwest Soaring
National Congress of American Indians
Women Against Racism

**Native American organizations that endorse the retiring of
Native American Mascots**

Advocates for American Indian Children
The Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians
Alliance Against Racial Mascots (ALLARM) (Sponsor)
Alliance of Native Americans of Southern California
American Indian Council of Illinois
American Indian Education Association
American Indians in Film
American Indian Mental Health Association
American Indian Movement
American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center of San Bernardino County
American Indians of Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions
American Indian Professors Association
American Indian Science and Engineering Society - CSU Long Beach
American Indian Student Council - CSU Long Beach
American Indian Studies Center - UCLA
Association on American Indian Affairs
California Indian Museum & Cultural Center
California Indian Professors Association
Capitol Area Indian Resources
Cedarville Rancheria Tribal Office
Cherokee Nation
Chickasaw Nation
Choctaw Nation
Committee for Native American
Concerned American Indian Parents
El Dorado County Indian Council
El Dorado/Amador Counties Indian Education Project
First Nations Tribal Education and Resource Center
Fontana Native American Indian Center, Inc
Foothill Indian Education Alliance
Gabrieleno/Tongva Nation
Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council
HONOR ? Honor Our Neighbors Origins and Rights
Indian Alcoholism Commission of Los Angeles County
Intertribal Consulting and Resources Development
Juaneño Band of Mission Indians
Lake County Citizen's Committee on Indian Affairs/Hinthal Education Center
Lakota/Dakota Advocates for Human & Civil Rights
Lone Pine Indian Education Center
Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission

Los Angeles Unified School District Indian Education Program, Title IX
Mascot Abuse San Francisco Bay Area
Medicine Wheel Intertribal Association
Menominee Tribe of Indians
Morning Star Institute
Muskogee (Creek) Nation
National Coalition on Racism in Sports and the Media
National Congress of American Indians
National Indian Education Association
Native American Caucus of the California Democratic Party
Native American Film and Television Alliance
Native American Journalists Association
Native American Productions
News from Native California
Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin
O'odham Women's Alliance of Southern California
Osa Center for Indian Education
Pauma Indian Reservation
Payomkawichum Kaamalam
Pechanga Band of Luiseno Mission Indians of the Pechanga Reservation
Peoria Tribe
Qana Native Student Programs
Ramona Band Of Cahuilla Mission Indians
Resources for Indian Student Education
San Bernardino/Riverside Counties Native American Community Council
Santa Ynez Chumash Teen Program
Soboba Band of Luiseño Mission Indians
Seminole Nation
Soboba Band of Luiseno Mission Indians of the Soboba Reservation
Society of Indian Psychologists of the Americas
Southern California Indian Center
Team Response: Indians Against Defamation (TRIAD)
Torres Martinez Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians
United American Indian Involvement
UCLA American Indian Student Association
UCLA American Indian Studies Center
Vallejo Inter-Tribal Council
Vallejo City Unified School District Native American Indian Studies Program

Chief issue not about race

Letter | The Daily Illini

Published Wednesday, April 28, 2004

The debate over Chief Illiniwek shows no sign of ending soon, but an ominous element of the discourse should alarm anyone who loves and cares about the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

I am referring to the rhetoric of race and the increasing innuendo and bald-faced assertions that those who are not opposed to the Chief are motivated by racism. It is a false and unfair insinuation that inflames an already emotional debate and exacerbates an already intractable situation.

In fact, the multitudes of opinions on all sides of the Chief issue are based on principal positions by virtually everyone with a point of view. Certainly there is not one member of the Board of Trustees who is driven by racism in his or her deliberations on this matter. Nevertheless, the rhetoric of race is intensifying. And whether it is intentional or not, it is deceptive and makes it all the harder for opposing sides to come together to resolve the issue. The most recent example was a disingenuous Daily Illini column ("Racial stereotypes dehumanize," April 21) that suggested Board of Trustee Chairman Lawrence Eppley and his colleagues are impelled by race when it comes to the Chief.

Chairman Eppley and his colleagues on the Board of Trustees have done an exemplary job under difficult circumstances to work toward a solution that includes accommodation by both sides. But exchange will not occur if either side persists with assertions that are false and incendiary.

James J. Stukel
president, University of Illinois