

May 5, 2005

NAH Denounces UIUC's Report to the "NCAA Institutional Self Evaluation Examining the Use of American Indian Mascots, Nicknames and Logos"

The Native American House finds the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's response to the NCAA's request to perform an "Institutional Self Evaluation Examining the Use of American Indian Mascots, Nicknames and Logos" to be in essence no response at all, an insult to our campus, an affront to Native peoples, and a blatant disregard for the intent of the initial request which prompted the NCAA to require UIUC to conduct a "self evaluation." In short, UIUC's response to the NCAA's request is unacceptable and disingenuous in every way.

The report, signed and endorsed by newly appointed University of Illinois President B. Joseph White, simply refutes the presence of a mascot, stating that "chief illiniwek" is instead a "tradition" of "nearly 80 years in UIUC athletics." Read as a whole, UIUC's report demonstrates no attempt of "self examination" and no one in the NAH community was contacted to discuss the content of the evaluation.

NAH is deeply disappointed that new university administration continues to demonstrate no leadership around this issue by adopting a pose of seeming neutrality while making comments and participating in activities that endorse the presence of "chief illiniwek," a racist symbol that undermines the University's goals as an educational institution and mis-educates the campus and community.

NAH calls for campus leadership to take action and assume responsibility for the ill effects of the racist symbol, "chief illiniwek." NAH invites UIUC administration and members of the Board of Trustees to participate in a real self-evaluation by engaging in meaningful dialogue with us.