

Board Meeting
March 13, 2007

RESOLUTION CONCERNING CONSENSUS PROCESS

WHEREAS, the Chief Illiniwek tradition was established at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1926 in conjunction with the Marching Band, and

WHEREAS, the State of Illinois legislature in 1996 passed a bill declaring as its purpose the continuation of Chief Illiniwek as the honored symbol of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and entrusting any changes in its status as the symbol of the University to the University of Illinois Board of Trustees, and

WHEREAS, a debate has ensued for a number of years between the proponents and opponents of the continuation of the Chief Illiniwek tradition and related regalia and logo among students, alumni, faculty, administration, and the general public, and

WHEREAS, many who oppose the continuation of Chief Illiniwek as a symbol of the University, including Native American students, alumni, and Tribes, consider the symbol as disrespectful of their heritage, and

WHEREAS, many who favor the continuation of Chief Illiniwek as the symbol of the University believe that the symbol is an honorable representation of the State's Native American heritage and virtues they respect, and

WHEREAS, both sides of the issue clearly hold their positions in all good faith, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees in June 2004 adopted a resolution whereby it would seek a “consensus conclusion” of the Chief Illiniwek issue, and

WHEREAS, subsequent actions by the Board progressed toward the goal of reaching a consensus conclusion, including the adoption in 2004 of the Board’s “heritage policy,” and the adoption in July 2005 of a set of seven principles to serve as guidelines for the consensus process, and

WHEREAS, in August 2005 the NCAA enacted a policy which sanctioned the University of Illinois athletic programs for continuing the symbol of Chief Illiniwek and related regalia and logo by barring the University’s athletic teams from hosting post-season competition, and

WHEREAS, in September 2005 the Board of Trustees supplemented the consensus process guidelines by adding an eighth guideline to recognize the NCAA policy which noted the University’s goal of ensuring student-athletes the opportunity to compete at the highest levels, and

WHEREAS, starting in October 2005 the University undertook a series of appeals of the NCAA policy and its application to the names “Illini” and “Fighting Illini” and the Chief Illiniwek tradition, and the University’s right to continue using the names “Illini” and “Fighting Illini” was confirmed by the NCAA, but after a six-month appeals process the University remained subject to the policy’s sanctions because of the existence of the Chief Illiniwek portrayal, name, and logo in conjunction with athletics, and University athletics have been deprived of the opportunity to host NCAA post-season competition, and

WHEREAS, on Friday, February 16, 2007, the University announced that Chief Illiniwek will no longer perform at athletic events after this season’s last home

men's basketball game on February 21, 2007, and the NCAA announced the University was removed from the list of institutions subject to the policy and that continued removal is conditioned upon the University's future non-use of Chief Illiniwek and the related Native American imagery in connection with University athletics, and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the University whose mission is to educate students, conduct cutting edge research, and serve the State, for the Board of Trustees to bring to conclusion the consensus process,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. THAT the Board adopts and ratifies the actions announced on February 16, 2007, ending the performances of Chief Illiniwek and further approves, adopts, ratifies, and confirms all other actions taken by University officials with respect to the consensus process, and
2. THAT the motion regarding Chief Illiniwek adopted by the Board of Trustees on October 11, 1990, be revoked insofar as it requires that Chief Illiniwek be retained, and
3. THAT the Board hereby directs the immediate conclusion to the use of Native American imagery as the symbol of the University of Illinois and its intercollegiate athletics along with the related regalia, logo, and the names "Chief Illiniwek" and "Chief," and the Board hereby directs the Chancellor of the Urbana-Champaign campus to manage the final disposition of these matters and report the decisions back to the Board and in so doing to remain in compliance with the NCAA policy, and
4. THAT the Board fully confirms the continued use of the terms "Illini" and "Fighting Illini" as they reflect our State, students, faculty, staff, and alumni, and
5. THAT this Resolution concludes the Board's consensus process regarding the matter of the Chief Illiniwek tradition.