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A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF A NATIVE AMERICAN
MASCOT AT “PUBLIC UNIVERSITY”

by

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M.S.A., Southeast Missouri State University, 1998
B.S., Southeast Missouri State University, 1994

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School of the

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI – ST. LOUIS
In partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

EDUCATION
with an emphasis in Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

May, 2010

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ABSTRACT

At the time this study began, there were approximately 60 senior colleges and universities using Native American mascots or nicknames to represent their athletic teams (Fournier, 2003). Many Native Americans, coalitions, organizations, and researchers (Connolly, 2000; Davis, 2002; King & Springwood, 2000; NCAA, 2001) believe that these mascots are racist stereotypes of Native Americans and recommend that they be banned. In contrast, other people believe that Native American mascots signify honor and tradition.

Differing meanings or opinions create an obvious conflict and each viewpoint includes a set of arguments to justify their beliefs. For example, many universities claim their alumni will stop contributing to the university if the mascot is removed. For the purpose of this study, the theory of semiotics was used to explain different meanings associated with Native American mascots and nicknames.

The civil rights movement was successful in decreasing the number of offensive African-American images and caricatures (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2001). However, it did not diminish the use of Native American images. Native American images and caricatures are used in everything from company logos to sports team mascots.

The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the removal of a Native American Mascot at one university. Data for this study was gathered from public and university records, ten personal interviews with faculty, staff, alumni, and community members, and one focus group with twenty-one students. The study examined historical documentation regarding the university's mascot/nickname, the

recent process that was used to change the mascot/nickname at the university, and opinions from students, faculty, alumni and the community regarding the university's former Native American mascot/nickname.

The opinions that were gathered from the documents, interviews, and focus group and were coded using the most common themes that support and oppose Native American mascots found in literature. Overall, 153 opinions were coded in opposition of the Native American mascot and the most common theme was Code O7: Marketing and School Spirit. Overall, 543 opinions supported the use of the Native American Mascot and the most common theme was code S1: Honor, Respect, and Pride.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the many colleagues and friends who helped me complete this dissertation. I would especially like to thank my dissertation committee. My chairperson, Dr. Shawn Woodhouse, took me under her wing after my chairperson left the university. I could not have made it through this process without her guidance and support. I would like to thank Dr. Paula King, Dr. Patricia Boyer, and Dr. Virginia Navarro for serving on my committee. Dr. King was a constant support throughout the completion of this dissertation. Dr. Patricia Boyer and Dr. Virginia Navarro replaced two committee members after the proposal was completed. They were very supportive and kind for agreeing to serve under these circumstances. I would like to mention the two members of the committee that preceded Dr. Boyer and Dr. Navarro. Dr. Stephen Sherblom and the late Dr. Mary Cooper were very instrumental in helping me develop the dissertation proposal. I sincerely appreciate the service of all of these faculty members.

I would like to thank the participants who spent time interviewing and completing the focus group with me. Their personal opinions and historical knowledge of the mascot were invaluable to my study. I would like to thank my parents, John and June Behnken, for their encouragement, support, and helping me understand the importance of a college education at a very young age. I would like to thank my son, Brady, and husband, Brian, for being patient with me as I spent time away from them to finish this dissertation. I would like to also thank Dr. Cheryl McAllister and Dr. Walt Paquin for their encouragement and support throughout my PhD program and dissertation completion.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

It is halftime. The crowd is on their feet clapping to the war chant being played by the University band. The crowd eagerly waits for their mascot, Chief Illiniwek, to enter the gymnasium. Finally, the barefoot Chief Illiniwek, dressed in buckskin clothing and an eagle feather headdress, runs onto the gymnasium floor. The crowd continues to clap and yell for the Chief. He circles the gymnasium floor, extending his arms and jumping around. He twirls around and performs one-legged high kicks. Chief Illiniwek finishes his performance with a cheerleader-like split-jump and then folds his arms out in front of him (Rosenstein, 1997). This description of Chief Illiniwek, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, means different things to different people. Some people find nothing wrong with this image, while others find it very disturbing. To Native American alumnus, Charlene Teters, this image is a “ridiculous kind of gymnastic routine” (Johns, 2000, p. 130) which is a humiliating and disgraceful impression of Native American people. Researchers concur that Native American mascots promote negative stereotypes and misconceptions of Native Americans (Davis, 2002; Connolly, 2000; King and Springwood, 2000; NCAA, 2002).

In contrast, other people believe this image signifies honor and tradition. University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Board of Trustee member, Susan Gravenhorst, stated that the use of the Chief Illiniwek mascot is a compliment to Native American people (Rosenstein, 1997). Alumni and fans of many universities believe the “nicknames and logos represent long-standing traditions. And they agree that rather than denigrating Native Americans, such nicknames serve to honor tribes that might otherwise be

forgotten” (Connolly, 2000, ¶ 2). Many Native Americans, coalitions, organizations, and researchers believe that these mascots are racist stereotypes of Native Americans and believe they should be banned. Others, such as University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign alumni who financially support the University, believe that the Indian mascots should not be removed (Rosenstein, 1997). Differing meanings or opinions, such as the aforementioned examples, create an obvious conflict. What should Universities do about this situation? This is where the controversy begins.

Purpose of the Study

At the time this study began, there were approximately 60 senior colleges and universities using Native American mascots or nicknames to represent their athletic teams (Fournier, 2003). This includes The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; The University of North Dakota; Arkansas State University; and Florida State University. Most of the research conducted on this subject was published during the last ten years (Connolly, 2000; King & Springwood, 2001b; Spindel, 2000). This research focused on universities that have experienced opposition to both maintaining and/or removing a Native American mascot. In most cases, the universities decided to retain the mascot.

There is minimal research that focuses on universities who successfully removed a Native American mascot. The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the removal of a Native American Mascot at one university. This study examined the following question: What is the process and experience for one university regarding the removal of a Native American Mascot?

Background of the Study

Why do Native American mascots mean different things to different people? All people have different cultural experiences, which comprise the cultural background. A person's cultural background includes "such things as languages and gestures; personal appearance and social relationships; religion, philosophy, and values; courtship, marriage, and family customs; food and recreation; work and government; education and communication systems; health, transportation, and government systems; and economic systems" (Jandt, 2001, p. 8).

American Education and the Media

Human beings find different meaning in images such as mascots as a result of individual difference and cultural background. However, there are two major forces that influence America's understanding of the Native American culture and use of mascots and nicknames – education and the media. According to Salisbury (2001), Americans are uneducated about Native American culture. Traditionally, American history books began with Columbus' "discovery" of America in 1492 (Salisbury, 2001). Therefore, most Americans did not learn anything about the Native American culture during their formal education. American history books are now beginning to include the history of Natives in America prior to 1492 (Salisbury, 2001). This lack of education has caused many Americans to believe that Native Americans lived as uncivilized primitives before Europeans settled in America (Brown, 1988). More accurately, research indicates that the Native Americans were diverse groups who developed their own sets of beliefs, attitudes, languages, and culture (Brown, 1988). These Native American groups also

developed their styles of clothing and housing that fit the climate in their region (Brown, 1988).

Most Americans were educated about the Native American culture through an informal and inaccurate means of education – the media. Many Americans have been exposed to Western television programs depicting cowboys and Indians (Rodriguez, 1998) and negative images of Native Americans in newspaper articles (Ganje, 1996). Television programs often portrayed all Indians as having “worn feather bonnets and buckskin clothes, rode horses, and lived in tepees” (Brown, 1988, p. 19). Other forms of media, such as newspaper articles, have exploited Native Americans by stereotyping them as attacking savages, noble warriors, or angry protestors (Ganje, 1996). These stereotypes provide a harmful and inaccurate depiction of the Native American culture (Brown, 1988; Ganje, 1996). Since most Americans were never formally educated about the Native American culture, many do not understand why the Native American mascot is inappropriate. Both formal and informal education about the Native American culture is critical in eliminating Native American stereotypes.

According to Ganje (1996), these negative images lead to harmful misrepresentations of the Native American culture. For example, many Native Americans experience low self-esteem, anxiety, exclusion, and anger because of images in the media. Today, Native American images and language are used on everything from blue jeans . . . to automobiles . . . to athletic mascots. However, research indicates that the use of Native American images, and the tradition of playing Indian, began well before the twentieth century (Deloria, 1998).

The Use of Native American Images

Long before Chief Illiniwek performed at halftime shows at the University of Illinois and Indian maidens decorated the front of butter cartons, our European ancestors dressed as Indians. White Americans of the 18th century started the American “tradition” of dressing as Indians (Deloria, 1998). Although the use of Indian disguises can be traced back to the mid 1700’s, the most well known incident involving the white man’s use of Indian dress was during the Boston Tea party in 1773 (Deloria, 1998). White Americans, disguised as Indians, dumped barrels of tea into the Boston harbor (Deloria, 1998). The Red Men society, founded in 1812, used Indian ranks such as sachem, chief, squaw sachem, and warrior to rank members of their club (Deloria, 1998). Around 1910, the Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Girls were formed (Deloria, 1998). The boys learned skills such as camping, and the girls were taught domestic roles. Both organizations used Indian costume and play as part of their club rituals (Deloria, 1998).

Beer, Butter, and Bikes

Today, many products are marketed through the use of Native American nicknames or images. For example, products and companies such as Land O’Lakes butter dishes (*Land O’Lakes*, n.d.), True Value “Lawn Chief” mowers, Mutual of Omaha financial group (*United of Omaha Life Insurance Company*, n.d.), Crazy Horse Malt Liquor (Co-op America’s Real Money, n.d.), and Indian Brand Motorcycles (*Indian Motorcycle Apparel, Parts & Accessories*, n.d.) currently use Native American images to sell their products.

There is no law banning the use of Native American images and nicknames for products. However, the Lakota Sioux and descendants of Crazy Horse successfully

prevented the production of Crazy Horse Malt Liquor (Co-op America's Real Money, n.d.). The use of the name Crazy Horse on a liquor product was particularly disturbing since Crazy Horse denounced the use of alcohol (Co-op America's Real Money, n.d.). Although this case was considered a victory, the Crazy Horse Defense Project continues to prohibit the use of the Crazy Horse name on any product (Co-op America's Real Money, n.d.). Organizations that support the Crazy Horse Defense project include the Morrison & Foerster, L.L.P. law firm, the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), the National Coalition on Racism in Sports and the Media (NCRSM), and the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) (Crazy Horse Defense Project, n.d.).

The Land O'Lakes butter carton depicts a "now-famous Indian maiden" (*Land O'Lakes*, n.d.), who kneels while holding a butter container in her hands. In the background is a nature-like scene consisting of trees, land, and water (*Land O'Lakes*, n.d.). The True Value "Lawn Chief" mower's nickname is more obvious than its profile of an Indian head that appears on the clear plastic headlight of the mower. The Mutual of Omaha Life Insurance logo portrays the profile of an Indian head with a stern expression and chiseled features (*United of Omaha Life Insurance Company*, n.d.).

The Indian motorcycle brand only uses the nickname "Indian". However, the website invites visitors to join a mailing list by clicking on an Indian profile logo (*Indian Motorcycle Apparel, Parts & Accessories*, n.d.). This muscular Indian looks as though he is riding on a motorcycle because his headdress appears to be soaring in the wind (*Indian Motorcycle Apparel, Parts & Accessories*, n.d.). These are just a few of the many companies and organizations using Native American images and nicknames as marketing

tools to sell a product. Why do companies use these images? According to Co-op America's Real Money (n.d.):

Companies often attach these images to their products because they feel people associate certain characteristics with Native Americans – such as bravery; strength; wisdom; or even an aggressive, war-like attitude- and they want consumers to associate these same qualities with their products or teams. (¶ 2)

Native American Mascots

According to Agnes (1999), a mascot is “any person, animal, or thing adopted by a group, especially a sports team, as a symbol or for good luck” (p. 883). It is unclear how university mascots originated and why so many colleges and universities adopted Native American athletic mascots. Thelin (1994) and Connolly (2000) suggest that a growth in both college enrollments and the addition of academic programs played a role in the development of intercollegiate athletics and mascots. The growth of intercollegiate competition during the early twentieth century likely inspired the creation of athletic mascots that would excite fans and promote school spirit.

Although it is unclear why so many athletic teams chose Native American mascots, researchers offer several explanations. Research from both Connolly (2000) and King and Springwood (2001b) indicate that universities adopted Native American mascots to honor the Native Americans who once lived in their region of the country. Other research indicates that there is no particular reason why colleges and universities have chosen Native American symbols as mascots. For example, red athletic uniforms were the source of the St. John's University nickname, the Redmen, not Native

Americans. The Redmen nickname eventually became associated with Native American symbols, but that was not the original intent of the nickname (King & Springwood, 2001b).

The Removal of Native American Mascots

The movement toward removing Native American mascots unofficially began in 1989 when Charlene Teters, a graduate student from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, began protesting the Chief Illiniwek mascot during athletic events (Johns, 2000). Her persistence sparked the nation's attention regarding the use of Native Americans as mascots for athletic teams. Although much of the national attention regarding this matter occurred during the last fifteen years, several universities removed their Native American mascots over thirty years ago.

According to the American Indian Sports Team Mascots (n.d.a), an organization promoting the removal of Native American mascots, both Stanford University and Dickinson State removed their Indian-related mascots in 1972. During the 1970s and 1980s, Syracuse University, N.Y., removed their Saltine Warrior mascot, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., removed the Brown Indians and Brown Squaws mascots, and Southern Oregon University discontinued the use of Indian symbols with their Red Raiders mascot (American Indian Sports Team Mascots, n.d.a). In 2002, researchers identified several reasons why many universities were not removing their Native American mascots. According to the NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee (2002), several universities claim that their Native American mascot honors Native Americans; other universities claim that there is no reason to remove the mascot because there is no opposition to their mascot; and some universities are concerned that

alumni will discontinue financial support to the university if the mascot is changed (NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee, 2002).

Significance of the Study

The civil rights movement was successful in decreasing the number of offensive African-American images and caricatures (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2001). However, it did not diminish the use of Native American images. Native American images and caricatures are used in everything from company logos to sports team mascots. Why are companies and universities permitted to use images that are discriminatory to Native Americans? This type of discrimination is not tolerated with any other race of people in the United States. According to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (2001), the use of Native American mascots contradicts anti-discrimination laws. The use of Native American mascots is also inconsistent with many university mission statements and anti-discrimination policies (NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee, 2002). When it comes to equal employment and access to education, most universities do a good job adhering to their own anti-discrimination policies. However, some universities contradict their own anti-discrimination policies by choosing to retain a culturally insensitive and racial mascot such as “Indian”, “Savages”, or “Redmen”.

The use of Native American mascots gained national attention in 1989 when Charlene Teters, a Cherokee tribe member, protested the “Fighting Illini” mascot at the University of Illinois-Champaign Urbana campus. Although protests have been occurring since 1989, the NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee (2002) indicates that more than 30 universities were still using a Native American mascot or

nickname in 2002. There are also community colleges, high schools, and professional sports teams using Native American mascots and nicknames. It seems like it would be an easy decision for a University to remove an offensive mascot that contradicts university discrimination policies. However, there are many issues surrounding the use of Native American mascots. As stated earlier, there are two basic viewpoints on this topic: some people are strongly opposed to the use of Native American mascots and others believe that this is a tradition at their university and their mascot honors Native Americans. Each viewpoint includes a set of arguments to justify its beliefs. For example, many universities claim their alumni will stop contributing to the university if the mascot is removed. Some alumni and supporters also believe the mascot is a tradition and not offensive to Native Americans.

Many university administrators are caught between their own mission and policies and their alumni and other financial supporters. For many schools, this issue has been a struggle. Other, more pro-active universities have willingly changed their mascot. Some administrators have changed mascots with little input from their constituents while others have created committees of faculty, staff, alumni, community members, and students to address the issue.

Overview of the Methodology

At the time this study began, there were approximately 60 senior colleges and universities using Native American mascots or nicknames to represent their athletic teams (Fournier, 2003). This includes The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; The University of North Dakota; Arkansas State University; and Florida State University. Most of the research conducted on this subject was published during the last ten years

(Connolly, 2000; King & Springwood, 2001b; Spindel, 2000). This research focused on universities that have experienced opposition to both maintaining and removing a Native American mascot. In most cases, the universities decided to retain the mascot.

There is minimal research that focuses on universities who successfully removed a Native American mascot. The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the removal of a Native American Mascot at one university. This study examined the following question: What is the process and experience for one university regarding the removal of a Native American Mascot?

To explore this question, qualitative methods were used to gather and analyze data for this study. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), “Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials . . . that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual’s lives” (p. 3). The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the removal of a Native American Mascot at one university. Qualitative methods permitted the researcher to understand the experience of the university under study.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), a characteristic of qualitative data is “their richness and holism, with strong potential for revealing complexity; such data provide ‘thick descriptions’ that are vivid, nested in real context, and have a ring of truth that has strong impact on the reader” (p. 10). Data for this study was gathered from three areas; 1) documents such as public and university records; 2) personal interviews with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members; and 3) focus groups with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members. The study considered three main areas:

1. A review of historical documentation regarding the development of the university's mascot/nickname including documentation regarding previous attempts to change the mascot
2. The collection of information about the recent process that was used to change the mascot/nickname at the university
3. The collection of information from students, faculty, alumni and the community regarding their opinions on university mascots in general, the university's former Native American mascot/nickname, the process used to select a new mascot, and the new choice for a mascot

The researcher conducted a content analysis to analyze the data gathered from the interviews, focus groups, and written documents. According to Berg (2001), content analysis is used to analyze forms of "social communication" (p. 240) such as written communication or recorded verbal communication. A "start list" of codes for this study was developed based on written documents and relevant literature.

A common method used to confirm the researcher's data coding in a content analysis is to request multiple coders to apply the researcher's code list to the data (Ryan & Bernard, 2001). This procedure determined whether multiple coders will apply the same codes to the data (Ryan & Bernard, 2001). For this study, the researcher asked other researchers to apply the code list to a set of data from this study. Another common method used to test and confirm data is triangulation. Triangulation allows the researcher to search for information using a variety of sources (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For this study, triangulation was used by gathering data from multiple sources such as interviews, focus groups, newspapers, and websites.

Limitations of the Study

At the time this study began, there were approximately 60 senior colleges and universities using Native American mascots or nicknames to represent their athletic teams (Fournier, 2003). The universities associated with a Native American Mascot are very diverse across the United States. They are located in large cities and small towns with varying levels of populations and cultural diversity. They are public and private universities with different student populations, administrations, athletic programs, alumni supporters, and protestors. Each university or college is different in many ways. This study was limited to the experience of the successful removal of a mascot at one university.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were used:

Alumnus/Alumni: “one who has attended or has graduated from a particular school, college, or university” (Alumni, 2006).

Booster: “an enthusiastic supporter” (Booster, 2006).

Caricature: “a picture or imitation or imitation of a person, literary style, etc. in which certain features or mannerisms are exaggerated for a satirical effect” (Agnes, 1999, p.222). Satirical effect is when “follies, vices, stupidities, and abuses in life are held up in ridicule and contempt” (Agnes, 1999, p. 222).

Mascot: “any person, animal, or thing adopted by a group, especially a sports team as a symbol or for good luck” (Agnes, 1999, p. 883).

Native American: “member of any of the aboriginal peoples of the Western Hemisphere, with the exception of the Eskimo, or Inuit, and Aleuts” (Native American, 2006).

Nickname: “a usually descriptive name given instead of or in addition to the one belonging to a person, place, or thing” (Nickname, 2006).

Public University: Public: “supported by public funds” (Agnes, 1999, p. 1160);
University: “an educational institution of the highest level, typically, in the U.S., with one or more undergraduate colleges, together with a program of graduate studies and a number of professional schools, and authorized to confer various degrees, as the bachelor’s, master’s, and doctor’s” (Agnes, 1999, p. 1563).

Sign: “a meaningful unit which is interpreted as ‘standing for’ something other than itself” (Chandler, 2002, p. 241).

Stereotypes: “widely shared beliefs about the characteristic traits, attitudes, and behaviors of members of various social groups (racial, ethnic, religious), including the assumption that the members of such groups are usually all alike (Wood & Wood, 1999, p. 694).

Symbol: “something that stands for, represents, or suggests another thing; especially an object used to represent something abstract; emblem [the dove is a *symbol* of peace]” (Agnes, 1999, p. 1450).

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 of this study includes the purpose of the study and an introduction to the topic and a background of the study. The background of the study includes a brief segment regarding American education and the media, the use of Native American images, and the current efforts to remove Native American mascots. The second part of this section includes the significance of the study, overview of methodology, limitations of the study and definitions of terms.

Chapter 2 of this study provides an introduction to communication theory and semiotics and how these theories can be applied to the subject of Native American mascots. In addition, the meanings associated with the use of Native American mascots, the meanings of Native American mascots found in literature, and several controversies involving Native American mascots are discussed. Chapter 3 contains the methodology used to conduct this study. Chapters 4 and 5 contain the results of the study, and Chapter 6 contains a conclusion and recommendations for future studies on this topic.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to O’Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders, and Fiske (1983), “A sign has three essential characteristics: it must have a physical form, it must refer to something other than itself, and it must be used and recognized by people as a sign” (p. 214). Native American images contain the characteristics of a sign. For example, a Native American athletic mascot is usually presented in the physical form of a drawing, caricature, someone dressed in a costume, or simply a word or nickname. The mascot refers to a university, college, high school, or professional athletic team and it is an easily recognizable symbol or logo for that team. Several theories within the field of communication can be used to explain the meaning found in signs. One associated theory that accomplishes this is called semiotics. For the purpose of this study, the theory of semiotics was used to explain different meanings associated with Native American mascots and nicknames.

Finding Meaning in Signs

The word “cat” is a sign. According to Chandler (2002), “A sign is a meaningful unit which is interpreted as ‘standing for’ something other than itself” (p. 241). The word “cat” stands for the physical object of the cat. Signs can take the “physical form of words, images, sounds, acts or objects” (Chandler, 2002, p. 241). For example, an image of a “cat” in the form of a picture or photo could also be a sign for a cat. Berger (1984) indicates several areas in which signs can be found in contemporary culture.

- 1) Advertising: Used mostly to identify or associate an image with a corporation. Logos and lettering are used in the form of billboards, neon signs, and plastic or metal signs.
- 2) Objects and Material Culture: Includes clothing style, housing style, style of accessories or paintings in home or office.
- 3) Activities and Performance: Intentional or unintentional use of body language or gestures, which indicate feelings about things.
- 4) Sound and Music: The use of sounds in films or television programs can accentuate scenes by indicating suspense, action, danger, or particular era.

Communication Theory and Semiotics

A sign is a form of communication. Communication is used to exchange information, develop relationships with others, persuade others, gain power, make decisions, express one's views, and understand the world (Dimbleby & Burton, 1985). However, a sign cannot be used as a form of communication until the meaning of the sign is known (Dimbleby & Burton, 1985). Dimbleby and Burton (1985) indicate that this concept can be challenging for several reasons: 1) Something may be considered a sign but the meaning of that sign may not be indicated; 2) the same sign can mean different things at different times and places; 3) a sign can have one or more meanings; 4) and different people find different meaning in the same sign.

What does the word "cat" mean? To some people, it means a furry, cuddly, purring, playful pet. To other people, it means a shedding, annoying, hissing, scratching, mean animal. To people in other countries, the word "cat" may mean a source of food rather than a pet. Why are there so many meanings for one sign? Each person finds

meaning in symbols and signs based on their cultural and educational background.

People find meaning based on cultural experiences. According to Jandt (2001), culture is not part of a person's genetic makeup. People learn to establish meanings for signs by forming a social network with those who have similar cultural associations (Dimbleby & Burton, 1985; Jandt, 2001).

According to Jandt (2001), "The meanings you attach to your perceptions are greatly determined by your cultural background" (p. 187). For example, the "cat" mentioned earlier is considered a pet in the American culture. Within this culture, there are subcultures that like cats and those that dislike cats as pets. In other cultures, the "cat" is a source of food. The culture in which one is assimilated will determine if a "cat" is a pet or a source of food. Communication does not always achieve its intended purpose (Dimbleby & Burton, 1985). Signs can be interpreted incorrectly. Dimbleby and Burton (1985) claim that although most communication is intentional, some communication is unintentional. For example, signs may have offensive meanings at times even if they are not intended to be offensive (Dimbleby & Burton, 1985).

Fiske (1982) claims that there are two main areas of study within the field of communication. The first area of study is concerned with the process of transmitting messages from one person to another (Fiske, 1982). The second area of study, semiotics, emphasizes decoding meaning of the messages that are transmitted. Fiske (1982) claims that "it is concerned with how messages, or texts, interact with people in order to produce meanings; that is, it is concerned with the role of texts in our culture" (p. 2). Semiotics, simply defined, is the "study of signs" (Chandler, 2002, p.1). However, this simple definition includes the study of visual signs, such as road signs, billboards, photographs,

art, symbols, and even body language (Chandler, 2002). Semiotics may also include the study of non-visual signs, such as words and sounds (Chandler, 2002). The study of signs, or semiotics, was traditionally concerned with signs that are formed within the structure of language, such as words or text (O'Sullivan et al., 1983). Semiotics is now used as a method by which to analyze sign systems such as media, film, literature, photographs and symbols (O'Sullivan et al., 1983).

Semioticians are interested in studying the meaning of signs, which can be examined in the form of text and media (Chandler, 2002). A message in the form of a text can include visual and verbal communication. According to Chandler (2002), this message may be recorded in the form of writing, video tape, or audio tape. Chandler (2002) states that “a text is an assemblage of signs (such as words, images, sounds and/or gestures) constructed (and interpreted) with reference to the conventions associated with a genre and in a particular medium of communication” (p. 3). Texts can exist in different forms of media (Chandler, 2002). For example, mass media information could include a newspaper article, a news report on television, a radio advertisement or report, a journal article, photographs, and other publications. Interpersonal communication may include media such as telephone calls, e-mails, letters, meeting minutes.

Chandler (2002) provides several important reasons to study semiotics. First, studying semiotics can help researchers understand that signs do not exist as independent systems. Rather, they are subject to human interpretation based on social realities. Second, the use of visual signs is a large part of our society. According to Chandler (2002), “We need to learn that even the most realistic signs are not what they appear to be” (p. 15). The two most important influences on the theory of semiotics are Ferdinand

de Saussure and Charles Peirce (Berger, 1984; Chandler, 2002; Cobley & Jansz, 1999; MacCannell & McCannell, 1982; Silverman, 1983). The idea of semiology was developed by Ferdinand de Saussure (Saussure, 1916/1966).

Ferdinand de Saussure

Saussure's model of semiology insisted that language must be studied first in order to understand semiology. According to Saussure (1916/1966), "Language is a system of signs that express ideas, and is therefore comparable to a system of writing, the alphabet of deaf-mutes, symbolic rites, polite formulas, military signals, etc. But it is the most important of all these systems" (p. 16). Chandler (2002) interprets Saussure's study of the sign as a two-part model which contains a signifier and the signified. The signifier refers to the sound pattern and the signified refers to the idea or concept. Chandler (2002) provides the following example to explain Saussure's theory: "a *signifier*: the word 'open'; a *signified concept*: that the shop is open for business" (p. 19). Cobley and Jansz (1999) explain Saussure's signifier as the physical or material aspect of the sign and the signified as the mental concept of the sign.

O'Sullivan et al. (1983) indicate that there is a "constant dynamic interaction between the two [signifier and signified]" (p. 217). Figure A provides a diagram of Saussure's model.

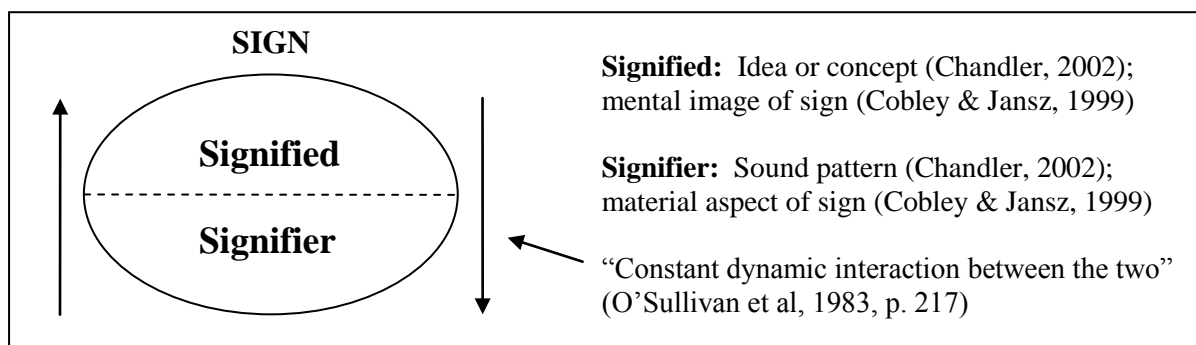


Figure A. Saussure's model of the sign.

Figure B provides an application of Saussure’s model to the “cat” example that was explained earlier in this chapter. The mental concept, or signified, is what a cat means to Person 1, Person 2, and Person 3 (Cobley & Jansz, 1999). The cat means something different to each person. The signifier may be a specific “cat”, such as a white Persian kitten, which is a specific cat rather than a general cat. However, when the word “cat” is presented to each person, they will think of the mental concept they associate with the word “cat”, not necessarily the white Persian kitten (Cobley & Jansz, 1999).

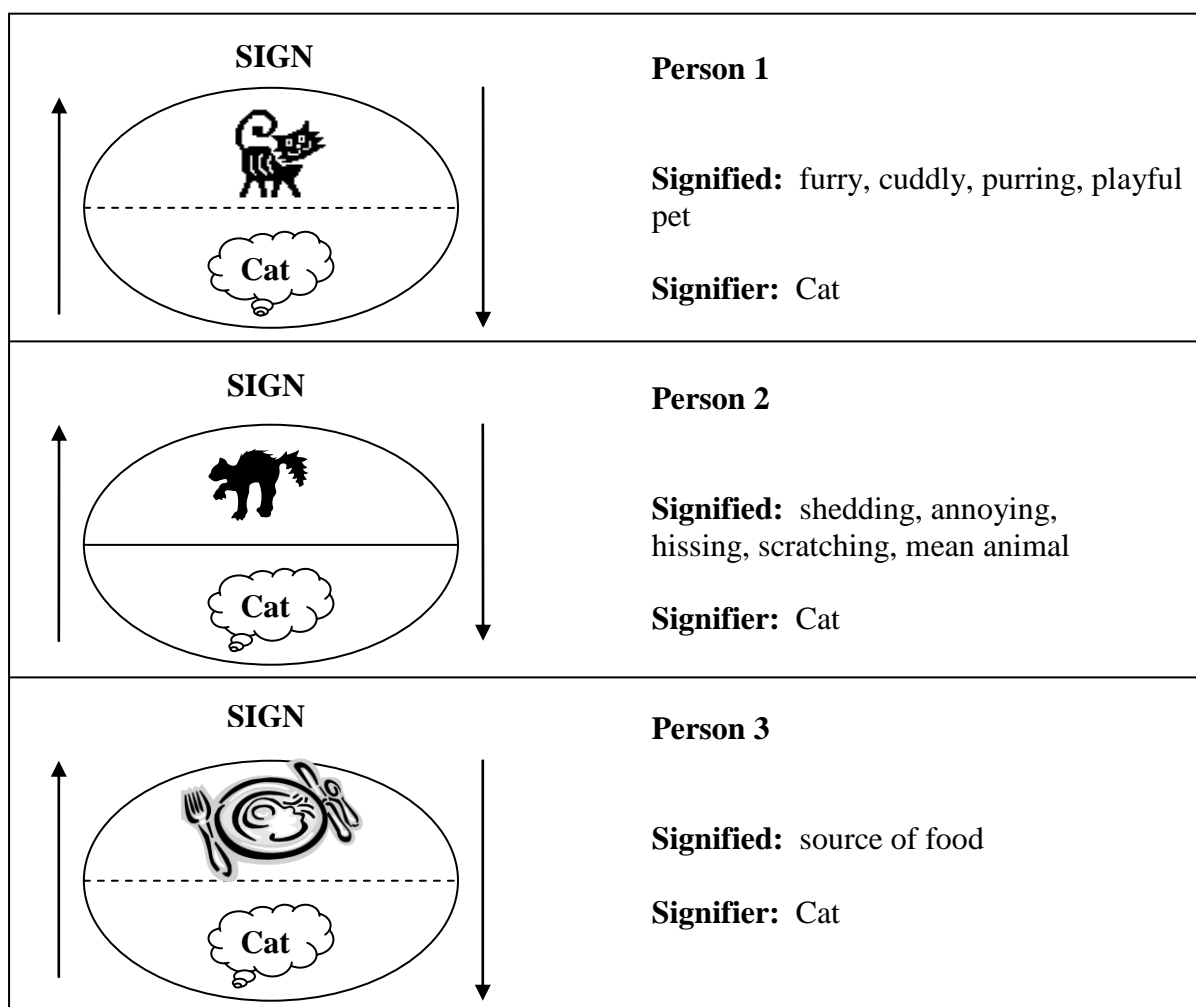


Figure B. Saussure’s model applied to the “cat” example explained at the beginning of this chapter.

Charles Peirce

Charles Peirce's model indicates that there is a three-part model that should be used to understand the sign (Fisch, 1982). Fisch (1982) explains that the first is the sign. According to Merrell (2001) the sign is also called the representamen. The second part is the sign's object (Merrell, 2001; Fisch, 1982), and the third part is the interpretant (Merrell, 2001; Fisch, 1982). Figure C provides a visual example of Peirce's model. After defining the sign, Fisch (1982) claims that Peirce would subsequently assign the sign into one of the following categories: "1) dividing the signs into icons, indexes, and symbols; 2) dividing symbols into terms; or 3) dividing arguments into retroductions, inductions, and deductions" (p. xxxii). After this process is complete, Peirce would then attempt to determine the logic or relative validity of the argument (Fisch, 1982).

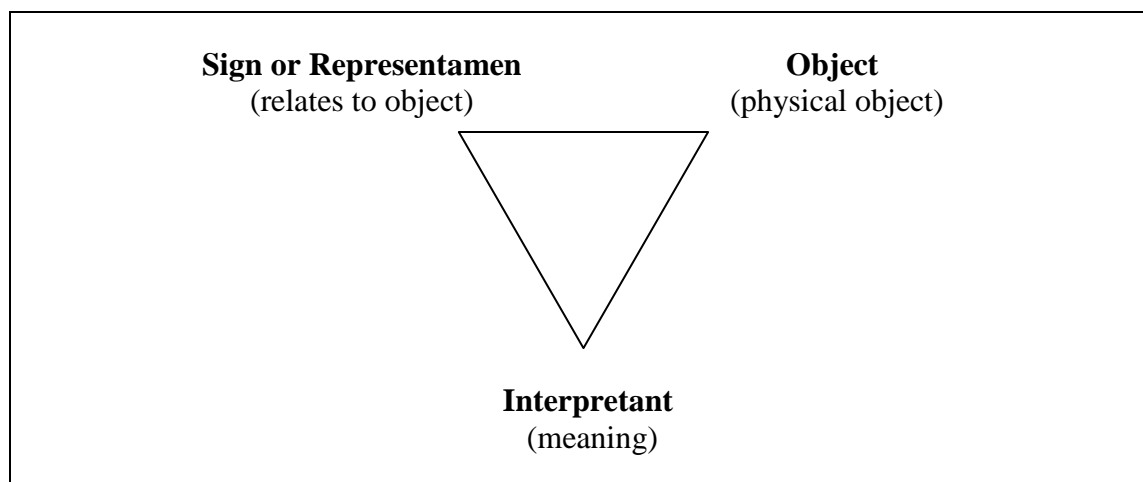


Figure C. Peirce's model of the sign (Coblely & Jansz, 1999).

Merrell (2001) provides an example of how this theory can be applied to a sign. The sign or representamen could be smoke in a forest. The object, or visual sign, of smoke would probably lead the person to think of fire. The interpretant, or meaning, of this sign may be to "call for help" (Merrell, 2001). Within Peirce's sign system, the

interpretant can actually produce further signs (Cobley & Jansz, 1999; Merrell, 2001).

After the person “calls for help”, the individual may then express “concern for the people near the fire” which would be considered an additional sign (Merrell, 2001).

Roland Barthes

Semiotics became increasingly popular during the 1960s when French cultural theorist Roland Barthes introduced this theory as a method of analyzing cultural studies (Chandler, 2002). Barthes’ sign system, which was based on the work of Saussure, integrates cultural values as a part of the signification process (O’Sullivan et al., 1983). Barthes’ model consists of two orders of signification (O’Sullivan et al., 1983). According to O’Sullivan et al. (1983), the first order of signification is called denotation, which Saussure (1916/1966) referred to as signification. Denotation is considered the “relationship of a sign to its referent” (O’Sullivan et al., 1983, p. 215). The denotation is intended to be an objective view that excludes cultural values. However, there is no such thing as a purely objective view except in languages such as mathematics (O’Sullivan et al., 1983). A denotative statement in mathematical language would be: $1 + 1 = 2$ (O’Sullivan et al., 1983).

The second order of signification includes connotation and myth. Connotation transpires when the person’s cultural beliefs or value system merges with the denotative meaning of the sign. This “produces associative, expressive, attitudinal, or evaluative shades of meaning” (O’Sullivan et al., 1983, p. 219). Myth “refers to a chain of concepts widely accepted throughout a culture, by which its members conceptualize or understand a particular topic or part of their social experience” (O’Sullivan et al., 1983, p. 216). Fiske and Hartley recommend that a third order of signification be added to the Barthes’

model – ideology (O’Sullivan et al., 1983). Ideology is “the way that the varied connotations and myths fit together to form a coherent pattern or sense of wholeness, that is, the way they ‘make sense’, is evidence of an underlying invisible, organizing principle – ideology” (O’Sullivan et al., 1983, p. 217). The model illustrated in Figure D, combines Saussure’s “signifier and signified”, Barthes’ “denotation and connotation and myth”, and Fiske and Hartley’s “ideology” to create a comprehensive example of the signification process.

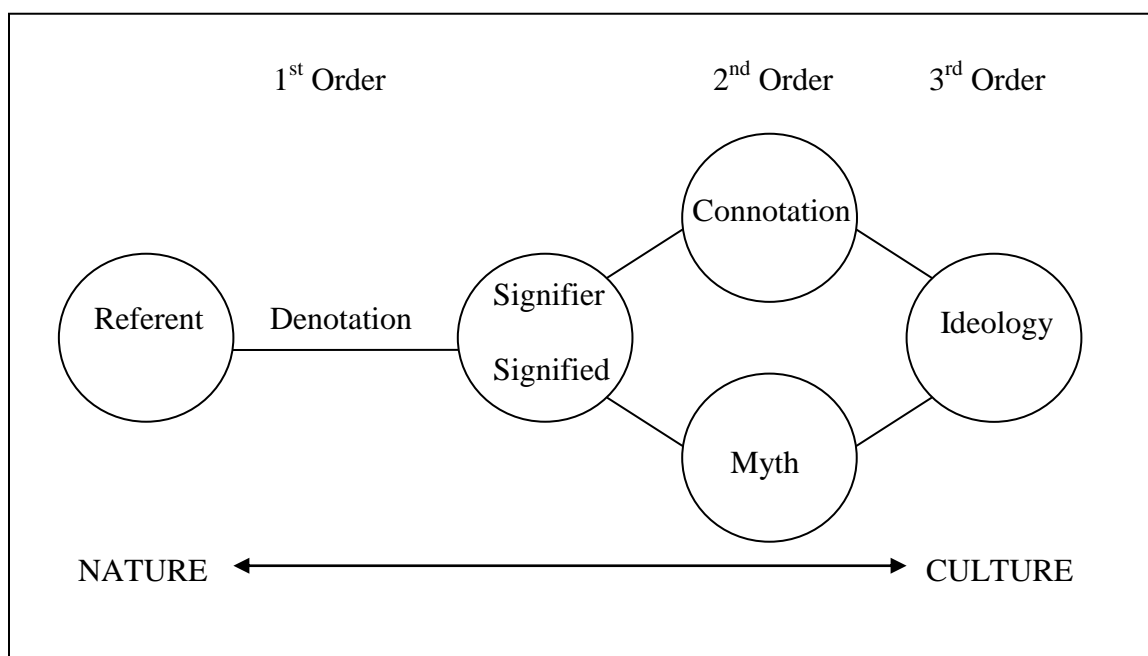


Figure D. Fiske and Hartley model of the signification (O’Sullivan et al., 1983).

In summary, the first order of signification allows one to identify the objective meaning of the sign. During the second order of signification, connotation (our cultural values and beliefs) and myths (common beliefs accepted by a certain culture) are merged with the signified and signifier. This merge creates an ideology (our idea or conclusion), which Fiske and Hartley call the third order of signification (O’Sullivan et al., 1983).

Semiotics and Native American Mascots

There are several reasons why semiotics was an appropriate theoretical model for this study. First, Native American mascots are signs that have different meanings for different people. The theory of semiotics helps to explain how people find meaning in signs. Second, differing opinions or perceptions of mascots stem from differences in cultural values and education. Cultural myths also influence an individual's interpretation of the meaning of mascots. Barthes' theory of semiotics is the most appropriate model for understanding the meaning of Native American mascots. This theory takes the objective meaning of the sign and adds each person's cultural values and cultural myths to create one meaning, or ideology. The earlier works of Saussure and Peirce did not focus heavily on the cultural aspect of meaning.

Meaning of Native American Mascots

So what do all of the symbols and signs that were presented in the first section mean? How do we understand what they mean? The answer is that they mean different things to different people. Just as the word "cat" can be considered a sign, so can the words and symbols of "Indian", "Chiefs", "Braves", and "Redmen". Native American mascots have been in existence for nearly a century. It was estimated that nearly 3,000 schools displayed Native American mascots during the 1970s (Harjo, 1999). The first removal of an Indian mascot occurred in 1970 at the University of Oklahoma (Harjo, 1999). Stanford, Dartmouth, and Syracuse also removed their Native American mascots during the mid 1970s (Harjo, 1999).

In the early 1980s, Franks (1982) researched mascots and nicknames at 2,000 colleges. In this study, Franks concluded that Warriors was the fifth most popular and

Indian the eighth most popular (Franks, 1982). However, he also noted that if all the Indian-related nicknames and mascots such as Redmen, Chiefs, and Braves were consolidated, these would be considered the most popular nicknames or mascots (Franks, 1982). Some institutions use both a Native American image and nickname while some use only a Native American nickname. Today, the number of Native American nicknames and mascots has decreased significantly. At the time this study began, there were approximately 60 senior colleges and universities using Native American mascots or nicknames to represent their athletic teams (Fournier, 2003). In 2003, “Warriors” was the most frequently used nickname, followed by “Indians” (Fournier, 2003).

Indian play and the use of Native American images to sell products and athletic teams have been prevalent for centuries. This ritual is part of the American culture. According to Pewewardy (1999), “Even though it has become as American as apple pie and baseball, making fun of Indigenous Peoples at athletic events is wrong!” (p. 1). Many researchers claim that Native American images promote racism, stereotypes, and discrimination (Connolly, 2000; Davis, 2002; Dolley, 2003; King & Springwood, 2000; Pewewardy, 1999). Even though many people find these images disturbing, there are many who feel the images promote honor and tradition (Connolly, 2000; Davis, 2002; Dolley, 2003; King & Springwood, 2000; Pewewardy, 1999). Native American mascots are symbols that hold different meanings for different people. For example, the mascots communicate “tradition” to some people and “racism” to others. Culture, education, and the media influence how people feel about different things. This section will explain culture and the media and how they influence communication.

Cultural Influences

Why do Native American mascots mean different things to different people? All people come from different cultural backgrounds. A person's cultural background includes "such things as languages and gestures; personal appearance and social relationships; religion, philosophy, and values; courtship, marriage, and family customs; food and recreation; work and government; education and communication systems; health, transportation, and government systems; and economic systems" (Jandt, 2001, p. 8). Culture includes many aspects of a person's life. This paper will focus on three main areas that influence the different meanings that an individual attributes to Native American mascots: 1) cultural myths and stereotypes; 2) formal education; and 3) informal education. All of these factors influence how people make meaning of Native American mascots.

Myths and Stereotypes

The first important influence on culture is cultural myth and stereotype (Jandt, 2001). Myths "represent the society's collectivity of persistent values handed down from generation to generation that help make the world understandable, support the social order, and educate the young" (Jandt, 2001, p. 9). Unfortunately, some cultural myths are negative. Myths and negative stereotypes about Native Americans influence cultural values. Stereotypes are false representations of individuals and the act of stereotyping can lead to discrimination (Wood & Wood, 1999). A stereotype can be harmful because it labels everyone in the group as being the same. Jandt (2001) claims that stereotypes are harmful to the process of communication in several ways. One issue is that stereotyping reinforces that the belief is true even when it is not true (Jandt, 2001).

Another issue with stereotyping is the belief that one individual has all the traits of a common stereotype (Jandt, 2001). Native American stereotypes have been around for centuries (Deloria, 1998). The following section provides a few examples of Native American stereotypes and how they have been used against Native Americans.

The Indian stereotype. When Christopher Columbus arrived in the Americas in 1492, he called the natives “Indians” because he believed that he had arrived in Asia. According to Lobo and Talbot (2001), Native Americans despise the term Indian because it denies Native Americans the ability to define their own names in their native language. In addition, the term assumes that all Indians are the same (Lobo & Talbot, 2001). However, research shows that at the time that Columbus discovered America, the Native Americans possessed varied skills and lifestyles (Lobo & Talbot, 2001). These lifestyles were more varied than the lifestyles of the Europeans who discovered the land (Lobo & Talbot, 2001).

According to Lobo and Talbot (2001), Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, an Ojibwa from Canada, proclaimed the following about the term Indian: “How I loathe the term ‘Indian.’ . . . ‘Indian’ is used to sell things – souvenirs, cigars, cigarettes, gasoline, cars . . . ‘Indian’ is a figment of the white man’s imagination” (p.18). In 2003, the name Indian was still being used as a nickname or mascot for seven Universities in the United States (Fournier, 2003).

The Redskin stereotype. Redskin is another name that is damaging to the image of Native Americans. This name was first used in the Province of Massachusetts Bay in 1755 where the murder of Indians was promoted (Lobo & Talbot, 2001). Currency was paid to those who obtained the scalps or redskins of Indians (Lobo & Talbot, 2001;

Ganje, 1996). So when an athletic team uses the term “scalp em” in their chants, they are referring to what Europeans did to Native Americans in the 1700s (Ganje, 1996).

Referred to as the r-word, this is one of the most disturbing of the stereotypes (Harjo, 1999). Southern Nazarene University used the Redskins mascot until 1998 when they adopted the Crimson Storm (Harjo, 1999). Miami University of Ohio also used the name Redskins until 1996. They are now called the RedHawks (Harjo, 1999). According to Fournier (2003), there are not any senior colleges or universities that use the Redskins nickname or mascot.

The Red Savage and Noble Redman stereotypes. Lobo and Talbot (2001) claim that the stereotypes of Red Savage and Noble Redman are also harmful to Native Americans. The Red Savage, as stated by Lobo and Talbot (2001), “portrayed Native peoples as barbaric killers, ‘looting, burning, pillaging,’ who had to be eradicated by any means possible” (p. 189). This stereotype is still used today, but it has been transformed into a new meaning – the drunken, incompetent Indian. Through the 1960’s, this stereotype was associated with the “four Ds” stereotype which implies “dark, dumb, drunk, and dirty” (Lobo & Talbot, 2001, p. 189). In 2003, Southeastern Oklahoma State University was the only senior college or university that used Savages as a nickname or mascot (Fournier, 2003).

The Noble Redman stereotype depicts Native Americans as uncivilized creatures who hunt, gather, and wander the land. However, this depiction of Native Americans is false. Native Americans had an advanced knowledge of agriculture and the land and understood how to use their resources in an efficient manner (Lobo & Talbot, 2001). The Redmen mascots are slowly disappearing. In 1994, St. John’s University changed their

mascot from Redmen to Red Storm (Harjo, 1999). In 2003, Fournier (2003) listed four senior colleges or universities that use the Redmen nickname or mascot.

The Squaw stereotype. The squaw, which is the common name for Native American women, has a very derogatory meaning. The word squaw comes from the French language and is a slang and improper term for female genitalia (Thompson, 1996). This term was first used by the French trappers when they entered Canada (Thompson, 1996). For many years, St. Bonaventure University in New York used the Brown Squaw as their mascot for the women's athletic program (Harjo, 1999). However, the name was quickly retired when the University learned the meaning of the word squaw (Harjo, 1999).

Formal Education

The second major influence on the meaning of Native American mascots is formal education. According to Salisbury (2001), Americans are uneducated about Native American culture. Traditionally, American history books began with Columbus' "discovery" of America in 1492 (Salisbury, 2001). Therefore, most Americans did not learn anything about the Native American culture during their formal education.

American history books are now beginning to include the history of Natives in America prior to 1492 (Salisbury, 2001). This lack of education has caused many Americans to believe that Native Americans lived as uncivilized primitives before Europeans settled in America (Brown, 1988). More accurately, research indicates that the Native Americans were diverse groups who developed their own set of beliefs, attitudes, languages, and culture (Brown, 1988). These Native American groups also developed their styles of clothing and housing that fit the climate in their region (Brown, 1988).

Informal Education – The Media

The final major influence on the meaning of Native American mascots is the media. The media is a powerful form of communication in today's society. The media has traditionally portrayed a negative and inaccurate depiction of the Native American culture. Most Americans were educated about the Native American culture through an informal and inaccurate means of education – the media. Many American children grew up watching Western shows depicting cowboys and Indians (Rodriguez, 1998). The American media portrays that all Indians wore “feather bonnets and buckskin clothes, rode horses, and lived in tepees” (Brown, 1988, p. 19). These stereotypes provide an inaccurate depiction of the Native American culture (Brown, 1988).

Since most Americans were never formally educated about the Native American culture, many do not understand why the Native American mascot is inappropriate. Americans must be educated about the Native American culture so they may understand why these mascots should be removed. The meaning that may be associated with Native American mascots relates to an individual's educational and cultural background. If someone is uneducated about Native Americans, it is probable that they will not understand that the images are inaccurate depictions. These inaccurate depictions of Native Americans can lead to negative stereotypes. Individuals who are educated about the Native American culture will likely perceive the images as inaccurate and harmful.

Meanings Found in Literature

This section of Chapter 2 will provide a summary of some of the meanings of Native American mascots that were discussed in various research studies. The first section summarizes the most common arguments, or meanings, opposed to the use of

Native American mascots. The next section will discuss the most common arguments, or meanings, supporting the use of Native American mascots.

Meanings Opposed to the Use of Native American Mascots

1. They promote stereotypes. According to researchers, Native American mascots promote negative stereotypes and misconceptions of Native Americans (Connolly, 2000; Davis, 2002; King & Springwood, 2000; NCAA Minority Opportunities, 2002). King & Springwood (2000) maintain that Native American mascots, such as Florida State University's Chief Osceola, "construct Native Americans as aggressive, hostile, and even violent" (§ 10).

2. They are damaging to children. Pewewardy (1999) "discusses how, as educators, we are responsible for maintaining the ethics of teaching and for helping to eliminate racism in all aspects of school life. Therefore, the exploitation of Indian mascots becomes an issue of educational equity" (§ 2). The NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee (2002) found that this "stereotypical portrayal of a living people gives children of all races the impression that the American Indians are gone" (§ 65). Dolley (2003) maintains a similar claim:

Schools have a heightened responsibility to teach students academically as well as behaviorally, it is therefore inappropriate for schools to continue the use of Indian names and mascots because they promote acceptability of racial stereotyping, a practice that runs counter to our educational ideals and societal morals. (§ 5)

3. They are harmful to Native Americans and other minorities. Several researchers indicate that these stereotypes are discriminatory, demeaning, dehumanizing,

and can be psychologically harmful to Native Americans (Connolly, 2000; Davis, 2002; Garrod & Larimore, 1997; Hatfield, 2000; King & Springwood, 2000, Mihesuah, 1998). Pewewardy (1999) claims that the use of Native American mascots “causes many young Indigenous people to feel shame about who they are as human beings, because racial stereotypes play an important role in shaping a young person’s consciousness” (§ 8). The NCAA (2002) claims that the use of Native American mascots allows universities to single out a particular race, “creating an environment where members of all minority groups can feel threatened” (§ 58).

4. They are racist. According to the NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee (2002), “the primary argument against the American Indian mascots is that the mascots are racist (§ 57). Other researchers such as Davis (2002), King & Springwood (2001a), Pewewardy (1999), and Stuckey and Murphy (2001) also claim that Native American mascots are racist.

5. They contradict University and NCAA policies. According to the NCAA (2002), Native American mascots conflict with university anti-discrimination policies. Sturm (2000) claims that “the stereotyping behind American Indian sports team mascots is particularly inappropriate in a university setting” (§ 6).

6. They are sacrilegious. According to the NCAA (2002), “the feathers, paint, costumes, and dances used by mascots are misappropriations of the feathers, paint, costumes, and dances used by American Indians in religious ceremonies” (§ 68). Davis (2002), also states that the Native American mascots mock religious aspects of the Native American culture.

Meanings Supporting the use of Native American Mascots

1. They are intended to honor Native Americans (Connolly, 2000; Davis, 2002; Dolley, 2003; Harjo, 1999; NCAA Minority Opportunities, 2002; Pewewardy, 1999; Rodriguez, 1998; Spindel, 2000). This is one of the primary arguments which supports the use of Native American mascots (NCAA Minority Opportunities, 2002).

2. A Native American group supports the mascot. According to King and Springwood (2000), Florida State University's Chief Osceola mascot is supported by the Seminole Tribe of Florida. The Miami Tribe of Oklahoma once supported Miami University's use of the Redskins mascot. However, the Tribe asked them to remove the mascot in 1996 (Connolly, 2000; Harjo, 1999).

3. The mascot is a tradition (Connolly, 2000; Davis, 2002; Dolley, 2003; King & Springwood, 2000; Rodriguez, 1998). According to the NCAA (2002), this "remains perhaps the most compelling argument by mascot proponents" (§ 76).

4. "No one has ever objected to our mascot" and "We have no Indian students on campus" continues to be an argument that supports the use of Native American mascots (NCAA Minority Opportunities, 2002). Other similar arguments say that only a small percentage of people object to the Native American mascot (Davis, 2002).

5. It is dignified, not offensive, and not intended to harm Native Americans (Dolley, 2003; Pewewardy, 1999). Some universities also claim that their mascot is more dignified than others, justifying its continued use (NCAA Minority Opportunities, 2002).

6. Alumni say they will stop contributing if mascot is changed (NCAA Minority Opportunities, 2002). A University of North Dakota alumnus claimed he would cease his \$35 million donation to the University if they changed their mascot (North Dakota school

divided, 2001). Some Universities also claim that financial costs and public opinion force them to retain their Native American mascot (Dolley, 2003).

7. Indians cannot be offended because they are gone. According to the NCAA (2002), many students and alumni use this argument, but it is not an official argument used by a university.

8. “The Indian’s oppose the mascot today – who will oppose next?” In other words, if a University changes their mascot to the “Bears”, will bears or animal rights activists start protesting to change the mascot next (NCAA Minority Opportunities, 2002)? Some researchers found that people believe that Universities succumb to political correctness when they change mascots (Dolley, 2003; NCAA Minority Opportunities, 2002; Sturm, 2000).

Controversies Regarding Native American Mascots

Because of the growing controversy regarding the use of Native American mascots, many American universities that use Native American mascots are currently faced with the decision of whether to retain or remove their athletic mascot or nickname. Some university administrators have been proactive in making the decision to remove the mascot, while other administrators are fighting to retain their mascot. At the time this study began, more than 60 American colleges and universities were still using Native American symbols and nicknames to represent their athletic teams (Rodriguez, 1998). The following section provides an overview of several universities that have dealt with controversy regarding a Native American mascot.

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. One of the most highly publicized controversies regarding a Native American mascot has occurred on the University of

Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus. A white male student dressed in buckskin clothing and an eagle feather headdress traditionally plays the University of Illinois mascot, Chief Illiniwek. Chief Illiniwek appears at athletic events, including the half-time performance at the University of Illinois basketball games. Protests against Native American mascots began in 1989 after Charlene Teters, a University of Illinois graduate student, attended a University basketball game with her children (Johns, 2000). Teters and her children were shocked by Chief Illiniwek's awful rendition of a Native American dance. In response, Teters began protesting against the mascot during athletic events (Johns, 2000). Teters thought that her protest would incite the University to take action against the mascot. To her dismay, the University and community responded negatively to her protests and fought against her wishes to remove the mascot (Johns, 2000).

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is the largest college in the United States that uses a Native American mascot to represent the institution during athletic events (Connolly, 2000). When asked to vote on the issue in 1990, all members of the University of Illinois Board of Trustees voted to retain the chief, except two students who believed the chief should be retired (Johns, 2000). In November 2003, a resolution to retire Chief Illiniwek was brought before the Board of Trustees (Forrest, 2003). The resolution would retain the Fighting Illini nickname but retire the graphic image of the mascot. The Board postponed the vote until March 2004 because they needed more time to make a decision on the issue (Forrest, 2003). In February of 2007, the university ended the use of Chief Illiniwek and other Native American images (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2007, ¶ 3).

Florida State University. The Florida State University (FSU) Seminole, which was adopted in 1947, has evolved into different forms over the last 30 years. The first mascot, Sammy Seminole, was a white “all-purpose cheerleader” (King & Springwood, 2000, ¶ 10) who led athletic teams onto the field. During the early 1970s, the distorted cartoon figures called Chief Fullabull and Savage Sam served as mascots (King & Springwood, 2000). The current mascot, named for Seminole leader Chief Osceola, was created in 1978 (King & Springwood, 2000). During the 1830s, Chief Osceola led the Seminole tribe in their fight against the United States troops regarding the occupation of land in Florida (Grinde, 1998). The Chief Osceola mascot dresses in Indian clothing, which FSU claims is authentic and approved by the Seminole Tribe of Florida (King & Springwood, 2000). One of the mascot’s performances includes riding an Appaloosa horse onto the field during games (King & Springwood, 2000).

The controversy at Florida State University is somewhat different from controversies at other universities. Florida State University maintains that the Seminole Tribe of Florida supports the Chief Osceola mascot (King & Springwood, 2000). Even more surprising is that Shayne Osceola, a descendant of Chief Osceola and recent graduate of Florida State University, feels that the use of the Chief Osceola mascot is an honor to his family. Shayne Osceola is also undisturbed by the famous Florida State University tomahawk chop and war chant that is now imitated at sporting events across the country (King & Springwood, 2000). Although there seems to be Native American support for FSU’s Chief Osceola mascot, there is one contradiction that King and Springwood (2000) mention. The Seminole Tribe of Florida that claims to support the Chief Osceola mascot is also supportive of the National Congress of American Indian’s

statement to ban Native American mascots (King & Springwood, 2000). King and Springwood (2000) maintain their view that “FSU’s continued use of Osceola is disturbing” even though the Seminole community and relatives of Osceola approve of the mascot (§ 21). Florida State University continues to use the Seminole name and Chief Osceola mascot with permission of the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

Arkansas State University. Arkansas State University faces similar challenges in understanding the history surrounding their Native American mascots. Arkansas State University, like many other universities, claims that their mascot was chosen to honor Native Americans of the region and state (Landreth, 2001). However, when examining the history of the state and region, the accuracy of this claim is challenged (Landreth, 2001). According to Landreth (2001), the University chose to honor the Osage Native Americans through the display of their mascot even though this group did not settle in Arkansas. The Osage Native Americans were stereotyped as “savage warriors” (Landreth, 2001, p. 50) who had regular conflicts with Cherokees and other Indians over hunting lands.

Arkansas State University has several Native American mascots: Chief Big Track, the Princess, the Brave, and Runnin’ Joe (Landreth, 2001). These mascots, like many others, do not bear the authentic wardrobe of the Native American groups they intend to honor. During sporting events, the mascots gather around a tepee in the end zone, throw lances, and do war dances (Landreth, 2001). In 1991, faculty at Arkansas State University petitioned to have the Native American mascots removed because they did not support the educational mission of the university (Landreth, 2001). The faculty received some support for their petition. However, the majority of the responses to the

petition were negative (Landreth, 2001). The petition was not approved, but minor changes were made (Landreth, 2001). The Runnin' Joe caricature was removed but replaced with another inaccurate Native American depiction. Arkansas State University also made slight changes to the mascot wardrobes and game time activities (Landreth, 2001). Arkansas State University finally retired their Indian mascot after a policy was established by the NCAA in 2005.

The University of North Dakota. Tovares (2002) claims that the University of North Dakota's official statement regarding the Fighting Sioux mascot is misleading and inaccurate. Much of the debate at the University of North Dakota concerns the conflicting historical information regarding the reason the Sioux mascot was selected. The University of North Dakota claims that it adopted the Sioux mascot in 1930 to honor the Native Americans who once lived in the area (Tovares, 2002). According to Tovares (2002), there is no documentation to corroborate this claim. Tovares (2002) found that there is some related research documenting the change from the Flickertails mascot to the Sioux mascot. However, the documentation does not support the claim that the Sioux was chosen to honor Native Americans. There is some belief that the Sioux mascot was chosen because North Dakota State University, the University of North Dakota's rival, selected a bison as their mascot (Tovares, 2002).

According to Annis (1999), the Sioux name was adopted after a student wrote a letter to the school newspaper stating three reasons why the Sioux mascot was a good choice. The first was due to the Sioux's ability to take out the bison, which is North Dakota State's mascot. The student claimed that the Sioux were also warlike and of superior build and that the name Sioux would be easy to incorporate into songs and

chants (Annis, 1999). Protests against the University of North Dakota mascot began in the late 1960s when the University of North Dakota Indian Association (UNDIA) demanded that the university retire the Sammy Sioux mascot (Tovares, 2002). The University agreed to retire the Sammy Sioux caricature, but retained the Sioux name and Blackhawk logo (Tovares, 2002).

Native Americans protested once again because of several incidents involving the Blackhawk logo that was used by the University of North Dakota hockey team (Tovares, 2002). The University of North Dakota decided to abandon the Blackhawk logo in 1992 after a group of Native Americans were harassed during a homecoming activity (Tovares, 2002). While Sammy Sioux and the Blackhawk logo were retired, the Fighting Sioux Indian head remains the logo of the University. Many students and community members who have sought to remove the Fighting Sioux mascot have been threatened through many forms of negative communication (Tovares, 2002). The University of North Dakota continues to use the Fighting Sioux mascot and is subject to policies developed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Efforts to Remove Native American Mascots

Although the protest against Native American mascots commenced with Native Americans, there are other groups and organizations who are now attempting to remove the mascots. One of the most important organizations involved with intercollegiate athletic competition, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), is one of the leaders of the campaign to remove Native American mascots from Universities. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and many other organizations are also attempting to remove the mascots.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association

In 2002, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee (2002) conducted a study regarding the use of Native American mascots at NCAA member universities. The NCAA “is a voluntary organization through which the nation's colleges and universities govern their athletics programs. It comprises . . . institutions, conferences, organizations and individuals committed to the best interests, education and athletics participation of student-athletes” (National Collegiate Athletic Association, n.d.). There are currently 964 colleges and universities who are active members of the organization (National Collegiate Athletic Association, n.d.).

In 2002, the Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee found that 33 NCAA athletic teams are still using Native American team names or mascots. The NCAA asked each university to complete an open-ended survey regarding the use of the Native American mascot at their institution. Twenty-seven of the 33 institutions completed the survey (NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee, 2002). The committee also found that 13 institutions recently changed their Native American mascot. The committee contacted each institution and inquired about the methods used to change their mascot. They also solicited opinions of student-athletes, Native American tribes, the NCAA membership, the general public and other NCAA entities (NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee, 2002). A summary of the results revealed the following themes that supported the elimination of Native American mascots: the use of Native American mascots is racist; creates a hostile environment; portrays to the public an inaccurate depiction of Native Americans; is damaging to young

people of all races; is sacrilegious because the stereotype costume mocks religious ceremonies; and contradicts antidiscrimination policies of universities and the NCAA (NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee, 2002).

The committee's report revealed the following themes that supported the retention of Native American mascots: our Native American mascot is meant to honor Native Americans; should be allowed at universities because there are no protestors of the Native American mascot and we have no Native American students; is more dignified than other universities (the image is only used for special occasions); is supported by a Native American group; is portraying an Indian tribe that is gone; and is a tradition at the university. Some universities believe that if the Native American mascot is eradicated, alumni may stop contributing to the university and other groups may protest the new mascot (NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee, 2002). For example, animal rights groups may try to protect mascots such as "tigers" or "beavers" (NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee, 2002). Although the NCAA has not banned Native American mascots, the committee developed several alternatives that could be implemented: 1) they could do nothing and allow this issue to be resolved by individual institutions; 2) pass legislation that would ban the use of Native American mascots by NCAA member institutions; 3) restrict post-season championship opportunities; 4) restrict funding to institutions who have Native American mascots; or 5) force institutions to pay a fine for using a Native American mascot (NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee, 2002).

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, which is charged with upholding the laws against discrimination and denial of equal protection based on race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin, is also making an effort to remove Native American mascots. One of the missions of the organization is to “issue public service announcements to discourage discrimination or denial of equal protection of the laws” (U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, n.d.). In 2001 (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights), the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a statement proclaiming that Native American mascots and team names should be eradicated. The statement indicated:

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 of people. (p. 1)

Organizations

Several organizations were established over the last ten years in an effort to remove Native American mascots from athletic teams. This includes The National Coalition on Racism in Sports and Media (NCRSM) and The American Indian Sports Team Mascot (AISTM) organization. The NCRSM was formed as a result of “the clear case of media coupling imagery with widely held misconceptions of American Indians in the form of sports team identities resulting in racial, cultural, and spiritual stereotyping” (National Coalition on Racism, n.d.,

¶ 1). Charlene Teters, a University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign graduate, is a founding board member of the NCRSM (American Museum of Natural History, 2002). In addition, many existing organizations are supporting the effort to remove Native American mascots. The AISTM (n.d.b) lists 90 organizations that endorse “retirement of ‘Indian’ Sports Team Tokens” (¶ 1).

Summary

Chapter 2 included an overview of how Native Americans are used as signs in American culture. Native American signs, including mascots, mean different things to different people. The theory of semiotics helps to understand the different meanings of signs and mascots. Culture, education, and the media influence the meaning of signs and mascots. When studying Native American mascots at colleges and universities in the United States, researchers found arguments opposed to the use of Native American mascots and arguments supporting the use of Native American mascots. The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the removal of a Native American Mascot at one university. Chapter 3 includes an outline of the methods that were used to identify participants for the study, conduct the study, and analyze the data provided by the participants.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

At the time this study began, there were approximately 60 senior colleges and universities using Native American mascots or nicknames to represent their athletic teams (Fournier, 2003). This includes The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; The University of North Dakota; Arkansas State University; and Florida State University. Most of the research conducted on this subject was published during the last ten years (Connolly, 2000, King & Springwood, 2001b; Spindel, 2000). This research focused on universities that have experienced opposition to both maintaining and removing a Native American mascot. In most cases, the universities decided to retain the mascot.

There is minimal research that focuses on universities who successfully removed a Native American mascot. The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the removal of a Native American Mascot at one university. This study examined the following question: What is the process and experience for one university regarding the removal of a Native American Mascot?

Inquiry

To explore this question, qualitative methods were used to gather and analyze data for this study. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), “qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials . . . that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual’s lives” (p. 3). The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the removal of a Native American Mascot at one university. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), a characteristic of qualitative data is “their richness and holism, with strong potential for

revealing complexity; such data provide ‘thick descriptions’ that are vivid, nested in real context, and have a ring of truth that has strong impact on the reader” (p. 10). Qualitative methods permitted the researcher to gain an understanding of the experience under study.

Design of the Study

The sample of participants was gathered from one four-year public institution in the Central United States. The site is called “Public University” for the purposes of this study. Founded in the late 1800s, Public University is a comprehensive regional university that has a student population of 10,000. It is located in a city with a population of 40,000 residents and offers nearly 150 academic programs (University Relations, 2001). Public University used a Native American athletic team name but did not use a Native American symbol or person who dressed as a mascot for athletic events. To gain a historical knowledge about Public University’s mascot, the researcher examined written documents located in the University archives and found the following information relating to the mascot.

The origin of the Native American mascot at Public University was not determined during this document search. However, the Native American mascot can be linked to the presence of Native Americans in this region from 1775 through 1812 (Gilbert, 1996). Public University had several mascots until the late 1980s when the administration decided to retire the mascots who dressed as female and male Native Americans at athletic events. A new mascot was never created at Public University. Over the last ten years, students have continuously voiced their opinion about the administration’s refusal to allow the students to use an Indian mascot or create a new mascot and team name for this university. Numerous mascot committees were created

over the years in response to student opinions about the mascot issue at Public University, but the mascot did not change. However, in 2004, another mascot committee of alumni, staff, and students was formed to determine if the University mascot should be changed. This committee, along with the Booster Board and National Alumni Council, voted to remove the Indian team name. A new team name and mascot was introduced in January 2005.

Sample

A combination of purposive sampling and convenience sampling techniques was used to conduct this study. According to Berg (2001), purposive sampling is used when “researchers use their special knowledge or expertise about some group to select subjects who represent this population” (p. 32). Based on the researcher’s knowledge of the site and preliminary document review, purposive sampling was used to identify faculty, staff, community members, alumni, and students, who were either involved in the process of changing the university mascot or are believed to have an interest in the issue. Convenience sampling, which “relies on available subjects – those who are close at hand or easily accessible” (Berg, 2001, p. 32), were used to identify students for focus group sessions. This sample included alumni, faculty, and staff who were involved in the change process or previous mascot committees, former student athletes and band members, students who were enrolled following the mascot change, and individuals with native American heritage.

Procedure

Data for this study was gathered from three areas; 1) documents such as public and university records; 2) personal interviews with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and

community members; and 3) focus groups with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members. The study considered three main areas:

1. A review of historical documentation regarding the development of the university's mascot/nickname including documentation regarding previous attempts to change the mascot
2. The collection of information about the recent process that was used to change the mascot/nickname at the university
3. The collection of information from students, faculty, alumni and the community regarding their opinions on university mascots in general, the university's former Native American mascot/nickname, the process used to select a new mascot, and the new choice for a mascot

Document Review

The document review process encompassed documents dated July 25, 2003 to May 14, 2005. The beginning date of July 25, 2003 was used because this was the first published information indicating that the Native American mascot would possibly be removed. The document review process terminated with the date of May 14, 2005 because it was the end of the semester in which the new mascot was introduced. These documents included university historical documents, websites, student newspapers, and correspondence with faculty, staff, and alumni. The local daily newspaper was also reviewed.

Interviews

The researcher identified ten interview participants using a purposive sampling technique. Each person was contacted and asked to participate in a personal interview

with the principal investigator. One interview was conducted with each participant, each lasting approximately 1 hour. The interviewer asked the participants to discuss their opinions about University mascots in general, the former Indian mascot/nickname, and the new University mascot. Participants also described their involvement in the mascot change or provided historical information about the former Indian or other mascots. Each participant involved in the interviews signed a consent form and was audio taped. The participants may be identifiable from raw data such as consent forms or audio tapes. All consent forms are coded with a number. This number was transferred to the audio tape transcripts.

Focus Groups

Twenty-one participants were identified through convenience sampling techniques to identify students who may be willing to participate in focus group discussions. The researcher identified the schedules of all face-to-face General Studies courses offered in the researcher's department. The researcher contacted a faculty member, explained the purpose of the study, and asked permission to conduct one focus group in a given General Studies course. There was one group meeting and it lasted approximately 1 hour. The interviewer asked the participants to discuss their opinions about University mascots in general, the former Indian mascot/nickname, and the new University mascot. They were asked to describe any involvement in the mascot change or provide historical information about the former Indian or other mascots. Each participant involved in the focus group signed a consent form and the group meeting was audio taped. The participants may be identifiable from the consent forms, but are not identifiable in the audio tapes.

The principal investigator made every effort to assure that all information gathered for this study was kept confidential. All items that would allow the participant to be identified are stored in a locked file cabinet. They will be kept for three years and then destroyed. This file cabinet is only accessible to the principal investigator. This will prevent access by unauthorized personnel. This study was approved by the University Institutional Review Board at University of Missouri – St. Louis on April 20, 2006 (Appendix A). The College of Health and Human Services College Review Committee at Public University approved this study on February 23, 2004 (Appendix B).

Data Analysis

The researcher conducted a content analysis to analyze the data gathered from the interviews, focus groups, and written documents. According to Berg (2001), content analysis is used to analyze forms of “social communication” (p. 240) such as written communication or recorded verbal communication. This communication is transformed into written text and analyzed through the development of a code list. The code list is applied to the written communication “rigidly and consistently” (Berg, 2001, p. 240) so that other researchers who analyze the same information would find “same or comparable” (p. 240) results. Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend that a “start list” of codes be developed before data is collected. A “start list” of codes for this study was developed based on written documents and relevant literature. The code list was then consistently applied to all qualitative data. While analyzing the data, the researcher discovered new codes and added them to the code list.

Testing and Confirming Data

A common method used to confirm the researcher's data coding in a content analysis is to request multiple coders to apply the researcher's code list to the data (Ryan & Bernard, 2001). This procedure determined whether multiple coders applied the same codes to the data (Ryan & Bernard, 2001). From this test, the researcher determined the percentage of agreement among the coders while also taking into consideration the error that will occur by chance (Ryan & Bernard, 2001). Miles and Huberman (1994) refer to this procedure as "check-coding" (p. 64). Their recommendation is for "more than one person to code, separately, 5-10 pages of the first set of transcribed field notes and then to review each rendition together" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 64).

For this study, the researcher asked other researchers to apply the code list to a small set of data from this study. This procedure allowed the researcher to determine the percentage of accuracy rating among the coders of the data. Another common method used to test and confirm data is triangulation. Triangulation allows the researcher to search for information using a variety of sources (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For this study, triangulation was used by gathering data from multiple sources such as interviews, focus groups, newspapers, and websites.

CHAPTER 4: DOCUMENT REVIEW

The document review process included two parts. The first part of the document review included the review of Public University historical documents. The main purpose of this part of the document review was to gather information regarding the origin of the Indian mascot that was adopted during the 1920s, gather information on what types of Indian mascots were used from the 1920s through the 1980s, and to create a timeline documenting the attempts to change the mascot during the 1980s through 2002. The second part of the document review includes information regarding the most recent effort to retire the Native American nicknames and adopt a new mascot. It also contains a content analysis of opinions related to the nickname/mascot change that took place between 2003 and 2005.

Part I

Public University Files

Center for Regional History Files

The Director of the Center for Regional History was contacted to determine if there was any written documentation regarding the origin of the Indian mascot. The historian indicated that a document search of Public University student newspapers and board of directors minutes was conducted independently by two Public University employees. The employees found no written documentation regarding the reason for the adoption of the Indian mascot. The historian did not provide any written documentation regarding the history of the mascot at Public University. However, he documented his

knowledge regarding the national trend for the adoption of sports team mascots in the form of a written email.

University Relations Department Files

The University Relations Department files, located in the Public University archives collection, contained much of the documentation regarding the history of the mascots and committees at Public University. The earliest information regarding a possible change of the mascot was dated back to 1981. The documents were reviewed from 1981 through 2002 so that a timeline of mascots and committees could be developed by the researcher.

Public University Yearbook and Student Newspaper

The Public University yearbook was reviewed from 1914 through 1989, the last year that the book was published. Through this search, the researcher was able to find the types of mascots that were present during this time period. Public University's student newspaper was reviewed manually for mascot-related articles. The researcher searched through student newspapers dated 1989 to 2000. This date range was used because the Indian mascot was believed to be removed in 1989. The nickname "Indians" was retained and several mascots and committees were adopted through the 1990s. Through this search, the researcher located twelve articles relating to the Public University Mascot.

Other Publications and Websites

Other publications, such as books and websites, were reviewed to determine the presence of Native Americans in the region. Historical sites in the region include

“mounds” and the Trail of Tears. Researchers indicate that many Native American mascots were named for Indians who lived in regions surrounding universities.

Findings

This section provides a summary of the information that was found in Public University files and other publications listed in the previous section. It includes a brief history of the Native Americans who lived in the region, the origin of Public University’s mascot, a description of the different mascots at Public University, and mascot committees that were unsuccessful in removing Public University’s Native American nickname. This information is presented in chronological order.

History of the Mascot at Public University

Native Americans in the Region

Mound builders. Mound Builders were the first known humans in this region of the United States. Mound Builders are a highly developed stone-age race who created mounds that were used as temple sites, lookouts, cemeteries, fortifications, and refuges from flood waters. There are nearly 18,000 mounds identified in this region of the country (Snider & Collins, 1956).

According to Snider & Collins (1956), “Recent investigations have indicated the strong possibility that the Indians found here were direct descendants of the Builders who had changed their habits and customs because of changed circumstances” (p.14). The first white men to enter this region were Spanish explorers. When they arrived in this region in 1541, these explorers spent time in several different Indian villages. One village was the home of the Casquin Tribe and the other village was the home of the

Capaha Indians. The settlers became friends with the Indians. The Indians helped the explorers find salt and yellowish metal (Snider & Collins, 1956).

About a century later, several French explorers spotted a group of Osage Indians in the region. It is believed that the Osage, of the Sioux Nation, apparently drove out the less warlike Casquins and Capahas, branches of the Algonquin Nation. The Osages were known as fine physical specimens. However, they were crude, lazy, and quarrelsome and considered a danger to whites and peaceful Indians (Snider & Collins, 1956).

A founder of a prominent city in this region was a native of Canada. He befriended the Delaware and Shawnee tribes who were chased into the area by the fierce Senecas. The founder's wife was a Shawnee Indian. This founder had a great influence on the Indians (Snider & Collins, 1956).

Trail of Tears. According to the Regional Planning & Economic Development Commission (n.d.), the Indian Removal Act of 1830, directed under President Andrew Jackson, forced Indians who were living east of the Mississippi River to move west. This act forced approximately 100,000 Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Seminole tribes out of states east of the Mississippi River. Thousands of Indians died of hunger, disease, and the effects of bitter climate conditions along the trail. This journey, which forced Indians to relocate to Oklahoma, is known as the "Trail of Tears" (National Park Service, n.d.a).

According to the National Park Service (n.d.b), the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail consists of approximately 4,900 miles of land and water routes which pass through parts of nine states. Public University is located near a section of the Trail of Tears. According to the Regional Planning & Economic Development Commission

(n.d.), a woman, referred to as “Princess Otahki”, is buried near the Trail of Tears. She was the sister of a Chief and Reverend who led one of the Indian detachments west of the Mississippi. Many local residents of this area of the United States consider “Indians” a significant part of the region’s history.

Origin of the Mascot

According to a local historian, there is no written documentation indicating the reason that the institution decided to adopt “Indians” as a team name and mascot during the 1920s. However, early versions of the University Yearbook contain verses that seem to be a tribute to Indians who were forced off their land onto the trail. During the time that the university changed its mascot, the women’s athletic team name was “Otahkians” which was likely named for “Princess Otahki” who is buried along the Trail of Tears near this city. The men’s athletic team name was “Indians”.

Public University Mascots: 1914 - 1980

There were university yearbooks available during the years of 1914 through 1989. The researcher searched for mascot photos, athletic team names, and other information using this source. The university yearbooks were obtained from the Alumni Services Department. Although none of the athletic teams were specifically called “Indians” in 1918, at least in the yearbook, there was a photo of a pep club that dressed as Indians at athletic events. The early university yearbooks depicted solemn drawings of Indians and some depicted writings or dedications to the Indians. For example, the 1916 yearbook depicts a drawing and the following verse:

The Big Hunt is ended. The Great Sagamore gazes up from his campfire
and dreams a dream of the Old Hunting Ground and the Big Chase. In his

heart he is sad, for on the morrow he must move his Wigwam yet farther into the Great Forest. As his ancestors have moved on to New Hunting Grounds so must he follow up the Big Trail. But ever as he goes he will see in the smoke of the Camp Fire in front of his Tepee the Dream Picture of his Old Happy Hunting Ground and there will come fond memories.

The 1917 – 1918 yearbook depicted a similar verse in the foreword:

With the nineteen hundred nineteen's early dawn, we salute you –
Sagamore, warrior of a mighty tribe; the silence and the greatness of the trails behind made you what you were; fleet of foot and keen of mind, body of a mighty brawn. All the lessons you have taught us and the traditions we have found, among relics and the love of fireside tales, have been the great things that God taught you and man has most forgot – forgotten, it makes no difference what it brings, always walk the open trail.

Examination of the university yearbooks revealed that the team name “Indians” could be traced as far back as 1923. During the 1923 -1924 athletic season, the men’s athletic teams were listed as the “Indians” in the university yearbook. The 1924 -1925 basketball team uniforms illustrated an Indian head profile on the front of the jersey. The basketball team wore this same uniform through the early 1930’s.

Until the late 1930’s, most of the Indian depictions in the university yearbooks were sketches of Indians with a solemn and peaceful appearance. Throughout the yearbook pages were sketches of arrowheads, feathers, bows and arrows, and smoke and fire. In the 1939 yearbook, a different type of Indian image was portrayed. An Indian

caricature is depicted on the first page of the yearbook. In the 1944 yearbook, the Indian caricatures are shown defeating other team caricatures by standing on top of them. The 1947 yearbook depicts a drawing of an Indian caricature with his hands on his hips. Surrounding him, printed on feathers, are the names of football teams who were defeated during the year.

The university yearbooks throughout the 1960's and 1970's portray a mascot dressed as an Indian at athletic events. Chief Sagamore entered the football field on a horse in 1967. Chief Sagamore and Princess Otahki rode a horse down the street in 1968, most likely for the Homecoming parade. Students also dressed as Indians for athletic events in the 1970's.

Mascot Committees

To determine the history of mascots and mascot committees at Public University, mascot files from the Department of University Relations were reviewed in the university archives. Information was also gathered from the Public University student newspaper and the Public University yearbook to gain an understanding of the mascot history.

Mascot committees: 1981-1987. The earliest correspondence in relation to the university's Indian mascot was dated 1981. This correspondence was in the form of a memo that addressed the concern regarding the use of the Indian mascot, and it also mentioned Stanford's recent change of their Indian related mascot. The first official mascot committee, which included members of the campus faculty, staff, students, and alumni, was documented in 1983. This information was found in the form of personal correspondence from the Vice President for Student Services. The purpose of this committee was to address the concerns of the University regarding the "unattractive

appearance” of the Indian mascot at athletic events. There was also concern about having a school mascot that could promote school spirit at athletic events. According to a document from March of 1984, the Indian Mascot Committee’s research included information obtained from Stanford regarding their recent mascot change, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the National Congress of American Indians were contacted. The recommendations formed by the committee in March 1984 were divided. The committee could not agree on one recommendation.

The recommendations regarding the Indian mascot included one recommendation to re-adopt the Chief Sagamore mascot that was used during the 1950s and 1960s. The committee recommended a costume that was authentic and ceremonial, and the committee did not want the mascot to promote school spirit and provide entertainment. In addition, the committee recommended the adoption of either an Indian-related or non Indian-related spirit figure to entertain crowds and initialize school spirit. The last recommendation was to cease all use of the Indian and Indian-related mascots due to the demeaning nature of these mascots. The University administration followed the recommendations of the mascot committee and established ceremonial characters – Chief Sagamore and Princess Otahki – and introduced a new spirit character. The mascot committee presented the following recommendations for a new spirit character: War Eagle, Duck, Skunk, River Pilot, Bleacher Bum, and a “Mark Twain” type.

A document from the Director of Student Life Activities dated April 12, 1985 indicated that sketches of an Eagle mascot were introduced in April 1985. Apparently, the sketches were not favorable and a new mascot concept was developed. Personal correspondence from the Vice President for Student Services dated June 6, 1985

indicated that “Red” mascot was introduced in May and was implemented in the fall of 1985. The university yearbooks from 1986 – 1988 depicted the mascot as a Caucasian stuffed costume character with a white baseball cap and fire engine red hair. He wore a white athletic shirt with two red stripes around the arms.

Mascot committees: 1988-1995. In 1988, a mascot committee was formed. Several alumni were concerned that the “Red” mascot portrayed a negative “country hick” image for Public University. According to the May 17, 1988, Ad Hoc Committee on the Mascot meeting minutes:

Some of the committee stated that a similar committee in the past had chosen an eagle for the mascot, but...Red somehow emerged instead.

Speculation was that the sketch of the eagle was not acceptable, not the idea of the eagle itself. (p. 1)

Documents from the Ad Hoc Committee on the Mascot, dated May 17, 1988 indicated that following a discussion, the “Red” mascot was discontinued by a majority vote of the committee. A memorandum from a Public University faculty member dated June 9, 1988 expressed concern for the continued use of the Indian name and mascot. The faculty member mentioned that the use of the Indian mascot is culturally insensitive, thoughtless, and the continued use of the mascot could hurt the image of the university. It was noted that the University was preparing to enter Division I in Athletics.

Although the Red Mascot was retired in 1988, the March 2, 1988, edition of Public University student newspaper found that the Princess Otahki and Chief Sagamore ceremonial characters were still being used as mascots for athletic events. The student writer claims the following reasons for the use of the Indian mascot at Public University:

The white man forced the Cherokee Indians off their land and made them move to reservations in Oklahoma. To get to Oklahoma, the Cherokees were forced to march on what is known as the Trail of Tears, where many Indians suffered and died. [Public University] continues the tradition of Indians in the form of its school symbols. Chief Sagamore, a Cherokee leader, and Princess Otahki, one of his wives who is buried on the Trail of Tears.....now symbolize the....Indians. (Morgan, 1988, p. 1)

The students who played the role of Princess Otahki and Chief Sagamore claimed that they were supposed to act differently than the cheerleaders and dance club. One of the students stated, "We're supposed to be quiet and solemn. Can't yell. Can't smile." He also stated this about his role as Chief Sagamore: "It's a tribute to the Cherokees and an honor for me to represent them." He claims there was once an Indian who ran around and tried to scalp the fans. The people did not like this and wanted to change the mascot. He stated, "That's when Red Mascot was born and the Chief and Princess got to be elegant" (Morgan, 1988, p. 8).

In the fall of 1989, Public University student newspaper headlines read, "Thunderbird: New mascot makes football debut". According to the student newspaper, the Thunderbird served as a substitution for the Red Mascot in January, 1989. This mascot was a large stuffed bird with many feathers. In November 1989, the student newspaper depicted a photo of the Tribe, State University's newly formed pep club. Members of the club wore sweatshirts that displayed the letters TRIBE and painted their faces to portray the image of Indians.

During the early 1990s, it seems that several Indian traditions started to disappear. According to the student newspaper, Chief Sagamore disappeared from the sporting events and the Indian atop the football stadium was removed. Also in 1990, the university established a Task Force on Ethnic Diversity on the campus. According to documents from the board of directors, the goal of this committee was to recommend ways “to create and nurture a sense of community which fosters mutual trust and respect among students, faculty, staff and administrators and which provides for the open and amicable expression of differences”. This new emphasis on ethnic diversity may have had some impact on the removal of Chief Sagamore and Princess Otahki mascots.

A letter to the editor from the April 25, 1990, student newspaper provides an anonymous view regarding the spirit groups at Public University. The writer claims:

The costume worn by the mascot, Thunderbird, seems to be losing more feathers with each passing game. The Tribe... well, was there ever a Tribe? It seems to me that this university got suckered out of 100 or so sweatshirts...I'd say that the only thing to look forward to during next year's sporting events will be Princess Otahki....if she even decides to return. (Incidentally, is she widowed now, or did Chief Sagamore and she get a divorce?) Could all of this be planned? If [Public University] truly plans to go Division I, it must also truly plan to get its butt kicked in any sport. I guess if we're gonna lose, there's no reason to have spirit – or a Spirit Team.

As stated above, the giant plastic Indian, who once stood atop the football stadium, was removed in the summer of 1991. According to the student

newspaper, the Indian was removed due to “safety and aesthetic concerns”. The plastic artifact was placed near the maintenance storage area after he was removed from the stadium. According to a student newspaper article dated January 17, 1990, the Indian was donated to the University in the 1980s.

According to a student newspaper article dated October 30, 1991, a university staff member addressed the issue that the Universities should be sensitive about how Native American mascots are portrayed. A staff member recalled the Princess Otahki impersonator wearing a “cheap \$5 wig and red makeup. That was supposed to honor Princess Otahki, but when I saw her I thought, ‘That’s fake; that’s mockery.’” Other students indicated that “we use the Indian as our mascot because it denotes happiness, strength and pride – all things with positive connotations”.

In 1993, the university apparently implemented rules for the spirit groups and students who attended athletic events. Students were not permitted to dress like an Indian or perform the tomahawk chop. This administrative control and lack of school spirit was also addressed in the student newspaper in 1994. On December 1, 1993, an individual wrote a letter to the student newspaper expressing concern about school spirit and the administration’s “control over student spirit at athletic contests”. The individual stated:

The student promotions and spirit groups are promoting a contest for the most spirited and enthusiastic group this basketball season, because they want student involvement. Of course, there are some rules that the administration has presented to students. They include: 1) No one may

dress up like an Indian (Dress as you would for class), 2) No Indian chop (like at Florida State), 3) No paint on students' face or chests, 4) No crude yelling. I am sure that the spirit group liked these rules as little as the students will like them. If they expect us to give to the university after we graduate, they should be concerned about our happiness as students NOW!...Is it possible the administration has placed these ridiculous rules on us so we will not attend the games and they can sell our tickets?

In February of 1994, the student newspaper staff challenged the administration with an article regarding the purpose of a team mascot. The sports staff stated:

Now, we understand the political correctness debate of the day and what an unpleasant odor arises when athletic teams mock peoples and their cultures. We appreciate this line of thought. But for us, as the sports staff, there is more to it than that....What is the point in having a mascot if students are forbidden to display the traits that are associated with said mascot? Retaining the name 'Indians,' while discouraging face painting, chanting and chopping is essentially silencing the problem without solving it....We are presented with a simple choice: either the administration allows students to reflect all the attributes that are traditionally inherent to the Indians or they should stop kidding themselves (they're not fooling us) and abandon the Indian figure all together.

This article, published on May 4, 1994, by a member of the student newspaper staff, expressed the views of the students and athletic director regarding the use of the

Indian mascot at athletic competitions. The athletic director said the following about the subject:

The 'tomahawk chop,' team names, Indian headdresses, face paint and other symbols deemed derogatory towards Native Americans have in recent years caused much controversy in the sports world. [Public University], although lacking a formal policy, has attempted to escape this controversy. Indian symbols such as headdresses have been eliminated and disrespectful fan activities are discouraged. What we want to do is take pride in being the Indians and Otahkians, not do any sort of disservice to the American Indians and their heritage. I think what we want to do is get students as excited about athletic events as possible and at the same time we don't want them to do something that would be an injustice to the Indian heritage.

In February of 1995, the mascot "problem" was introduced again by a sports editor at the school newspaper. The sports writer said he wrote the article because he had recently received a letter that reiterated the mascot issues at Public University. He wrote:

It's been a while since anyone on these pages has brought up the terrible mascot problem this university has. Of course I'm talking about the Indian. Maybe no one has realized it, but we are pretty much not allowed to do anything in the way of cheering for our teams beyond yelling and screaming.....I understand how the Native American would feel exploited by this name. So in fairness to both the Native Americans and the

Southeast students and fans, let's change the names of our teams from Indians/Otahkians to something else. If everyone on campus who feels that they are being repressed would write a letter to [the athletic director or president] perhaps we could get something done about this spirit problem.

Mascot committees: 1996-2002. In 1996, the administration was concerned about encouraging more students to attend athletic events. According to a student newspaper article dated October 2, 1996, the administration proposed to implement a new school mascot because the Indian was no longer used. A coach stated:

There's been talk of coming up with a mascot, not really changing the current one. We just really haven't had a mascot present at the games. We need to come up with a rallying point that is visible to all students. Something that is useful and that creates more fun at events would be ideal.

A mascot committee was formed in 1996 and its purpose was to determine if the Indian nicknames should be retired and to recommend a new mascot. In April 1997, the mascot committee recommended keeping the Indian names. However, it was not a unanimous vote. In February 1997, an article in the local daily newspaper stated that several members of the committee wanted to remove the nicknames. On March 13, 1997, the headlines of a local daily newspaper article stated, "Panel seeks public's input on suggestions for mascot".

The committee's goal was to proceed with recommending a mascot to the President by the end of April. In May 1997, a Sun-figure mascot was recommended by

the committee. An Eagle or Hawk mascot were second and third choices. A local daily newspaper article dated November 6, 1997, indicated that the costume for the Sun mascot was difficult to construct, therefore the committee proceeded with the Eagle concept per the direction of the university President. In November 1997, four hundred students signed a petition opposing the eagle mascot. Students wanted to be more involved in the decision regarding the mascot. The Student Government Association recommended that they have the opportunity to vote on several mascots. This information was gathered from an article dated November 13, 1997.

According to an Associated Press article from a regional newspaper dated March 17, 1998, the committee had not reconvened and the issue was delayed. In September 1998, the use of Native American mascots during athletic events at colleges and universities gained national attention once again when the NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee was developed. The charge of the committee was to request that NCAA participating universities discontinue the use of Native American nicknames and mascots (Wurth, 1998).

In November 2001, the Department of Athletics requested the formation of a committee to develop a new mascot to provide a symbol for teams and promote school spirit. Nationally, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (2001) released a statement regarding the use of Native American Mascots for sports teams. Several mascots were proposed, but no decision was made. According to the Director of Athletic Development (personal communication, December 8, 2002), the National Alumni Council and Booster Board of Directors were required to vote affirmatively regarding the mascot change before it could be implemented by Public University.

Part II

The second part of the document review consisted of examining documents dated July 25, 2003 to May 14, 2005. The beginning date of July 25, 2003 was used because this was the date that information regarding the most recent effort to retire the Native American nicknames and adopt a new mascot was published. The document review process terminated with the date of May 14, 2005 because it was the end of the semester in which the new mascot was introduced. All of the following documents were reviewed for information pertaining to Public University's mascot.

Newspapers

Local Daily Newspaper

Local daily newspapers were reviewed manually beginning with July 25, 2003, the date that an article on the front page indicated that the National Alumni Council voted to remove the Indian name used for the university mascot. The researcher found 30 articles, 192 "Speak Out" submissions, 32 "Letter to the Editor" submissions, 2 opinions from the newspaper, 3 online opinion polls, 4 "Fanspeak" submissions, 4 "Guest Column" submissions, and 5 staff writer articles. Table 1 provides a detailed list of the information gathered from the local newspaper.

Table 1

Information Gathered from Local Daily Newspaper, July 2003 – May 2005

Date and Type	Quantity	Content
July 2003		
Article	1	Alumni council votes to change mascot

Date and Type	Quantity	Content
July 2003		
Article	1	Coaches understand need to change mascot
Speak Out	16	Anonymous opinions relating to the mascot
Letter to the Editor	1	Opinions relating to the mascot signed by author
Staff Writer Article	2	Opinions relating to the mascot signed by author
August 2003		
Article	1	Nickname change called inexpensive
Speak Out	51	Anonymous opinions relating to the mascot
Fanspeak	1	Anonymous opinions relating to the mascot
Online Opinion Poll	1	Online opinion poll asking public to voice opinion
Our Opinion	1	Opinion submitted by newspaper
December 2003		
Article	2	Student government vote
March 2004		
Article	2	Committee formed and new mascot website
Speak Out	3	Anonymous opinions relating to the mascot
Fanspeak	1	Anonymous opinions relating to the mascot
April 2004		
Speak Out	38	Anonymous opinions relating to the mascot

Date and Type	Quantity	Content
April 2004		
Letter to the Editor	11	Opinions relating to the mascot signed by author
Online Opinion Poll	1	Online opinion poll asking public to voice opinion
Staff Writer Article	1	Opinions relating to the mascot signed by author
May 2004		
Article	3	Potential nicknames established; public invited to forums to voice opinions
Speak Out	37	Anonymous opinions relating to the mascot
Fanspeak	1	Anonymous opinions relating to the mascot
Letter to the Editor	8	Opinions relating to the mascot signed by author
Guest Column	1	Opinions relating to the mascot signed by author
Staff Writer Article	1	Opinions relating to the mascot signed by author
June 2004		
Article	1	Nickname selected by committee after input
Speak Out	6	Anonymous opinions relating to the mascot
Letter to the Editor	3	Opinions relating to the mascot signed by author
Guest Column	3	Opinions relating to the mascot signed by author
July 2004		
Article	2	Board of Directors votes to retire Indian mascot
Speak Out	33	Anonymous opinions relating to the mascot

Date and Type	Quantity	Content
July 2004		
Fanspeak	2	Anonymous opinions relating to the mascot
Letter to the Editor	2	Opinions relating to the mascot signed by author
Online Opinion Poll	1	Online opinion poll asking public to voice opinion
Our Opinion	1	Opinion submitted by newspaper
Staff Writer Article	2	Opinions relating to the mascot signed by author
August 2004		
Speak Out	2	Anonymous opinions relating to the mascot
September 2004		
Article	1	Name needed for mascot
Speak Out	1	Anonymous opinions relating to the mascot
October 2004		
Article	4	Indians will be retired; Board of Directors approves logos for nickname
Speak Out	7	Anonymous opinions relating to the mascot
November 2004		
Article	1	New logo announced
Speak Out	2	Anonymous opinions relating to the mascot
Letter to the Editor	1	Opinions relating to the mascot signed by author

Date and Type	Quantity	Content
January 2005		
Article	4	New mascot introduced at basketball game

Public University Student Newspaper

Public University's student newspaper was reviewed manually for mascot-related articles. The review resulted in nineteen articles and one letter to the editor. Many of the articles were written to keep students informed of the various stages during the mascot change process. Most of the information was very similar to what was published in the local daily newspaper.

Other Newspapers

A regional newspaper contained six articles pertaining to the mascot change process. The researcher learned of these articles through a column entitled "Letter to the Editor" in the local newspaper. One article from a local high school paper was found relating to the mascot change at Public University. This high school newspaper was distributed as an insert in the local newspaper. Most of the information presented in these articles related to the process of changing Public University's mascot. Since it was very similar to what was presented in the Local Daily Newspaper, this data was not analyzed for this study.

Public University Communication

University Relations Department Files

The researcher reviewed the University Relations Department files to determine if all newspaper articles and mascot website information regarding the process of changing

the mascot (2003-2005) gathered by the researcher was accurate and complete. It was discovered that the researcher had a more complete data collection of local daily newspaper articles and opinions. The researcher's mascot website information was complete except for one critical piece of information that was not made public. Many of the comments and suggestions that were related to keeping the Indian mascot were deleted and not published on the website. The reason they were deleted was because the Indian was not a selection option for the new mascot. The researcher found copies of letters that were written to the individuals who suggested the Indian to let them know that their suggestions were being considered but not available on the public website. Another piece of information that was found included a thesis that a student in Athletic Marketing wrote in 2002 suggesting a process that the university should consider with regard to changing the Indian nickname.

Newsletters and Press Releases

The Public University Newsletter is distributed twice a week to faculty, staff, students, and some community members. A review of the newsletter indicated that those groups generated 11 submissions. All of the submissions were related to the mascot website where individuals could submit their opinions regarding the mascot change. The date and time of the public forums, for this website were also announced in this newsletter.

The Public University Alumni Newsletter is mailed to all alumni two times per year. Two articles relating to the mascot change were published in the alumni newsletter. One article related to the change of the university nickname and was found in the Spring 2004 edition, and a continuation of that article was found in the Fall 2004 edition. Eight

press releases from the University Relations department were found. The press releases contained information regarding the mascot website and public forums, the Indian mascot retirement ceremony, the sale of merchandise containing the new nickname, and the announcement that the university was seeking a name for the mascot who would be present at athletic events.

Letters, Email, and Flyers

Two letters were sent to faculty and staff from the President. One email was sent to professional staff urging them to vote on the new mascot on the website. One email was sent to faculty members asking that they select a representative to serve on the mascot committee. One email was sent from the administration updating faculty and staff on the mascot change process. Two flyers that were posted on University bulletin boards were photocopied. One pertained to voting for the new mascot and the other encouraged full-time Public University students to audition to become the new mascot.

Public University Websites

The Rumor Mill Website

The review of the Public University “Rumor Mill” website resulted in three rumors regarding the university mascot. The rumor mill allows faculty, staff, students, and community members to post a rumor and the administration will respond with an answer. Two of the rumors contained inquiries regarding whether the university was planning to change the mascot. The third rumor was posted by the administration to thoroughly explain the process because they had several inquiries regarding the possible change.

Nickname/Mascot Committee Website

One of the charges of the mascot committee was to create a website that would detail for faculty, staff, students, and community members the mascot change process as well as provide input to the committee. The website included information regarding other universities that retired their Indian mascots and research regarding the use of Native American mascots. A thorough review of the Nickname/Mascot Committee Website resulted in the list of information provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Information Gathered from Nickname/Mascot Committee Website

Type	Number	Content
Mascot suggestions	672	Submissions including some comments
Mascot suggestions not published	223	Submissions including some comments
OVC and Missouri public schools mascot names	2	Pages of information about other regional school mascots
Criteria for perfect match after a careful and diligent search	2	Pages of procedure for selecting mascot names
Mascot ranking form – five choices	1	Page for selecting a mascot from five choices provided
Comments from ranking of five mascots	41	Comments

Type	Number	Content
Frequently asked questions about Indian/Otahkian nicknames	13	Pages include information from NCAA and general information on the issue
Submit comments	1	Form to submit comments
Comments from Mascot Suggestions	324	Comments
Student Government Resolution	2	Student Government vote to adopt a new Mascot (2 pages)

Findings

This section provides a summary of the information that was found in local daily newspaper articles, Public University internal and external communications, and the Public University websites as listed in the previous section. It includes a descriptive timeline of the change of the university mascot that took place between 2003 and 2005 and the opinions of faculty, staff, students, and community members regarding the change of the university mascot.

Changing Public University's Mascot: 2003-2005

Although a mascot committee was formed to pursue a new mascot in 2001, the public was largely unaware of the committee's formation. The mascot debate became public knowledge on July 25, 2003, when the front page of the local daily newspaper headlines read, "Scrap Public University nicknames, says alumni council vote". The article indicated that the Public University Alumni Council voted to retire Public

University's Indian nicknames. It was mentioned that the NCAA was pressuring universities with Indian nicknames to change.

The Vice President for University Advancement indicated that the move was not done because of "political correctness". Although most people feel that the university respected Indian heritage with their mascots, there can never be another Indian mascot due to NCAA policies. This was the first step in the process of working with Public University faculty, staff, alumni, students, board of directors, and community members in finding a new mascot that can promote school spirit and a visible symbol for athletic teams. The article asked readers to provide their opinions to the local daily newspaper via anonymous letter or telephone call.

On July 26, 2003, another article appeared in the local daily newspaper entitled, "Public University athletes, coaches say they understand push for name change". One of the University's athletic team coaches grew up in a Native American household. He stated, "If my mother [who is almost half Native American] and grandmother [who is full Native American] were still alive, I know they'd be offended by it". The coach agreed that the name should be changed if it is considered offensive and marketing sports teams would be improved with a new nickname. He understood the difficulty of taking away something that is very much a tradition at Public University.

Another coach who was interviewed for the article said, "As a department we're so tentative using it in marketing, and it's nice for a school to have a mascot they can use all the time. That's part of your image". There were mixed feelings among athletes. An African American player understood why the name should be changed "You can look at

it as a racial slur, like calling black people the ‘N’ word. I guess it would be politically correct to change”.

On August 2, 2003, an editorial column of the local daily newspaper claims that “Public University mascot is marketing move”. They indicate that changing the university’s mascot is at the “forefront of casual conversation and this very Opinion page”. Reference is made to an earlier statement from the Vice President for University Advancement which indicated that the mascot change did not have anything to do with political correctness. He contended that although the Indian names were used respectfully at Public University, a new mascot is needed. “Public University has made its marketing decision. New names that are honorable, respectful of this area’s heritage and least likely to offend other are now the goal. It’s time to find one that everyone can enjoy” (p. 6B).

On August 8, 2003, the front page of the local daily newspaper read, “Nickname change called inexpensive”. According to university administrators, the name “Indians” only appears in two locations on campus, which could easily be removed with paint. The word “Indians” was located in the end zone of the football field and a painting of a Native American is located in the Athletic Complex. “I don’t see a huge cost at all,” said the Athletic Director. “I don’t know where it would come from” (p. 1A). Although the final decision rests with the board of directors, groups such as the Booster Club, Faculty Senate, Professional Staff Council, and Student Government provided input on the issue.

The front page of the local daily newspaper dated December 8, 2003, indicated that the Student Government Association would be the next group to vote on a recommendation for a new mascot. This paper featured a photo of the “Redmen”, which

is a group of fraternity members who dress up with red paint. They have claimed in the past that “Redmen” is a reflection of the school’s color, not their Indian mascot. At University basketball games they sometimes “stomp through the arena in a single-file line reminiscent of an Indian dance in a movie Western” (p. 4A). One of the students stated, “I don’t think it is offensive at all. I like to think we provide spirit” (p. 4A). An Indian Chief said that it is wrong for fans to act “like movie star Indians do” (p. 4A). The Chief also graduated from Public University in the 1970s and did not have a problem with an Indian mascot “if the person dresses in a buckskin outfit like those that would have been worn by American Indians” in this region of the country (p. 4A).

On December 9, 2003, the student government voted 24-3 to remove the Indian mascot and create a new mascot that will boost school spirit. Feelings were mixed among student senators. Several students did not believe that Public University needed a new mascot. One quoted, “Harvard isn’t known for its mascot. We don’t need to be either” (p. 4A). Another senator said that a survey of 683 students conducted the week prior indicated that only twenty-five percent wanted to change the mascot. Some senators mentioned the fraternity that dresses like “Redmen” and said that it is offensive to Native Americans.

According to a local daily newspaper article, the Athletic Booster Club voted 12-8 on February 10, 2004 in favor of changing the University’s mascot (Bliss, 2004). On February 24, 2004, the chair of the faculty senate distributed an email to all faculty announcing that the President of the University indicated that a mascot committee would be formed immediately. The President requested that the faculty provide the names of four potential committee members.

On March 3, 2004, the newly formed Mascot/Nickname Study Committee voted unanimously to “recommend to the president and board of directors that the mascots/nicknames be retired with dignity and honor and that a new mascot/nickname be selected” (University Website Now Available, 2004). On March 13, 2004, the local daily newspaper announced “Committee to decide Public University’s Mascot” (p. 1A). A seventeen member committee of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and boosters, hoped to recommend a new mascot by June. The committee developed a web page for individuals to comment and provide suggestions on a new mascot. The school color of “Red” would not change, so that would need to be considered as a new mascot was developed. The President of the University made it clear that he would not recommend a mascot change without “solid support from students, university employees, alumni, and boosters” (p. 2B).

Via email, March 19, 2004, the chair of the professional staff council asked its members to submit mascot ideas to him. On March 23, 2004, the Public University Newsletter, which is distributed to faculty, staff, students, and some community members, announced the new website that was created for the submission of mascot ideas. The announcement was also posted on Newsletters dated March 26th, March 30th, and April 2nd, 2004.

On March 24, 2004, the local daily newspaper announced, “Web site taking ideas for Public University mascot”. It is also mentioned that the National Alumni Council, Student Government, and Athletic Booster Club supported the retirement of the Indian nickname. It also mentioned that the NCAA recommended removing Indian-related team names and mascots. The web page address was provided for the public to provide

suggestions. The Nickname/Mascot Study Committee website contained information regarding the current status of the mascot study, a list of nicknames/mascots for the athletic conference and state public schools, a section with frequently asked questions concerning the Indian nickname, the criteria for narrowing the list of mascot suggestions gathered from the public, and the resolution passed by the student government.

On April 4, 2004, the local daily newspaper provided a summary of the first 800 suggested mascots on the website; everything from animals to vegetables had been recommended. Cardinals and Red Wolves were the most frequently mentioned names. A summary of the issue was provided. The president of the board of directors felt that any change of the mascot name should be made for marketing reasons, not because the word "Indian" is offensive. He states, "One thing that troubles me is the whole concept that there is something demeaning about using the Indian name" (p. 8A). It was also mentioned by a University Relations staff member that "the United Methodist Church has a resolution against using Native American mascots. It has become a moral issue" (p. 8A).

On April 8, 2004, the local daily newspaper headlines read, "Nickname Committee Selects Final Five". The Nickname/Mascot Study Committee narrowed more than 800 suggestions down to five choices: Red Birds, Red Hawks, Red Wolves, Explorers, and Sentinels. The committee created nine criteria to consider when ranking the five mascots. Some of the criteria included marketing potential and ability to be used for a long period of time. The committee also announced that they voted unanimously to continue to honor the Indian through a manner other than through the use of a mascot.

On April 11, 2004, a Sports Talk writer indicated that if he had his way, the University would remain the Indians and Otahkians and bring back the Indian mascot. He just did not understand why it needed to be changed. But since the change was going to happen, he reviewed the final five choices. “If the name must go, Red Hawks flies best”.

On April 14, 2004, the local daily newspaper read, “Public University plans public forums on nickname”. Anyone interested in providing suggestions regarding the final five nicknames was encouraged to attend forums on April 21st, April 28th, and May 5th at 12:00, and May 12th at 7:00 p.m. The public had the opportunity to rank the nicknames and provide comments using the University’s mascot website. The chairperson of the committee stated that he also wanted to educate the community regarding the use of Indian mascots through the development of forums, documentary film presentations and the mascot website. The nine criteria the committee used to narrow the nicknames down to five are as follows: 1) The name should articulate Public University’s many purposes; 2) The name should capture the region’s essences and Public University’s identity; 3) The name should be distinctive; 4) The name should be unique in the conference, region, and nation; 5) The name should permit unlimited fan expression; 6) The name should be able to stand the test of time; 7) The name should unite the majority of Public University supporters; 8) The name should provide marketing opportunities; and 9) The name should be gender neutral.

On April 20, 2004, the Public University Newsletter extended an invitation to the university community to watch two films about Native Americans that could be viewed at 12:00 on April 20th. There would also be a public forum on April 28th at 7:00 p.m.

with members of the Mascot/Nickname Study Committee. Comments could also be mailed to University Relations. On April 21, 2004, the local daily newspaper headlines read, "Cherokees seek input on Public University nickname". The American Indian Center of the Heartland, which is based in the same city as Public University, was founded by a local couple, one of whom is full-blooded Cherokee. The couple also own a gift shop in the town. The Cherokee woman formerly thought that the Indian nickname was offensive. She said that she changed her mind after having talked to other local Native Americans. She believed that Public University could keep that name as long as they adopted a different mascot.

The May 8th meeting of the group, which usually had about 35-40 attendees, would be asked how they felt about the university's plans to retire the Indian nickname/mascot. They also discussed how the University could promote Native American culture in a respectful manner. The article also mentioned that the public forums scheduled for April 21st and May 5th were cancelled. Apparently the schedule was not finalized prior to the announcement of the dates. The public was invited to provide comments concerning this article to the Native American group. The meeting date, time, and location were provided along with the group's telephone number and email address.

On April 22, 2004, the local daily newspaper headlines announced, "Decisions on Public University mascot/nickname not made yet, board president says". A recommendation on a new mascot could be presented on June 25. The board of directors was concerned that alumni believed the removal of the Indian mascot was finalized and that they did not have an opportunity to provide an opinion. The president stated, "The

committee may make a recommendation, but this board is free to accept or reject it.” The public was once again asked to provide input on the mascot website. On April 23, 2004, the Public University Online Newsletter indicated that the web site was available for ranking the mascot choices. The headline appeared again on April 27th and May 4th.

On April 24, 2004, the local daily newspaper indicated that the board of directors wanted to devise a scientific opinion poll to allow commentary regarding the nickname. Although the board of directors did not think that the nickname issue was a popularity contest, they did feel like the views of some alumni were being ignored. (Some members of the board felt as though they were only privileged to one side of the issue.) Some felt that the Indian mascot should have been one choice among the final five mascots. However, committee members felt that keeping the Indian mascot should not be a choice given the research conducted by the NCAA. The board also questioned the student government’s vote to remove the Indian mascot when a survey of more than 600 students indicated that the majority were in favor of keeping it. The student government president felt that students simply wanted a mascot.

On May 6, 2004, the local daily newspaper indicated that the Red Hawks and Red Wolves received the most votes from the ranking of a total of five mascots. Of the 1,724 votes that were received, 1,194 were received from students, 121 from alumni, and over 200 from University faculty and staff. Participants were asked to rank the five mascots from one to five – one being the first choice. Red Hawks received the most votes, but Red Wolves received the most first choice votes. One-half of the votes were received through the University mascot website. The committee had to decide between a recommendation of Red Hawks or Red Wolves as the new mascot name with the hope of

presenting it to the board on June 25th. The Red Hawks and Red Wolves mascot/nicknames were both familiar to this region of the country and would coincide with the school color of red. Comments could still be submitted using the web site. The final public forum was scheduled for May 12th. They also intended to conduct the scientific poll requested by the board of directors.

On May 7, 2004, the Public University Online Newsletter indicated that the chair of the committee would be providing information on the University's radio program on May 9th. On May 9, 2004, the local daily newspaper stated, "American Indian group voices stereotype worry". According to some American Indians attending the American Indian Center of the Heartland meeting, the biggest problem with Indian mascots was to allow students to wear Hollywood type attire and perform silly and stupid stunts. While some were tolerant of the nickname, many did not feel that anyone should imitate Indian dress attire.

On May 11, 2004, the Public University Online Newsletter indicated that there was an open forum concerning the mascot scheduled for May 12th. On May 13, 2004, the local daily newspaper indicated that public opinion regarding the mascot was divided among about 40 people who attended the open forum. University faculty, staff and administration commented on the need to bring excitement to athletics, the university, and prospective students. This could not be accomplished using an Indian nickname. Several alumni remembered the pride they felt when they supported an Indian mascot and did not understand the issue of "political correctness". One of the Public University athletic coaches who was one-quarter Osage Indian said, "There is no honor in having a Chief mascot. Indians are less educated, they have the lowest self-esteem of any minority

group. It is frustrating to me to hear what honors an Indian; only an Indian knows” (p. 5A).

On June 30, 2004, the local daily newspaper indicated that the “Redhawks” would be the new nickname recommended to the board of directors. The president indicated in a meeting with the committee that he preferred “Redhawks” over “Redwolves” since the red-tailed hawk could still be found in the region. The red wolf is extinct and no longer in the area. The president recommended that the Indian nicknames would be retired with honor and that the University find another means by which to honor Native Americans. He also recommended that the University adopt the Redhawks nickname. The scientific poll that was requested by the board of directors found that 50 percent of students were in favor of keeping the Indian mascot while 49.8 were in favor of identifying and adopting a new mascot. To the board’s surprise, 60 percent of alumni were in favor of identifying and adopting a new mascot and 40 percent wanted to retain the nickname. A total of 380 students and alumni responded to the survey (38% return rate +/- 6% error).

On July 1, 2004, the local daily newspaper indicated that the board of directors unanimously voted to retire the Indian mascot with dignity and adopt the Redhawks nickname beginning in Spring 2005. The 17-member committee and the president presented the recommendations to the board. A crowd of 80 students, faculty, staff, and alumni gave the board a standing ovation after the vote.

On July 3, 2004, a local newspaper article indicated that two local high schools were hoping that their Indian mascot would not be eliminated like that of Public University. On September 22, 2004, a press release from the University Relations department indicated that the new Redhawks mascot needed a nickname. The committee

chairperson said that many mascots have names was able to provide some examples from other universities and professional sports teams. Suggestions for the name could be submitted through October 16th. The committee would narrow down the selections and ask students, alumni, boosters, faculty, and staff to vote during Homecoming week - October 25-31. This information was printed in the local daily newspaper on September 28, 2004.

According to the Nickname/Mascot Committee website, the top five suggestions (narrowed from 500 suggestions) were Rally, Ricky, Rocky, Rowdy, and Rudy. The names could be ranked on the website through October 31st. The University planned to reveal the mascot name on January 22nd during the first basketball game of the season. It was also mentioned that currently enrolled students could audition for the mascot by contacting the University Relations Department.

On October 19, 2004, the local daily newspaper announced a formal ceremony to retire the Indian nicknames. Carol Spindel, author of "Dancing at Halftime" delivered the keynote address. "This ceremony is hopefully a way of trying to show the community at large that the university will never forget its Indian heritage", stated the director of university relations. The ceremony included performances by Native American musician Bill Miller, the University ROTC group, and the Intertribal Native American Dancers. The ceremony took place on October 22, 2004 on the steps of the main administration building on campus.

On October 28, 2004, the local daily newspaper indicated that the Regents would make a decision regarding the new Redhawks logo on October 29th. The university intended to begin the sale of merchandise bearing the new logo in December. The new

logo was expected to be announced during the men's and women's basketball media day on November 16th.

On October 30, 2004, the local daily newspaper indicated that the board had decided on the Redhawks logos. The board only recommended minor changes to the logo. The logos would be presented at the men's and women's basketball games as planned. A flyer, developed by the University Relations Department, was posted indicating that Redhawks mascot auditions would take place on November 12, 2004. The requirements were listed and an outline of the performance standards were provided.

On November 18, 2004, the local daily newspaper presented the new Redhawks logo and the changes that were implemented by the board of directors and the outside designer. The Redhawks nickname was not planned to be officially used until January 22, 2005, during the first home basketball games of the semester. The sale of Redhawks merchandise on campus and online through the university website was planned for December 8th.

On January 22, 2005, the local daily newspaper indicated that the Redhawks were everywhere. T-shirt and MP3 player giveaways, banners, and painted Redhawks were everywhere. Residence Hall groups decorated the halls when students returned from Christmas break. The director of athletic marketing stated, "I've been here for thirty-five years. I was here when we changed from state college to state university, I was here when we celebrated our one-hundred year anniversary and I've never seen participation like this. You go into the residence hall and every inch is decorated. This thing is feeding on itself" (P. 10A). Another article that was printed on the same day anticipated the biggest crowd of the basketball season as the new Redhawks mascot was introduced.

The basketball coaches were excited about the new mascot but hoped their teams could remain focused on the games.

On January 23, 2005, a local newspaper article indicated “Redhawks born winners”. Rowdy the Redhawk was introduced just before the men’s game. A record season crowd of 6,607 were present for the introduction. Rowdy greeted the players as they ran onto the floor and was a hit with the crowd. A player said, “It was good to come out with a new look. It had to be a good luck charm. We’re 1-0 with him” (p. 1B).

On January 26, 2005, a caption in the Public University Student Newspaper read, “Let’s get Rowdy!! New Mascot Decorations Cover Campus.” Rowdy the Redhawk is the first mascot to be displayed on campus in 20 years. Student government purchased Redhawk banners for the campus and each student living on campus received a Redhawk window decal. A freshman student stated, “It’s exciting to experience the mascot change. The decorations give me a different view of the campus and they give campus more color” (p. 1). Most students were excited to become part of a new tradition. However, there were still mixed feelings about the Indian mascot. A student stated, “It looked like a wussy little bird. I didn’t like the free shirt either. The Indian was much better” (p. 6).

Opinions of Faculty, Staff, Students, and Community Members

The researcher conducted a content analysis to analyze the data gathered from the written documents in this section. According to Berg (2001), content analysis is used to analyze forms of “social communication” (p. 240) such as written communication or recorded verbal communication. This communication is transformed into written text and analyzed through the development of a code list. The code list is applied to the written communication “rigidly and consistently” (Berg, 2001, p. 240) so that other

researchers who analyze the same information would find “same or comparable” (p. 240) results.

Start Codes

Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend that a “start list” of codes be developed before data is collected. A “start list” of codes for this study can be found in Table 3. The start codes were acquired from the six most common meanings that oppose the use of Native American mascots (Codes O1-O6) and the eight most common meanings supporting the use of Native American Mascots (Codes S1-S8). A more descriptive version of each meaning is listed in Chapter 2, pages 32 through 34. The codes were applied and “O” is used to indicate those who oppose the mascot and “S” for those who support the mascot. A number was then applied to each reason that was classified as either an opposing or supporting idea.

Table 3

Start Codes for Document Review

Code	Description
O1	They promote stereotypes
O2	They are damaging to children – educational institutions should not promote stereotypes and racism
O3	They are harmful to Native Americans and other minorities
O4	They are racist
O5	They contradict University anti-discrimination policies and NCAA policies
O6	They are sacrilegious
S1	They are intended to honor Native Americans

Code	Description
S2	A Native American group supports the mascot
S3	The mascot is a tradition
S4	“No one has ever objected to our mascot” and “We have no Indian students on campus”
S5	It is dignified, not offensive, and not intended to harm Native Americans
S6	Alumni say they will stop contributing if mascot is changed
S7	Indians cannot be offended because they are gone
S8	“The Indians oppose the mascot today – who will oppose next?” – political correctness

The code list was consistently applied to all qualitative data. As the researcher applied codes to the data, codes were modified and additional codes were added. Code O7, Code Name, Code NA-O, Code NA-S, Code S9, Code S10, and Code Admin/\$ were added to the code list. Code S2 and Code S7 were removed from the final code list because they were not used. The final codes and code descriptions are listed in Table 4.

Some comments were coded multiple times. For example, if a person commented that using an Indian mascot is honorable and that the university is caving into political correctness, this comment was coded S1 and S8. After all comments were coded, they were photocopied if multiple codes applied. The researcher sorted the comments according to code and then analyzed the data for each code.

Table 4

Final Codes for Document Review

Code	Description
O1	Stereotypes - They promote stereotypes
O2	Damaging to children - They are damaging to children. Educational institutions should not promote stereotypes and racism
O3	Harmful to minorities - They are harmful to Native Americans and other minorities
O4	Racism - They are racist
O5	University/NCAA Policies - They contradict University anti-discrimination policies and NCAA policies
O6	Sacrilegious - They are sacrilegious
O7	Marketing and School Spirit - Students and alumni want a mascot to help market the university and promote school spirit
Name	New Mascot Name - Suggestions for the new name of the mascot
NA-O	Native Americans Oppose - People who claim to be Native Americans and oppose the use of the Indian mascot
S1	Honor, Respect and Pride - They are intended to honor or respect Native Americans or are a source of pride
S3	Tradition - The mascot is a tradition
S4	Why change? - “Why are we changing mascots” and “Only a small number of people (or minority) are complaining”

Code	Description
S5	Not Offensive - It is dignified, not offensive, and not intended to harm Native Americans
S6	Alumni Support - Alumni say they will stop supporting or contributing if mascot is changed
S8	Political Correctness - “The Indian’s oppose the mascot today – who will oppose next?” – political correctness
S9	Other Sports Teams/Landmarks - Reference to other schools or professional sports teams not changing mascots/References to changing names of landmarks, states, and parks
S10	History, Heritage, Trail of Tears - The mascot is a tribute to Native American history, heritage, or the Trail of Tears
Admin/ \$	University Administration - Complaints about the University Administration’s handing of the mascot and money spent or gained from this controversy
NA-S	Native Americans Support - People who claim to be Native Americans and support the use of the Indian mascot

Local Daily Newspaper

Speak Out

The first set of documents reviewed were from the “Speak Out” section of the local newspaper. “Speak Out” is a part of the Opinion section of the newspaper. “Speak

Out” allows individuals to voice their opinions regarding any subject anonymously. According to the local newspaper employee, “Speak Out” comments are filtered and not all of them are published due to content submitted and space limitations (personal communication with Southeast Missourian employee, July 2, 2008). There were a total of 192 published comments related to the mascot in the “Speak Out” section of the local daily newspaper. Overall, 25 Speak Out comments were positive toward removing the Indian and Otahkian nicknames and adopting a new mascot at Public University. There were many more opinions that supported the use of the Indian and Otahkian nicknames.

Code O1: Stereotypes. Three opinions were coded as O1. All three were in favor of removing the mascot, but for different reasons. Two opinions were opposed to using Native American mascots. One opinion indicated that we should not mock them with caricatures and the other indicated that people claiming to be Native Americans seem proud to be stereotyped. “I am amazed that a vast majority of residents are part American Indian. . . and how wonderful that they are all so proud of being stereotyped ethnically”. One opinion indicated that our culture stereotypes Native Americans to be noble savages and they really kept slaves and raped and killed our ancestors.

I am so pleased that Public University is replacing the Indian as its mascot. Sports teams glorify the alleged good qualities of the American Indian. Actually, prior to 1492, they were Stone Age warring people. They practiced slavery. After 1492, they killed, tortured and raped our ancestors. We must eliminate this false memory of noble savages embodied in the names of sports teams and leave this civilization where it belongs: in the dustbin of history.

Code 02: Damaging to Children. Two opinions commented that a nearby high school should also remove their mascot. One indicated that the university should set an example and maybe the high school will also do what is right. The other indicated that “the offensive tomahawk chop at football games... teaches children the wrong lesson about what it means to respect other people”.

Code 04: Racism and Code 05: University/NCAA Policies. Three opinions were categorized as Code 04: Racism. Two of the individuals commented on how we would never call ourselves the “Negroes”, or the “Asians, or “Caucasians”. The other comment indicated “get with the times. We don’t name our mascots for someone’s race”. Four opinions surfaced regarding the institution’s responsibility to educate individuals, discourage stereotypes, be a leader and a visionary, and be sensitive to cultural diversity. These comments were categorized as Code 05: University/NCAA Policies.

Code 06: Sacrilegious. There was one comment regarding the name of the university dance team. This is not really related to the overall mascot debate, but it provides another example of the use of Native American rituals on campus.

Public University really needs to reconsider the name of its dance team. Naming a group of scantily dressed women the Sun Dancers isn’t exactly respectful of others’ religious traditions. The sun dance is a sacred ritual for the Lakota people.

Code 07: Marketing and School Spirit. Six comments were related to marketing. Two comments indicated: “Let’s face it, with our mascot like it is now, the university can’t market itself as a legit Division I program” and “In a Sports Illustrated article,

Public University is known for being one of the very few schools that haven't changed their Indian mascots. That is not a good thing". The third comment indicated:

The decision to change the name of Public University's mascot is correctly said to be driven by market forces. In other words, Public University gets hurt economically because using the word Indian is considered offensive in more places than it isn't.

Two students indicated the excitement about buying a t-shirt with the mascot and team name printed on it. One opinion indicated:

Since Public University wants a more marketable mascot, it should be held accountable. Taxpayers and alumni should see the results of those marketing efforts. I think the best marketing tool you can have is winning teams. Then the money will come in and the mascot really won't matter that much. It's always about the money.

Ten comments communicated an excitement for finally identifying a mascot for Public University in order that students can begin a new tradition. One student commented:

I am a current student at Public University, and I was at the Indian nickname forum. At the forum a Southeast alumnus got up and spoke on behalf of the Indian mascot. He told an emotional story of his experiences on campus when Public University has a mascot. Until that night, I hadn't realized just what I was missing. I wish that I felt the same way as this alumnus does about Public University. It is unfair that students today do not have the same experience that alumni had. We need a new nickname

so we can develop a mascot that will evoke those same emotions. If Public University gets a new nickname, we won't be taking away any tradition that isn't already gone. Instead, we would be giving something back to students that has been missing for a long time.

Many indicated they are current students or recent graduates. One comment indicated that the athletes also deserved a mascot. One comment indicated skepticism regarding the number of students who voted for a new mascot.

Nearly 1,200 students voted for a new nickname? I am amazed. I have attended many home basketball games and haven't seen anywhere near that many students – ever. Perhaps the voting should have taken place at athletic events where only those who care enough to show up get to have a say.

Code Name: New Mascot Name. Sixteen people recommended new names for the Indian mascot. Some did not seem like a serious suggestion for a mascot, “Since the University wants to pick a mascot theme that will also allow us to continue to use the present school colors, be a icon for our region, and appeal to our ‘fighting’ spirit, I suggest we use the one creature that appears in no danger of extinction in the region. Please welcome the Rednecks”.

Code S1: Honor, Respect and Pride. A total of fifteen comments were coded for this category. Nine comments indicated that Public University's use of the Indian nickname is an honor to Native Americans. One individual stated:

I want to comment on the change of the mascot at Public University. I think it's absolutely ridiculous, uncalled for, too expensive and should be

stopped. The Indians have been here for a long time, and it's a very honorable name. We have numerous things in this whole area that have Indian names. I think the Indian people are honored to be connected with all of this.

Two individuals indicated that the Indian nickname is respectful. One comment indicated: "Get a dog, cat, mule or goat for a mascot but keep the Indian as the university symbol of its dedicated sports teams, courage and fighting spirit". Three comments indicated that they are proud of the Indian mascot – two of the individuals indicated they are one-half-Cherokee. One of these individuals commented:

I started to say it has been interesting to watch and read reaction to the name change for Public University. But it isn't anymore. Many who want to change have stooped to twisting into slandering the pride and respect the university had for representing a proud people. Hate has raised its ugly head. There are those who either don't understand or refuse to believe we were proud to remember our nation's American Indian.

Code S3: Tradition. Comments coded as tradition can be broken into several small categories. Two comments indicated they will always call the team Indians regardless of the change and one indicated that "it wouldn't seem right without the Indians and Otahkians". One comment indicated that "too many memories with the Indian name. Changing the name will just cause a rift". Another comment, which was also coded as S1, indicated that changing the mascot changes tradition and "that is what a university is supposed to be built on: tradition." One individual submitted a comment in

the form of a poem: “The new name made me scream, then holler. I can’t believe it’s true. Tradition was trumped by the dollar. I’ll be forever blue.”

Code S4: Why Change? Three comments indicated that the majority of Native Americans do not care about the issue. Another comment indicated that we are just satisfying a small majority. The other three comments suggested that nobody really cares and they cannot understand why the change has been emphasized.

Code S5: Not Offensive. Eleven comments indicated that Public University’s Indian mascot is not offensive and does not degrade Indians. One comment indicated:

This is in regard of the much ado about nothing over the Public University Indians and Otahkians. My husband and I are both part American Indian, and we do not consider this an insult. In fact, it’s a compliment. Thank you. That’s just our opinion.

Code S6: Alumni Support. Four people indicated that they will no longer financially support the University if the Indian mascot is changed. Two people indicated that they will no longer feel a connection with the university. One person indicated they will no longer attend athletic events.

Code S8: Political Correctness. The words “political correctness” surfaced in fifteen comments. Two people thought that animal rights activists will start complaining about animal mascots. Three people thought that we should not change mascots just because we are afraid of offending someone. One alumnus stated:

My husband and I have season tickets at Public University, and we attend other sports as well. At quite a few games a year in both basketball and football the band plays the tomahawk song up, and some band members

do the tomahawk chop. Students are adamant. They don't want the Indian nickname changed. This is political correctness baloney.

Code S9: Other Sports Teams/Landmarks. The mascot debate at Public University influenced the challenge of a local high school Indian mascot. Six comments recommended that a local high school follow in the university's footsteps and change their Indian mascot: "A University is supposed to be a leader, a visionary. The Indian is wrong. Set an example, will you? Who knows, a local town may rise to the challenge too and do what is right."

Sixteen people commented that the local high school should keep their Indian mascot. Two people recommended changing the town's name because it is named after a President who forced Indians out of the area. Two references were made regarding professional sports teams and the persistent use of the Indian names. The comments indicated that the teams are marketed very well and Public University should change when they change. Five people mentioned that if the Indian mascots were removed, it would also be necessary to rename parks, monuments, highways and other landmarks.

Code S10: History, Heritage, Trail of Tears . Support for using the Indian mascot related to history, heritage, and the Trail of Tears was mentioned nine times. One person thought that Indian heritage would be lost without the mascot and another person thought the Indians "should be grateful their names are being used for sports teams, because at least it makes the American public think about them. Otherwise, we would just totally ignore them". Two other comments indicated that the connection of the Indian mascot to the Trail of Tears is not respectful because it was the name given to the forced removal of Indians in the area.

Code NA-S: Native Americans Support. Twelve people claim to be part Native American and still support the use of the Indian mascot. One caller commented that “if you have not grown up practicing native culture you have no business saying you do not find it offensive”. Another caller commented:

I am amazed that a vast majority of local resident’s are part American Indian. What a much larger percentage than the last census suggested. And how wonderful that they are all so proud of being stereotyped ethnically. Long live the mythological legends of many white families that they must have had an Indian princess great-grandmother.

Code Admin/\$: University Administration. Sixteen comments were related to the university spending money on this process instead of spending time on the University’s financial situation, tuition costs, and state of the economy. A comment was made in response to the calls regarding the cost of the process: “The Indian name is only located in two places on campus. Once the nickname is changed, Public University will remove that with little cost to the university.” It was also mentioned that the committee was comprised of people who were volunteering their time regarding this issue.

Four comments were aimed at the University board of directors. Two of the comments denounced the board’s decision to retire the Indian mascot. Another person stated, “I hope our board of directors will not be foolish enough to derail a University tradition that is important to the hundreds of alumni who respect our Indian heritage”. The fourth comment thanked the University board of directors for doing the right thing and retiring the Indian mascot: “Doing what’s correct is not always easy. Thank you for having the personal character to choose correctly in the face of bigoted opposition.”

One comment indicated that the University needs a “real athletic director who can get winning teams to put fans in the stands so they can sell shirts and hats.” Another comment indicated that “changing the nickname won’t help the teams win championships. Having someone dance around in a costume won’t help the players perform any better.”

Five comments were related to the open discussion forums directed by the Mascot/Nickname Committee. One indicated they were a “sham” and other indicated they were a “joke”. They indicated that the University does not want to listen to the people who want to keep the Indian mascot:

Over and over again we have been shouted down. The majority of us who support keeping the Indian name do not even exist, according to the University. University officials have an agenda and are not going to rest until the name is changed.

Another person indicated that of the 75 – 100 people that attended a forum, no one commented on keeping the Indian mascot: “If people are against the change, they need to attend the meetings and discuss their views with the committee.” The other two comments related to the time of the day that the forums were scheduled. One indicated that they were only at 12:00 on a weekday and the other person commented that there was a forum at 7:00 p.m.

Three individuals commented about the university’s decision to remove Indian-related or inappropriate suggestions from the mascot website. The University administration regularly filtered the website and removed Indian-related and improper

suggestions. One person indicated that his suggestion of the “Local Yokels” was filtered by the University. He said, “I guess the site filters out stereotypes indiscriminately.”

One person indicated that “the whole idea that Public University would actually take suggestions from the public for the mascot is ridiculous. School officials have already made up their minds. They’re going through the motions for public relations.” One comment suggested that the change was dictated by the president, and four others provided general comments about the University’s decision to change the nickname and mascot. There was one positive comment regarding the mascot retirement ceremony: “I would like to congratulate the University on the ceremony to retire the Indian mascot. I never saw anything like it. It was moving”.

Fanspeak

“Fanspeak” is similar to “Speak Out” in that people can provide anonymous opinions. The main difference is that “Fanspeak” relates to sports comments and they are published in the Sports section as opposed to the Opinion section of the newspaper. Four entries were published in “Fanspeak”. One comment recommended sticking with tradition, categorized as Code S3: Tradition. Two comments related to a reference to other schools and professional teams, categorized as Code S9: Other Sports Teams/Landmarks. There were two negative comments that respondents expressed regarding the university administration, categorized as Code Admin/\$: University Administration. One comment indicated:

It’s very revealing that so many Public University sports fans are willing to turn their backs on the school over a mascot issue. I don’t attend events

to see a mascot, so I'll continue to support the school not matter what the name is. To me, that defines a true fan.

Letters to the Editor and Guest Columns

The second set of documents that the researcher analyzed were the 'Letters to the Editor' and "Guest Columns" from the local newspaper. These items are also published in the Opinion section. A "Letter to the Editor" or "Guest Column" must be signed by the author unlike opinions published in "Speak Out" and "Fanspeak, which are anonymous.

Thirty-one letters to the editor were reviewed. Twenty-two letters supported the use of the Indian mascot and 7 letters opposed the use of the Indian mascot. One letter recommended that the University consult other schools that have changed their mascots recently. The other letter was from a person who previously wrote a letter in favor of keeping the Indian mascot. This second letter recommended that everyone come together to support the new mascot.

Code O1: Stereotypes. One comment from an alumnus was coded in this category. The letter stated:

The use of Indian imagery does not allow for the elimination of stereotypes and for making room for the many rich varieties of American Indian culture. It does not allow for real learning about real people and their issues as American citizens. The use of Indian mascots reduces hundreds of Indian tribes to generic cartoons.

Code O3: Harmful to Minorities. One letter from an alum indicated that after research into the matter and discussions with Native American groups he found the

following: “They are asking us to understand even though we intend to honor them. They are saying, ‘Please do not do it this way anymore.’ They are saying it hurts in ways we would never tolerate.”

Code O4: Racism. Three letters address the issue of racism. One University staff member stated, “No other race appears as a mascot name, because no other race of people was hunted. People hang animal heads in their dens and Indian heads in the gymnasiums.”

Code O5: University/NCAA Policies. Two letters addressed the NCAA’s request for all participating teams to eliminate their Indian names. The author stated, “To continue the use of an Indian mascot-nickname places our university in an embarrassing situation with the NCAA, with national educational organizations, with some legislatures and with the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights”.

Code O6: Sacrilegious. One letter addressed the issue of schools using “drumbeats and feathers” for mascot dances, which are sacred rituals for Native Americans. The other letter stated, “From the 1920s until 1978 it was illegal for Native Americans to wear sacred dress and symbols and practice their religion. However, it was OK for white people to use these same sacred objects in mimicking the Indians at sporting events.”

Code O7: Marketing and School Spirit. Five people indicated that selecting a new nickname and mascot would restore school spirit, new traditions for current students, and help market the university. A student athlete commented, “The current situation has facilitated poor school spirit and a lack of student tradition or connection to Public University. In order to provide those things for future generations of students, we must

be able to use our nickname. As an athlete, I feel no connection with the Indian as a symbol of my team. Something is missing, and I see this debate as a chance to fill a void.”

Code S1: Honor, Respect and Pride. Eleven letters stated that the Indian mascot is an honor to Native Americans. One alumnus stated:

I am a 1961 alumnus of Public University. My years at the university were full of pride to be an Indian. The Indian athletic team name was one of honor, respect and inspiration. Having the Chief on the heights overlooking the stadium was a dignified start to every football game.

Code S3: Tradition. Five letters commented that the Indian mascot is a tradition and should not be removed. An alum and former athlete said, “There is too much tradition behind the names Indians and Otahkians. These two names have been with the university for as long as I can remember.”

Code S4: Why Change? Two opinions were categorized as Code S4. One alumnus stated that “changing the name was instigated by only a small fraction of the population”. Another letter stated, “The recent argument over a school mascot is a melancholy example of erratic thinking. Who would have believed anyone could object to Indians as mascots?”

Code S5: Not Offensive. Five letters indicated that the Indian mascot is not offensive, categorized as Code S5: Not Offensive. An individual commented: “Indian heritage has never been offensively depicted in Public University’s logo or mascot.”

Code S8: Political Correctness. The theme of political correctness surfaced in eight letters. For instance, an individual replied, “In my opinion, a mascot change for

Public University is superfluous. Certainly sensitivity should not be overlooked, but the deluge of political correctness commentary in our society has reached the ridiculous”.

Code S9: Other Sports Teams/Landmarks. A total of eight comments were categorized as Code S9: Other Sports Teams/Landmarks. Five people mentioned the issue of other professional teams and other schools that use Indian names. Three people mentioned that the names of rivers, parks, and states would also have to be changed.

Code S10: History, Heritage, Trail of Tears . A total of thirteen comments were categorized as Code S10: History, Heritage, Trail of Tears . History and heritage were mentioned in ten letters. The Trail of Tears was mentioned in three letters.

NA-S: Native American Support. Three comments were categorized as NA-S: Native American Support. All three people support the use of the Indian mascot and claim to be Native Americans.

Code Name: New Mascot Name. One comment was categorized as Code Name: New Mascot Name. The comment was written by the CEO of the World Institute to Minimize Predation. She indicated her “shock and dismay” that Public University chose a hawk to represent their new mascot. She stated, “The flagrant glorification of predators in the promotion of teams by colleges and universities throughout our nation is absolutely unconscionable” and recommends that more “cute, cuddly little animals” be used for sport team mascots.

Code Admin/\$: University Administration. Five people indicated they did not like the manner in which the administration was handling the mascot change. Three people questioned the amount of money and time spent on this process. Two letters requested

that people vote on the new mascot and one letter recommended that the university seek input from universities who had recently changed their mascot.

Online Opinion Polls

The Local Daily Newspaper conducted three online polls during 2003 and 2004. The results of the first online poll, “Should Public University scrap its American Indian nicknames for its teams?”, were published on August 4, 2003. Four-hundred twenty-two votes were cast (n=422); 87% percent responded “No” and 13% responded “Yes” to the elimination of American Indian nicknames for its teams.

The second online poll, which was published on April 5, 2004, asked “What color should be dominant in Public University’s new mascot design?” Three-hundred eighty-four votes were cast (n=384). A total of 66.9% of the people indicated the school color should remain red, which was what the University planned to do anyway. The third online poll, which was published on July 12, 2004, asked “What do you think of Redhawks as the new nickname for Public University teams?” Four-hundred eighty-three votes were cast (n=483); 51% of the respondents replied: “I hate it”; 27% said “I can live with it”; 17% said “I do not care”; and 6% said “I love it.”

Public University Student Newspaper

The review of the Public University student newspaper resulted in 19 articles and one “Letter to the Editor” relating to the mascot. Many of the articles were written to keep students informed of the various stages during the mascot change process. Most of the information was very similar to what was published in the local daily newspaper. The researcher searched every article and letter to the editor and found several opinions from students. Three articles focused on potential new mascot names, categorized as Code

Name: New Mascot Name. Five students and two staff members commented that having a mascot will promote school spirit and pride and provide a marketing tool for the University. These comments were categorized as Code O7: Marketing and School Spirit. In an August 2003 article, a senior football player said, "I'd like a mascot to rally around. I don't really care what it is."

Public University Mascot Website

The Public University Mascot website provided an anonymous outlet for all faculty, staff, students, and community members to provide comments about the Indian nicknames and suggestions for a new mascot. Information provided under the website titles of "Mascot Suggestions" and "Comments from Mascot Suggestions" were published for view by the public and the researcher printed them directly from the website. A document labeled "Suggestions Not Published" was found in the University Relations Department files. This information was not available to the public. Information regarding "Comments From the Ranking of Five Mascots" were gathered from the public website by the researcher.

Mascot Suggestions

As stated earlier in this chapter, a website was developed so that all faculty, staff, students, and community members could provide suggestions for a new nickname and mascot. A total of 672 mascot suggestions were found on the website. According to the researcher's counts, 243 people identified themselves as "Current Students", 235 indicated they were "Alumni or Friend of the University", 74 were "Faculty or Staff" members, 54 were "Related community members", 30 indicated they were "Future Students", 13 were from a "Parent of a Student", and 23 people did not specify their

relationship with the University. Totals from the Department of University Relations were slightly different than those of the researcher, as 374 people indicated they were “on campus” and 713 indicated they were “off campus,” for a total of 1087. Three-hundred eighty seven suggestions were not published.

Since the purpose of the “Mascot Suggestions” section of the website was to suggest a new nickname and mascot, many suggestions to retain the Indian nickname were filtered and not published. Most of the people who submitted suggestions for the mascot wanted the mascot to be related to or connected with the university, the region, or the state. Many animals, people, and a vegetable – Fighting Okra -- were suggested. Suggestions included everything from wolves, eagles, copperhead snakes, to catfish and people such as Lewis and Clark, explorers, and farmers. There were even four suggestions to bring back the “Red” mascot from the 1980’s. Three of them recommended that the “Red” mascot come back as “buff” or “with huge muscles”. A fifth person urged those people living in the past who wanted to bring back “Red” to “let it die peacefully.....please”.

In general approximately 10 people mentioned that their suggestion was “not offensive” or more “marketable” than the Indian names. Some of the suggestions were Indian-related. Four people recommended using an Eagle as the mascot because this bird can be linked to Native American culture. Four suggestions related to using arrows or arrowheads as part of the mascot or nickname. Eight comments suggested “spin offs” or something that sounds similar to an Indian name. For example, one person recommended the following: “The nickname Engines (Injuns) would allow us to get rid of the ‘offensive’ title of Indians without discarding all the old Public University merchandise.”

Fifteen people recommended keeping the Indian nickname. Six of them did not specify why it should be kept other than that they liked it or did not think it should be changed. One person stated, “Why should we change until other teams such as Florida State, Atlanta Braves, and Washington Redskins change their nicknames? One college changing their mascot isn’t going to set a standard”. This comment was coded under “Code S9: Other Sports Teams/Landmarks”.

Four comments were coded under Code S1: Honor, Respect and Pride. One person stated, “Personally, I feel that it would have been an honor to be a University mascot, unlike those who want/feel the need to change from the Indians.” Four comments were coded under Code S10: History, Heritage, Trail of Tears . For example, one comment provided was as follows:

The names give a sense of history to the college and help keep the memory of what happened during the Trail of Tears ‘alive’. For many if the current nicknames weren’t used – they would have not idea of the history related to Princess Otahki and the Trail of Tears other than the park name.

The issue of political correctness, Code S8, appeared eleven times. All comments were aimed at recommending something more “politically correct”. The mascot suggestions that stood apart from the others were the “Puppets”, “PC Pussy Cats”, and the “Weasels”, which represented the University’s attempt to succumb to pressure to change the mascot in the first place.

The code Admin/\$: University Administration was used three times. Three people commented about the people who want to change the nicknames. One suggestion

for a nickname was “Money”. The suggestion also included this phrase: “Because the tuition to go here keeps raising, and we are going to waste money on changing something like our mascot.”

Two comments were coded S5: Not Offensive. The comments were as follows: “It’s ridiculous and things have gotten out of hand at the fact we’re even considering a change because of ‘offensive’ reasons” and “Why Change? The current mascot does not degrade Indians.”

Three people were glad that the university was considering changing the mascot. Two individuals did not specify the reason, but one thought that the Indian mascot was “overdone and vanilla”. Three additional comments were coded Code O8: Marketing and School Spirit, Code O3: Harmful to Minorities, and Code O1: Stereotypes. The comment that was coded O1 stated:

Whoever wants to keep ‘Otaiki’ should at least do a little research before arguing about something they do not understand. First of all, the Cherokee have never had a ‘Princess’ in their social structure. That is a false label created by the Rotary Club. Princess Otaiki never existed and there is no record of Otaiki ever being a name or word in Cherokee history. However, words that sound similar to Otaiki are derogatory toward women. If people are honest and sincere about naming the team after an unfortunate woman who passed away during the Trail of Tears, then name the team the [real name] because that is the real name of the Cherokee woman who perished that winter. But I guess that probably doesn’t sound ‘Indian’ enough for most people. By insisting the women’s

team remain the Otahkians, people are only proving that they would rather honor the myth of ‘Indians’ rather than understand and represent truth about Native American culture.

Comments from Mascot Suggestions

Forty-one comments regarding mascot suggestions were received. There was no indication who submitted the comments (student, parent, alumni, etc.). Twenty-three comments supported the use of the Indian mascot, 12 opposed, 2 were duplicates, one was undecided, and 3 comments were unrelated to Indian mascots.

Four people thought it was a good idea to change the Indian mascot. They did not offer specific reasons but mainly thought it was a good idea to change the mascot. Two people indicated that Indian mascots promote stereotypes, categorized as Code 01: Stereotypes. Three comments characterized the Indian mascot as offensive, categorized as Code O3: Harmful to Minorities. One example of the comment is as follows: “Please consider using a different mascot than the Indians. It offends more people than most of us realize”.

Two people mentioned how other races are not used as mascots (Code 04: Racism): “I could not imagine an athletic team being called the Caucasians or the Blacks which would be the same idea”. Two people indicated that the NCAA discourages the use of Indian mascot names, categorized as Code 05: University/NCAA Policies. After taking a class on Native American culture, one student athlete mentioned, “I have learned that any symbol, custom, dance, costume, or song associated with Native Americans is considered sacred.” This comment was categorized as Code 06: Sacrilegious. Three

comments indicated that Public University is lacking school spirit and pride without the representation of a mascot, categorized as Code 07: Marketing and School Spirit.

Five people indicated that they supported the mascot but did not provide specific reasons. Five comments indicated that the Indian mascot honors Native Americans. For instance the comment “I come from an Indian background and I consider it an honor to have my heritage represented this way” captures this sentiment and is categorized as Code S1: Honor, Respect and Pride. Four comments indicated that the mascot is a tradition and should not be removed, categorized as Code S3: Tradition. For example:

May I remind you that one of my great grandmothers was a Cherokee and I'm damned proud of it. There is nothing wrong with tradition but your social political correctness turns my stomach in my thoughts of what used to be my alma mater.

Six comments related to the university's attempt to please a minority of people who are against the Indian mascot, categorized as Code S4: Why Change? “I would like to know where all the people are that want the name change because I can't find them.” One person indicated that the Indian mascot “is not meant to be disrespectful to the various native nations that were here before the Europeans came over” and was categorized as Code S5: Not Offensive.

One person stated, “You will never get another cent from this alumnus for taking away my love for Public University and the heritage it represented” and was categorized as Code S6: Alumni Support. Five comments related to political correctness and were categorized as Code S8: Political Correctness. One of the comments is as follows: “You people are what's wrong with the country. Breaking down traditions and removing

continuity with our children and generations because a few people think it's not politically correct.”

There were two references to professional sports teams and other high schools and universities that are not changing, categorized as Code S9: Other Sports Teams/Landmarks. One person indicated that the word Indian should be removed from every place at the university and several states should pursue name changes. One comment regarding the Trail of Tears was categorized as Code S10: History, Heritage, Trail of Tears.

Three comments were received from people claiming to be of Native American heritage. All supported the use of the Indian mascot and were categorized as Code NA-S: Native Americans Support. Three references were made to the mascot either making or spending money, categorized as Code Admin/\$: University Administration. Another comment indicated that statistics posted by the nickname/mascot committee were misleading to the public.

Suggestions Not Published

According to a list found in the University Relations Department file dated March 29, 2004, 223 mascot suggestions were not published. The website was filtered so that inappropriate suggestions and suggestions relating to the Indian mascot were not published. The IP Address was recorded for each entry, allowing the University Relations Department to monitor which comments were submitted off campus and which ones were submitted on campus.

The researcher found six duplicate comments and removed them. Comments that were received from duplicate, on-campus IP Addresses but had different comments were

not removed since they could have been sent from a computer lab. However, one off-campus IP Address was recorded as having transmitted 22 comments. It was noted by the University Relations Department that this was the same individual. It appears that this person kept trying to submit an Indian mascot/nickname suggestion and indicated this in his submissions several times. The person stated, “Is anyone listening? Do those of us who are normal and want to keep the Indian mascot get to be heard?”

The researcher reviewed the unpublished suggestions and found that 103 of the 223 comments pertained to the Indian culture or tradition. Thirty-nine of the comments were received from an “Alumni or Friend”, 31 were from “Current Students”, 2 were from “Future Students”, 6 were from “Faculty and Staff”, 10 were from a “related community member”, 12 were from “Parents of students”, and 3 were “unspecified”. Other comments were gathered that did not suggest the use of an Indian mascot but contained comments related to the Indian mascot or the process of changing the mascot. The researcher categorized the findings of the “Suggestions Not Published” into the several categories below.

Code S1: Honor, Respect and Pride. Fifteen people indicated that they would like to keep the Indian names because they honor Native Americans. For example one commented, “It is an honor to be a mascot for a school – not disrespectful. This can be an opportunity to educate people on Native American culture. PC is going too far here.” Three people associate the Indian name with “pride”. For example one commented, “I am Proud to be an Indian” and another commented, “If I had a ‘Native American’ heritage I would be proud that a football team was named after me”. Another comment indicated that Indians are “brave, noble, and sensitive to environmental issues”. One

comment indicated the name was “respectful” and another indicated it is a “tribute” to Native Americans.

Code S3: Tradition. A total of nineteen comments were categorized as Code S3: Tradition. Eleven people felt that the mascot should not change because of “tradition” and eight others felt that the University should keep the mascot because it is part of the history of the University.

Code S4: Why Change? A total of twenty eight comments were categorized as S4: Why Change? Sixteen people recommended keeping the Indian mascot and stated, “Why change the mascot?” and “There is no reason to change”. Twelve people commented that only a small number of people were complaining and the majority wanted to keep the nickname.

Code S5: Not Offensive. According to 28 people the mascot was not offensive, insulting, degrading, or disrespectful to Indians. Four of the 28 people claimed they were Native American. These 28 comments were categorized as Code S5: Not Offensive.

Code S6: Alumni Support. Three comments were categorized as Code S6: Alumni Support. All three people claimed they will not support the University any longer if the mascot is eliminated.

Code S8: Political Correctness. Thirteen people indicated they would like to keep the Indian mascot and that the University is succumbing to “political correctness” by wanting to change the Indian mascot. One person indicated to call them “Native Americans” since we cannot call them Indians. Another person said “people of Native American descent. Does this politically satisfy everyone?” One person thought that animal rights activists would protest if Public University used an animal mascot.

Code S9: Other Sports Teams/Landmarks. Ten people indicated that they would like to keep the Indian mascot and referred to other teams that have not changed such as the University of Illinois, Arkansas State, Florida State, and professional sports teams. For example an individual stated, “Mascot: Chief Illiniwek, Nickname: Fighting Illini. Their name and mascot apparently isn’t offensive because they get to keep it. Maybe we should try it.” Four people who wanted to retain the Indian mascot indicated a concern that now “we would have to change the names of rivers, parks, and states because they have Indian-related names”.

Code S10: History, Heritage, Trail of Tears . Fifteen references were made to “heritage” and “history of the area”. For example an individual indicated, “Our Indian names are in honor of those great people, and of this area that is so rich in heritage”. All of these people were in favor of retaining the Indian mascot. Four references were made to the “Trail of Tears”.

Code Admin/\$: University Administration. Eleven people indicated that the University is investing too much money in trying to change the mascot. Three people think the University is changing mascots to make more money. Five people indicate this is a waste of time and resources. One example is as follows: “It seems that some people have too much time on their hands.”

Code NA-S: Native American Support. Eight people who commented claimed to be Native American. One stated, “As an Indian I resent being deprived of the honor of being the representative symbol of a fine school and a fine group of athletes. Publish the specific names of the persons of Indian blood who object to Public University using that name.”

Fourteen people indicated that they would be interested in keeping the Indian mascot but did not provide a specific reason or justification. Twenty-three people recommended mascots and nicknames that were inappropriate and made reference to the mascot change process. Some of the mascot/nickname recommendations included “Pussy Cat with big Brown Nose/Brown Nose Cats”, “Nerdy/Tree huggers”, “Chicken/Cowards”, “Board of Directors/The Big Weinies”, “Some small whipped dog of some kind/Wimps”, “A White Guy/Honkeys”, “The University PC”, and “A Care Bear/Politically Correct Pansies”.

Only one of the 103 Indian-related comments was opposed to the use of Native American mascots. This comment indicated that the University should not keep the Indian name. He or she stated, “Don’t perpetuate racism with a name like ‘Indians,’” categorized as Code 04: Racism.

Comments from Ranking of Five Mascots

Three-hundred and twenty-four comments were posted during the ranking of the five mascots narrowed by the Nickname/Mascot Study Committee. Sixty-six comments related to keeping the Indian mascot. Forty comments were from current students, 10 from alumni or friends, 8 from faculty and staff, 3 from future students, 3 from community members, and 2 from parents. Twenty-two comments favored removing the Indian mascot. Thirteen were from current students, 5 were from faculty and staff, 4 were from alumni and friends, 1 was from a community member, and 1 was unspecified.

Thirty-seven people indicated they want to keep the Indian mascot, but did not provide a specific reason to support their opinion. Six people claimed that the Indian name should be changed but did not provide a justification for their opinion. The

remainder of the comments related to the five nicknames that were presented. The researcher analyzed the “Comments from the ranking of five mascots” and categorized the information into the following codes.

Code 01: Stereotypes. One comment from a faculty or staff member was categorized as Code 01. The faculty or staff member stated:

I am part Shawnee. The use of our race as a mascot is insulting to me. My reasons may differ from those of other Native Americans. When the term ‘Indian’ is used in association with white man’s play, one might think they (white folks) really appreciate us. They never have and this just rubs it in more. It’s almost like the situation with the poor who work in tourist areas in the Third World. They work as janitors and food preparers at resorts while the wealthy play. The poor are grateful to have jobs but resent the luxury of the wealthy foreigners on some of their finest land and beaches. I am not bitter...just very sad for how Native Americans have suffered and continue to suffer. They are forgotten in their current poverty and are reduced to mascots and western movies.

Code 03: Harmful to Minorities. Four comments indicated that the Indian mascot is insulting and offensive and needs to be changed. One individual commented, “I’m happy you finally decided to do away with the Indian nickname. I feel that it is offensive and I was kind of ashamed that we still had that nickname when I went to school there.”

Code O4: Racism. Seven comments indicated that the Indian mascot is racist. For instance, a person stated, “I understand how Native Americans can take offense to this. There are no schools with the Fighting Jews or Whities as a mascot.”

Code O5: University/NCAA Policies. One comment from an alumni or friend was categorized as Code O5: University/NCAA Policies. The person stated: “As an institution of higher learning Public University has an obligation to address this issue – respectfully retire the Indian and adopt a mascot and nickname that will bring new pride and tradition to the sports programs.”

Code O6: Sacrilegious. A comment from a current student was categorized as Code O6: Sacrilegious. The student stated, “I think that having an Indian mascot is really disrespectful to their culture. We might see it as honoring them, but they probably see it as us mocking them and their religious beliefs.”

Code NA-S: Native Americans Support. Six people claim to be part Native American and support the use of the Indian mascot, categorized as Code NA-S: Native Americans Support.

Code NA-O: Native Americans Oppose. One comment was categorized as Code NA-O: Native Americans Oppose. The person claiming to be part Native American stated that the “use of our race as a mascot is insulting to me.”

Code O7: Marketing and School Spirit. Six students, one alumnus or friend, and one community member commented that “we really need a mascot to help improve school spirit, identity, and recruitment.” A current student stated, “People are talking about not changing this at all...the university needs to stop listening to the outsiders and just change this, we need an identity.”

Code S1: Honor, Respect and Pride. Eight people indicated that the Indian mascot honors Native Americans. An alumni or friend stated, “Actually, I think this is silly to change the mascot. The Indian is our nation’s history and represents strength and courage. It should be an honor for a Native American to have their name associated with an institution of higher learning.” Five others commented about the respect and pride the mascot shows.

Code S3: Tradition. Four people indicated the mascot is a tradition, categorized as Code S3: Tradition. A future student stated, “I think there should be a choice of keeping the Indians. This is a long lived tradition.”

Code S4: Why Change? Two comments were categorized as Code S4: Why Change? A future student indicated that he or she has read about only one person offended by the Indian mascot. A current student said, “In my eyes this controversy casts a bad reputation on Public University. This truly shows that the minority counts more than the majority.”

Code S5: Not Offensive. Ten comments indicated that the Indian mascot does not degrade, disrespect, or offend Native Americans. A faculty or staff member stated, “I think we should keep the Indians. I don’t think it’s disrespectful. It was so impressive back when the Chief mascot would be spotlighted on the hill overlooking the football field. Why not let the student body AND the alumni vote on it?”

Code S6: Alumni Support and Code S8: Political Correctness. One comment was categorized as Code S6: Alumni Support. The alumni or friend stated, “Keep the Indian name or no donations ever.” Four comments related to “political correctness” were categorized as S8: Political Correctness. A current student stated:

I think it is silly to change the name in the first place, political correctness has gone too far. I myself am part Sioux Indian and it does not offend me that the University has the current nickname and mascot.

Code S9: Other Sports Teams/Landmarks. A total of eight comments were coded S9. There were seven references to other universities and professional sports teams with Indian mascots. One reference was made regarding names of parks.

Code S10: History, Heritage, Trail of Tears . Five comments were related to history and heritage. An individual stated, “It is wrong ...to sweep history under the rug and act like there were never any Indians in this area”. Five comments related to the Trail of Tears being in close proximity to Public University.

Code Admin/\$: University Administration. There was one comment coded in this category. The individual indicated, “I think changing the name is really dumb and will be really expensive.”

Conclusion

Common Themes

Comments Opposed to the Use of Native American Mascots

The most common theme among people opposed to the Indian mascot focused on marketing and school spirit. The Code O8: Marketing and School Spirit category was mentioned forty-three times. The second most common theme was Code 04: Racism. Sixteen comments were concerned that the use of a Native American mascot is racist. Code O3: Harmful to Native Americans and Code O5: University/NCAA policies were tied, with nine comments each. Code O1: Stereotypes was used for eight comments. Four comments indicated that Native American mascots are sacrilegious, categorized as

Code O6: Sacrilegious, and two comments indicated that Native American mascots are damaging to children, Code O2: Damaging to Children. One person claiming to be part Native American opposed the use of the Native American mascot. Twenty comments provided suggestions for a new nickname/mascot, categorized as Code Name: New Mascot Name.

Comments Supporting to the Use of Native American Mascots

The most common theme among Indian mascot supporters was Code S1: Honor, Respect and Pride. A total of seventy-two comments were coded in this category. The second most common theme, with seventy comments, related to negative comments about the administration, categorized as Code Admin/\$: University Administration. Sixty-five references were made to other sports teams and professional teams that did not change their mascots and the concern that all things named after Indians would need to be changed, categorized as Code S9: Other Sports Teams/Landmarks. Sixty-one comments were coded S8: Political Correctness and fifty-seven comments indicated that Native American mascots are not offensive, categorized as Code S5: Not Offensive. Fifty-six comments were coded S10: History, Heritage, Trail of Tears and forty-five comments were coded S4: Why Change?. Thirty-eight comments indicated that the mascot should not be removed because of tradition, classified as Code S3: Tradition. Twelve people indicated they will no longer support the university if the mascot is changed and these comments were coded as S6: Alumni Support. Thirty-two individuals claim to be part Native American and still support the use of Native American mascots.

Summary

Overall, one-hundred twelve comments were coded in opposition to the use of the Native American mascot at Public University. Five-hundred eight comments were coded in support of the use of the Native American mascot at Public University. A survey published by the Local Daily Newspaper on August 4, 2003, indicated that 55 people were in favor of changing the mascot and 367 wanted to keep the Indian mascot.

Another survey conducted by the university in June 2004 at the direction of the board of directors indicated that 50 percent of students were in favor of retaining the Indian mascot while 49.8 percent were in favor of a new mascot. To the board's surprise, 60 percent of alumni were in favor of a new mascot and 40 percent wanted to retain the Indian mascot. Three-hundred and eight students and alumni responded (n=308).

Many of the comments or opinions received refer to eradicating the Indian mascot at this university. Technically, this university has not had an Indian mascot for twenty years. The charge of this committee was to remove the Indian and Otahkian nicknames and adopt a new mascot.

CHAPTER 5: INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP

Interviews

The qualitative data included in Chapter 5 was collected using ten personal interviews and one student focus group. The researcher identified interview participants using a purposive sampling technique. The sample included university staff, faculty, retirees, alumni, and community members who were either involved in the process of changing the university mascot or were believed to have an interest in the issue. Ten participants were contacted by telephone and asked to participate in a personal interview with the principal investigator.

Nine participants agreed to answer a specific list of questions, sign a consent form, and consented to an audio-taped interview. The list of interview questions is located in Appendix C. One interview participant declined to answer the specific list of questions and refused to participate in the audio taping session. The participant wanted to provide information regarding the mascot change that was confidential. The information that was not confidential however, such as why the participant felt the university mascot should be changed, was summarized and included in the data analysis.

Focus Group

Twenty-one focus group participants were identified through convenience sampling techniques. The researcher identified one face-to-face, lower-level General Studies course and asked the instructor for permission to conduct a focus group during a class session. The students in the focus group were asked a specific list of questions and the session lasted approximately one hour. The list of focus group questions is located in

Appendix D. Each participant involved in the focus group signed a consent form and the session was audio-taped.

All participants in this study may be identifiable from raw data such as consent forms or audio tapes. All consent forms were coded with a number. This number was transferred to the audio tape transcripts. All consent forms and audio tapes are locked in a file cabinet belonging to the researcher.

Data Analysis

The researcher conducted a content analysis to analyze the data gathered from the interviews. According to Berg (2001), content analysis is used to analyze forms of “social communication” (p. 240) such as written communication or recorded verbal communication. This communication is transformed into written text and analyzed through the development of a code list. The code list is applied to the written communication “rigidly and consistently” (Berg, 2001, p. 240) so that other researchers who analyze the same information would find “same or comparable” (p. 240) results.

The interview data and focus group data were analyzed separately. The data analysis includes an analysis of the answers to interview questions and focus group questions. The data was summarized according to the corresponding question. As opinions regarding support or opposition to Native American mascots emerged, a content analysis was conducted using the Final Codes from Chapter 4. The “start list” of codes for this chapter can be found in Table 5.

Table 5

Start Codes (Final Codes from Chapter 4)

Code	Description
O1	Stereotypes - They promote stereotypes
O2	Damaging to Children - They are damaging to children – educational institutions should not promote stereotypes and racism
O3	Harmful to Minorities - They are harmful to Native Americans and other minorities
O4	Racism - They are racist
O5	University/NCAA Policies - They contradict University anti-discrimination policies and NCAA policies
O6	Sacrilegious - They are sacrilegious
O7	Marketing and School Spirit - Students and alumni want a mascot to help market the university and promote school spirit
Name	New Mascot Name - Suggestions for the new name of the mascot
NA-O	Native Americans Oppose - People who claim to be Native Americans and oppose the use of the Indian mascot
S1	Honor, Respect and Pride - They are intended to honor or respect Native Americans or are a source of pride
S3	Tradition - The mascot is a tradition
S4	Why Change? - “Why are we changing mascots” and “Only a small number of people (or minority) are complaining”

Code	Description
S5	Not Offensive - It is dignified, not offensive, and not intended to harm Native Americans
S6	Alumni Support - Alumni say they will stop supporting or contributing if mascot is changed
S8	Political Correctness - “The Indian’s oppose the mascot today – who will oppose next?” – political correctness
S9	Other Sports Teams/Landmarks - Reference to other schools or professional sports teams not changing mascots/References to changing names of landmarks, states, and parks
S10	History, Heritage, Trail of Tears - The mascot is a tribute to Native American history, heritage, or the Trail of Tears
Admin/ \$	University Administration - Complaints about the University Administration’s handing of the mascot and money spent or gained from this controversy
NA-S	Native Americans Support - People who claim to be Native Americans and support the use of the Indian mascot

The start code list was consistently applied to all qualitative data. As the researcher applied codes to the data, codes were modified and additional codes were added. The final codes are listed in Table 6. Some comments were coded multiple times. For example, if a person commented that using an Indian mascot is honorable and that the university is caving into political correctness, this comment was coded S1 and S8. After

all comments were coded, they were photocopied if multiple codes applied. The researcher sorted the comments in piles according to code and then analyzed the data for each code.

Table 6

Final Codes for Interviews and Focus Group

Code	Description
O1	Stereotypes - They promote stereotypes
O3	Harmful to Minorities - They are harmful to Native Americans and other minorities
O4	Racism - They are racist
O5	University/NCAA Policies - They contradict University anti-discrimination policies and NCAA policies
O6	Sacrilegious - They are sacrilegious
O7	Marketing, identity, and school spirit - Students and alumni want a mascot to help market the university and promote school spirit
S1	Honor, Respect and Pride – They are intended to honor or respect Native Americans or are a source of pride
S3	Tradition - The mascot is a tradition
S4	Why Change? - “Why are we changing mascots” and “Only a small number of people (or minority) are complaining”
S5	Not Offensive - It is dignified, not offensive, and not intended to harm Native Americans

Code	Description
S8	Political Correctness - “The Indian’s oppose the mascot today – who will oppose next?” – political correctness
S9	Other Sports Teams/Landmarks - Reference to other schools or professional sports teams not changing mascots/References to changing names of landmarks, states, and parks
S10	History, Heritage, Trail of Tears - The mascot is a tribute to Native American history, heritage, or the Trail of Tears
S11	Symbol of Strength/Fighting - The mascot is a strong symbol or symbol of strength and fighting

Findings from Interview Questions

General Questions

What is your affiliation with the university? Many of the participants had multiple affiliations. For example, one participant was a university alum, a former athlete, a former alumni association board member, and an athletic booster board member. Five of the ten participants classified themselves as university alum. Two were university staff and two were retired university staff. One university faculty member and two retired university faculty members were interviewed. One non-traditional student, two former athletes, and one former band member were interviewed.

Several participants indicated they were current or former university board members. Two were former alumni association board members, one was a former student government board member, and one is a current athletic booster board member.

Table 7 provides demographic and descriptive information about the ten participants included in this study.

How long have you been affiliated with the University? The graduation years of the five alums ranged from the 1950s through the 2000s. The only decade not represented was the 1980s. The other five non-alum participants became affiliated with the university in the 1970s or 1990s. This information is also included in Table 7.

Table 7

Interview Participants: Demographic and descriptive information

Descriptive Information of Participants	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
Alum	5/10	50%
Graduation Decade - 1950s	1/10	10%
Graduation Decade - 1960s	1/10	10%
Graduation Decade - 1970s	1/10	10%
Graduation Decade - 1990s	1/10	10%
Graduation Decade - 2000s	1/10	10%
Non-alum	5/10	50%
Affiliation Decade - 1970's	3/10	30%
Affiliation Decade - 1990's	2/10	20%
Staff	2/10	20%
Retired Staff	1/10	10%
Faculty	1/10	10%
Retired Faculty- Emeritus	2/10	20%
Non-traditional student	1/10	10%

Descriptive Information of Participants	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
Former Alumni Association Board member	2/10	20%
Former Student Government member	1/10	10%
Athletic Booster Board member	1/10	10%
Former athlete	2/10	20%
Former band member	1/10	10%
Full-blooded Registered Native American	1/10	10%
Registered Native American	1/10	10%
Indicated Native American descent	1/10	10%
Male	8/10	80%
Female	2/10	20%

General Importance of University Mascots

What is the importance of a University mascot/nickname? Most of the participants indicated several reasons why a university mascot or nickname is important. Six of the participants felt that a mascot helps create an identity for a university. Similarly, one participant said, “If you go to a game...the university stands for a mascot...If you have a name like the Indians, you expect to see the Indian...It’s important to the whole core of the game.”

Three participants felt that a mascot or nickname is a “rallying” point or symbol. Two participants indicated that a mascot could help “market” the university and one indicated that “they can generate revenue to...items that they sell with the

mascot...depending on what the mascot is”. Other opinions included “it probably brings enthusiasm”, “it should be something that you can be proud of”, “it is important to build a sense of community”, “they kind of unify the university behind some concept”, and “serves as sort of a focal point for the development of certain traditions.”

Does the mascot create more school spirit? Why or why not? Six participants felt strongly that a mascot does create more school spirit. One person felt that “it could if it’s the right mascot” and another felt that “it has the potential to...if you have a mascot that...meets the needs of the spectators...then...I think it can be a cohesive unifying factor in the athletic experience.” Another person said, “Probably yes. Not by itself necessarily, but it helps...school spirit is more than just a mascot...but it helps.”

Does this school spirit create more connected alumni? Why or why not? Five participants felt strongly that school spirit creates a more connected alumni. One participant stated:

Again, I don’t think there is any question about that. I think...the more you can create...spirit and pride in the institution, the more successful you are in keeping your alumni connected to the institution after they leave.

Other participants did not feel as strongly. One participant answered, “Well, we would hope so” and another answered, “I would think so”. Only one participant answered “No”. The participant stated:

I think...winning programs draw people in and I think that the mascot is...part of that, but if you have a successful athletic program, you are going to get a lot more alumni that are going to want to come see the mascot. So I think the mascot is part of it.

What is your level of awareness about the trend of removing Native American mascots around the country? The nine participants who were either involved in past attempts or the recent process of changing the university mascot were all very aware of the national trend of removing Native American mascots. Their answers included statements such as “probably quite a bit above average”, “I would think very keen”, “I’ve learned a whole lot more about it than it did before”, “I’m completely aware of that”, “It’s been highly documented and it’s been a hot button issue with the NCAA for a number of years”, and “I’ve studied it quite a bit and been involved in it...I’ve fought against it a lot.” The one person who was not involved in the mascot change process became aware of the issue due to the media coverage of highly publicized schools such as the University of Illinois but has not researched it and studied it like the participants who were involved in the mascot change process.

Researchers provide many reasons why Native American mascots and nicknames should be banned. How do you feel about the following statements? Indian mascots and nicknames are racist. Code O4: Racism. Seven of the participants indicated that Native American mascots are racist. All seven of the participants were involved in the mascot change process. Three of the participants felt very strongly that Native American mascots are racist. One participant stated:

They are, definitely. I feel real strongly about it. It is racist...I feel like if it was...any other race of people, they wouldn’t even consider it. You know, if it was...Jews or...the blacks, or whatever...They wouldn’t do it. So...it’s racist.

The other four participants did not feel as strongly. Most of them believed that a Native American mascot could be racist, but it is not always true in every instance. One of the participants stated:

Ya, ya, and...I could see why they would think it would be racist because you're...mocking a people, if you will. Whether intentional or unintentional...we thought we were honoring, carrying on the tradition of the Indian, but we weren't Indians doing it. You know, if you have an Indian doing it, it might be different. Well, we're a white man painting up...so its like...putting on...black face and...doing your...old minstrel shows and stuff like that. Uh, ya...because it's a race of people, hence racist. It could be construed that way. We didn't see it that way.

Code S1: Honor, Respect, and Pride. Two participants felt that Native American mascots honor Native Americans. One participant was not involved in the mascot change process. The participant said:

I don't think they are racist at all. I thought it was, it would be an honor...to have the university have a certain type of thing named after them, like a mascot. I thought it would be representative.

The other participant said that the mascot and other regional parks, centers, and teams are named in honor of Native Americans and that local residents feel that is an honor. The participant stated:

I can't put myself in their shoes because I'm not... I don't understand their, where they come from. They represent a race of people who unfortunately were...for lack of a better term, forcibly wiped out. At

Public University, I don't think that it was used in a racist way. I think that the Native American, if you look all over the region, and this was my point when people would say, 'This is racist and we should change'. I said, 'You know, you are not going to convince alumni of this for that reason'. We have the Trail of Tears, we honor Native Americans at the Trail of Tears State Park.

Code S10: History, Heritage, Trail of Tears. One participant felt that we are honoring Native Americans through the Trail of Tears, the mascot, and many other local landmarks that are named for Native Americans.

Indian mascots and nicknames create a hostile environment for all students.

Three participants did not agree with the statement. Four of the participants indicated that Indian mascots and nicknames have the potential to create hostility but it is not true in every case. Two of the participants felt that Indian mascots and nicknames create a hostile environment for Native American students. Neither of them felt that the Indian mascot creates a hostile environment for *all* students. One of the participants said:

I think it does create hostility...when they used to do the parades out here...I would watch the students out there and how they would act towards...with beating themselves on their chest...and just doing all kinds of hostile things and other teams hanging Indians.

The other participant mentioned that schools in North Dakota and South Dakota have issues because one school has a buffalo mascot and the other an Indian mascot. He also mentioned a story about a young Native American boy who was asked to play a mascot. The participant stated:

When they...play each other...some of the very, I mean its...immoral, things that they do with the Indian and the Buffalo. You can imagine what they do. So...ya...it does create a hostile environment. There's a story about a young Indian boy that was in some school in Minnesota and...they wanted him to...they had an Indian...nickname of some sort...and they knew that he was a Native American and they wanted him to go at...halftime and do an Indian dance and he did. And then they wanted him to do it again...and it got to a...point where, where the students got out of hand and it embarrassed him...they wanted him to do things that were not in Indian traditions. And...so it...causes a lot of the problems.

Indian mascots and nicknames provide an inaccurate depiction or stereotype of Native Americans. Only one participant disagreed with this statement. Code S1: Honor, Respect, and Pride. The participant said, "I always thought that it would be...if you have a state institution, university, representing a certain name I would think that would be an honorable thing. Of course, I'm not Native American, so it's just my opinion". This participant was not involved in the changing of the university's Indian mascot.

Code O1: Stereotypes. The other eight participants agreed that Indian mascots and nicknames provide an inaccurate depiction or stereotype of Native Americans. One participant stated:

Definitely does. Sadly, a lot of the schools do not even really teach about the Native Americans the way they are. I mean young children...You know when I go to schools to promote our culture, students - these young children, are not aware at all. You know it's all stereotyped and

everything. I think a university. They are a teaching school and they are the ones that are supposed to stand up to teach their students so that they can teach in schools and it is very stereotyped and they get the wrong impression and the mascot just adds to that.

Indian mascots and nicknames are sacrilegious (mascot costumes mock those used in religious ceremonies). Code 06: Sacrilegious. Six participants agreed that Indian mascots mock Native American culture. Three of the six participants specifically mentioned that the mocking is usually unintentional (the university and constituents believe they are honoring Native Americans).

The other three participants disagreed. One participant in particular mentioned how much effort they exerted to render the former Indian mascot costumes authentic.

The participant stated:

I think anyone who goes to the trouble of researching any kind of Indian ceremony and trying to depict...originality comes to the conclusion quickly that you are not in it for the mocking, you are in it to try to create a world of reality or originality...to me that doesn't reek of racism. It reeks of trying to find something and trying to do something it a correct manner.

Two participants said they really didn't know but acknowledged that others could feel that Indians mascots and nicknames are sacrilegious. Neither one of them viewed the use of Indian mascots as disrespectful or sacrilegious. Both comments were categorized as "Code S5: Not Offensive."

Indian mascots and nicknames go against antidiscrimination policies of Universities. Code O5: University/NCAA Policies. Six participants agreed that Native American mascots go against anti-discrimination policies of university. All six were involved in the mascot change process. Two of the participants believed that the use of Native American mascots could be discriminatory to Native Americans while four of the participants felt very strongly about this. One participant, who is Native American, said:

I think it is kind of a form of discrimination. Like I said, they wouldn't do it with any other race...With any other race, there would be no question. They wouldn't even think about it. When they do it with us. It's like it's no big deal. So, ya, that would be discrimination.

Code 03: Harmful to Minorities. One participant thought that Native Americans were more “downgrading” than discriminatory to Native Americans. The participant said:

It is downgrading... because... they don't handle it properly...Even the sound of the drums means something...they're just...not out there goofing around...like they do at games. All these things, the feathers, the dance, the steps, and...the beating on the drums...all have meaning to these people. And when they go to a game, if you are a Native American, you see...them being bastardized...its hurtful.

Historical Information Regarding the Public University Mascot

There have been many different University mascots over the years. Describe the ones you can remember at Public University. What meaning do they possess for you (or

the school)? Three of the participants remembered the Chief mascot from the 1960s.

One participant stated:

He [the Chief] and his 'squaw'...I guess we called her back in those days...wasn't any big deal, you didn't think a thing about it, they would stand on the rock over there...before the football game raise his arms, fire, oh, it was cool... from this Trail of Tears and all this Indian...history it was a very natural thing and then with my scouting background and all that just...fit right in. So we enjoyed it...it was a pretty natural thing and so that was our...rallying cry...and we never thought about it. What the opponents said or...'scalping' or anything wasn't any big deal in those days...now it is.

Another one of the three participants that remembered the Chief said:

I think honestly in the beginning, I really think the mascot was set up more for a thing of honor and I honestly don't think Public University ever set it up to discriminate or to hurt us in any way.

Two participants remembered the Chief during the 1970s. His appearance changed from a solemn respectful Indian to an Indian who ran around in sneakers. One participant described him as "a male mascot that came out in his Indian outfit and a pair of Nikes. It just didn't go". Another participant said:

I can remember seeing the Indian dressed up and running down the street here...you know kind of a costume kind of thing. It wasn't a thing of the proud Indian at that time. It was more of a mascot to make fun of, to mock at.

Three participants remembered the “Big Red” mascot during the 1980s and one participant remembered the “Thunderbird” mascot. The mascots had no special meaning to any of the participants. One participant commented that “they were all kind of ridiculous.”

There have been several attempts to change the University mascots in the past. Were you involved in those attempts? If yes, please explain your involvement and your view of what happened. Only one participant was involved in past attempts to change the mascot. The participant said he was involved in attempts to change the mascot from the 1980’s through 2001. None of the attempts to change the mascot were successful. Another participant said he was not involved but “on the periphery”. He said:

I remember I was chair of the [faculty] senate at one time and...as a result of that position I was on the...executive committee...whatever they call that, with the President, and others, about four or five people. I remember a few discussions in there...and then I remember...a discussion with the former president...and...how his plan was to create a distance. I cannot remember what capacity I was working with him...but...I just remember discussions...what were I think failed attempts but they really weren’t because they were necessary to get us to the position at some late date.

Preference to Change Public University Mascot

How do you feel about the University’s decision to change the Indian nickname/mascot? Nine participants indicated they were in favor of the university’s decision to change the mascot. One participant preferred to keep the Indian nickname but understood why it needed to be changed.

Why was it important to change (or not to change)? Eight participants cited specific reasons why it was important to remove the Indian nickname/mascot. Two participants believed that pressure from the NCAA played a significant role in changing the mascot. One participant said:

They were pretty well forced into it and that kind of got it started and I think truth be known they kind of used the Indians to make themselves look good at it. I think they would have changed it no matter what...Honestly, I don't think we had a whole lot of effect on doing it. I think it was going to be done one way or the other. That's my opinion. I might be wrong! That's how I felt.

Code O7: Marketing, identity, and school spirit. Three participants felt that the mascot should be changed because the university and its constituents had no identity or nothing to embrace. Two participants felt that the mascot would help to market, promote, and recruit students to the university. Code O3: Harmful to Minorities. One participant felt that the mascot/nickname needed to be changed because it is inappropriate for a university to use one particular minority group to represent a mascot.

First of all, I think no institution of higher education should have a minority as a mascot. That goes against what higher education is supposed to be. Uh, it focuses on, usually one aspect of [a] minority's culture and it is usually erroneous and...they kept picking Indians because they said they wanted to honor them, all these different schools. Well, uh, you didn't end up honoring somebody if you misrepresented them...I just

don't think it has any place in higher education. I think it is racist and I think it's...belittling any group that you claim to be honoring. I think it works just the opposite.

Why do you think the University decided to change mascots? Many of the participants mentioned several reasons why the University decided to change mascots. Five participants stated that the University changed mascots because of pressure from the NCAA. Two participants mentioned that the University changed it due to political correctness. Six participants mentioned reasons such as marketing, promotion, identity, and student recruitment.

Do you feel this is an important decision for the University? Why or why not? Nine participants felt as though it was an important decision for the University to make. Five of the nine participants mentioned that it generated a rallying point and enthusiasm for the athletics programs. Other participants mentioned that it allowed the University to properly market itself, it was an important decision for the students, it was a "growing up" decision for the university, and it helped remove "the negative that it did bring towards Native Americans." One participant did not feel it was an important decision. The participant said:

I don't think it was an important decision. I think it was a decision...The university didn't have anything to do with it. The NCAA said that they were going to have to change it or...else. The University just had to change it...I don't think the university would have changed from the Indians if there would have been no...issue with the Native Americans. I don't think they would have ever changed the Indian.

Process of Changing the Public University Mascot

What was your involvement with changing the University mascot? Please describe. Seven of the participants were very actively involved in changing the University mascot. They either served as a member of the mascot committee or worked very closely with the committee. Many of them sought opinions from alums and students, developed mascots and sorted through potential nicknames, worked through all the issues and opinions that surfaced, and developed a plan to convince the Board of Regents that the mascot should be changed.

One participant was involved with the very beginning stages of the mascot change. He served on student government when they were seeking input from students regarding the possibility of changing the mascot. The two remaining participants were not involved in changing the University mascot.

How do you feel about the process the University used to change the mascot? Seven of the participants felt as though the formal and public process used to change the mascot was very inclusive and successful. They felt as though seeking input from students, community members, alumni, faculty and staff was critical to the process. One participant also mentioned the educational processes that they had to complete along the way. The participant spent a lot of time educating different groups about the arguments that oppose the use of Native American mascots.

Two participants specifically mentioned parts of the process that were considered “behind the scene”. There were many very important parts of the process that were confidential and unknown to the public. The tenth participant had very mixed feelings about the process. The participant mentioned that the University did not live up to its

promise to honor the Indians, provide educational programs, and a proper memorial site for the Indian mascot. The participant said:

There were a lot of promises being made. Things they were going to do. Things they didn't do at all. You know, like I said. It's like once that issue is over with. It's like, 'Good. It's gone. Let's forget about. You know we've got the Indians behind us. We are moving on'. Nothing else has ever been said and done about it again. It's just a bad memory they don't want to remember.

Question Added During Interview 1

Do you think alumni (or students) have embraced the new mascot? Nine participants said that the alumni and students have embraced the mascot. Six of the nine mentioned in particular how students have really embraced it and made it a success. One participant said, "I think that it has been better received and more successful than I ever thought it would be, personally."

Do people still complain about the university's decision to retire the Indian mascot/nickname? Five participants mentioned that they still hear an occasional complaint about the mascot change. One participant stated:

And we have people...who...will not take a Redhawk hat at Booster barbeques and things like that. 'No I'm an Indian'. They bring their Indian hat. And that's fine because...when we leap over at a booster barbeque and a man comes up to me and says 'I'm wearing my Indian hat.' If I attacked him, I am guilty of the same kind of discrimination. He has a right to wear his Indian hat...I'm pleased with it. I think it has been

well accepted. It will never be accepted in some circles. But, I think we made the right decision for the times and we stood up for what we believed was right for future students and it is just basically a mascot. It is not something to burn the bridges with.

Findings from Focus Group Questions

General Questions

What is your affiliation with the university? All twenty-one participants were at least eighteen years old and students in an introductory-level General Studies course. Eighteen of the participants were female and three of the participants were male.

How long have you been affiliated with the University? Two students completed dual credit classes with Public University during high school. One student was enrolled in classes at Public University in 2006. The remainder of the class became affiliated with the Public University in August 2008.

Can anybody...define a school mascot for me? Or do you know of a school mascot? Do you know what our school mascot is? One person answered, "Public University's mascot." Another student said "Chief Illiniwek."

Do you think a mascot creates more school spirit? Several students said "Yes." Four students discussed how a mascot gives them "something to cheer for", helps connect them to the university and can be a source of pride. The first participant said, "Well it is something to cheer for...kind of an object that you can cheer for". The second participant said, "I don't know about this one...but...in high school I remember all the pep rallies and the things like that...We had a Wildcat and whenever he would come

across the floor...it would...give you a reason to scream and go crazy. The third participant said:

I think it connects you with the university more because it is something that's always, you can be like, 'Hey, you know, that's what we are cheering for'. We're cheering for our school and that's just the symbol that kind of connects a human or something physical, than just a name.

The fourth participant said:

I also think its kind of a connection...just think...how many people you see like walking around...with the apparel on that...shows off...who we are. It kind of makes you...proud even if you really don't attend the games or anything. It just makes you kind of proud of your school.

So it maybe goes beyond athletics, you think? Several students agreed.

So what do you know about... this trend of removing Native American mascots across the county? Who knows anything about this? Two students indicated that they were aware of this trend. One of the participants stated, "I've heard about it a little bit. I don't really know a lot about it but I heard that they were trying to do it and I don't think they should."

So, you don't feel that they should be removed? The researcher asked this question to the participant who was quoted in the previous paragraph. This student and eight others provided opinions about the removal of Native American mascots. Two of the students provided opinions that were coded multiple times. For example, one student thought a new symbol would break traditions at the university and did not feel the mascot

was a derogatory to Native Americans. The first part of her comment was categorized as Code S1: Honor, Respect, and Pride. She stated:

It's a symbol of strength and perseverance and athleticism...so I would think that they would see it more as...a privilege to...have a mascot as an Indian. Of course, I'm not, so I don't really know...I just see it more as strength and... something positive.

Code S3: Tradition. Two students felt that removing a Native American mascot breaks a tradition at the school or university. One student stated that "having to change it will probably break school spirit a lot, because now they have a new symbol they don't really have such a tradition with". Another student stated:

Um, well my high school [mascot] is...Indians, so I feel more of a connection...Public University used to be, but I'd be...I guess I'd feel disconnected...from the other alums of the high school who graduated after, if they were changed, cause we've always been the Indians.

Code S5: Not Offensive. Two students indicated that Native American mascots are not derogatory or offensive. One student stated:

I mean, It's not like a derogatory thing. It's not like they're being, it's just a, and it's probably in a lot of cases been there for years and years and years and years. And, you know, it wasn't meant as like being a mean thing, even when it was first originated it was. It is not now.

Another student stated:

Uh, I think if it is like offensive to whatever tribe I guess, that their in, I guess if it is offensive to them then we should. But I mean, I don't really, like she said, it's not really, um, derogatory towards them.

Code S8: Political Correctness. One student indicated that Native American mascots are being removed due to political correctness. Code S10: History, Heritage, Trail of Tears . One student mentioned the University of Illinois, the removal of Chief Illiniwek, and the history of Indians in Illinois. The student stated:

Ok. Well, I'm, I don't see what the big deal is, like I was a big Illinois fan and like whenever I was little, like, we would always go to the football games and they'd have Chief Illiniwek come out and he'd dance during half-time and now they can't do it anymore. It was like a big symbol of the university and now that it's just an "I" like it's still, like, there but the fact that they can't show it anymore and I don't see why they're so offended because it's just, like, history of Illinois, like, the Illini tribe.

Code S11: Symbol of Strength/Fighting. A new code emerged in this focus group. During this question one student indicated that a Native American mascot is "a symbol of strength and perseverance and athleticism."

Code 03: Harmful to Minorities. Two students felt that Native American mascots could be harmful to Native Americans. One student stated that it was not derogatory, "but I mean if they have like a personal problem with it, or like their tribe does, then I guess we should respect that and stop using it". Another student stated:

I could see where they would think it would be mocking their culture. I mean this guy is just dancing around and says it's part of, like, says he embodies what it's like to be a Native American, when Native Americans are really underrepresented so I could see where it would be mocking.

Researchers indicate that Indian mascots and nicknames are racist. So what's your feeling on that? Do you think they are racist? One student asked why Native American mascots are considered racist now. The researcher explained that many Native American mascots were adopted in the 1920s before the equal rights movement of the 1960s and 70s. The student asked:

Well what makes it racist now?...wasn't it racist when they first came up with it? Like when they first came up with the mascot, like, shouldn't they have said it was racist then? Why are they all of the sudden being like, 'Oh. It's racist.'

The researcher also explained that a female student at University of Illinois was offended by Chief Illiniwek's dance performance at a basketball game during the late 1980s and started this movement toward the removal of the Native American mascot. A student responded with this statement: "If it was a problem when, what the mascot did when it came out then why wouldn't they just remove that part of the, um, that part of it, instead of taking the entire mascot away?" The researcher explained that they could remove the offensive part and keep the mascot but then the university is left with a mascot that cannot be used.

So does anybody have a feeling about the racism? After some discussion and explanation, eight students provided opinions regarding Native American

mascots. They were coded and multiple codes were used if applicable. One student felt that the female student from the University of Illinois should be honored by Chief Illiniwek, categorized as S1: Honor, Respect and Pride. The student stated:

Like, we don't sit there and like, ha, ha, look at that Indian being seen like that, that's funny and making fun of them. Like, people find pride in that. I mean, she should be honored by that, I think.

Code S3: Tradition. One student feels that the Indian mascot tradition could remain and anything, such as a dance, that mocks Native Americans could just be removed. The student stated:

If it is something that's, like, it's a ceremony, or somebody is doing something that is offending them. A big part of mascot, is, like you said, its been there since the 20s, it's a tradition, it's part of the school...if they were here to change the mascot...I wouldn't feel connected as much with anybody who was like, who supported the new mascot, you know, new students, because I, there just wouldn't be as much of a connection, and for all the alumni and all the current students at these schools, if they could just take out something like a dance that's mocking, and it is, you know, some of that it is rude, just take that out and then they can keep that same tradition and just. I mean, it's not like our current mascot walks around like flapping his wings like a bird necessarily. He's, you know, cheering and doing something a bird doesn't necessarily do. The same thing, the Indian, could walk around cheering and everything and doing

something non-characteristic of an Indian, you know. There's no reason why they couldn't keep that mascot.

Code S8: Political Correctness. Seven opinions were related to political correctness. Three people mentioned how everything has to be politically correct.

The first student said:

At the same time, are we going to remove every single offensive thing in the entire world? Some people are going to be offended by things sometimes. It's kind of just how it is. Not everybody is going to be happy all of the time.

Another student stated, "I think everyone is getting a little touchy now a days.

Like especially, like we are cracking down on everything. The third student stated:

Everything has to be politically correct. Like you said earlier, I shouldn't say guys, I shouldn't say guys, it's been a girl. Come on. Obviously you don't mean only boys. You know, oh you can't say guys anymore, you can't say "guys". It's offensive. You know, at a certain point we are completely censoring our entire culture to make every single person happy. Somebody is always going to be offended. It's kind of just how it is. You can't please everyone.

The other four opinions related to political correctness referred to other nationalities or cultures that are offended by mascots. For example, one student said, "I think there are other people here that could be offended too. I could say, I'm from Trojan descent and I'm offended by the Trojans". Two students mentioned the Irish, Angels, Saints, or Spartans and that no one is offended by those. One student stated, "if there was

the Cleveland Africans, and people were offended by it, you know, like you would probably have to change it”.

Code S10: History, Heritage, Trail of Tears . Two students mentioned the use of Native American mascots as a historic aspect of the United States. One student stated, “I see that as like a symbol of our country, we’ve got the Indians, and we have like the Patriots.” The other student stated:

Native Americans, they were here first, you know, and um the Hispanics they came into the culture, whenever, you know, and Asians, you know, they are not a symbol of America and Indians were here before and so that’s kind of why we use Indians as mascots because of that history and so with that, we just don’t use it.

Code S11: Symbol of Strength/Fighting. Three students indicated that Native American mascots were either “strong” or “fighter-type” mascots. One student stated, “I think people want like a mascot that’s strong”, one student stated that “when they came up with these mascots, they were looking at it as a strong symbol”, and the other student stated that “we’ve got the Indians, and we have like the Patriots, and these fighter-type mascots”.

Code O3: Harmful to Minorities. Only one student felt that if the Native American mascots were offensive to Native Americans, they should no longer be used.

The student stated:

That’s kind of how I feel, I think that they originally, when they came up with these mascots, they were looking at it as a strong symbol, something that has had a downward spiral, you know, in the United States, and in our

own history, so it probably, you know, originally didn't intend for it to be offensive in any way. It was just looked at as a strong symbol as like, you know, um symbol, but, you know, then, like you said, times have changed, maybe things are kind of getting adopted or that are maybe trying to stretch the truth, or stretch things a little bit too far and I think at that point then it shouldn't matter, you know, what the students think and what they're used to and that, because, you know, they will adapt to whatever, and its its probably best to go with what the, you know, if the Indians are offended by it then they should probably not do that.

Code O4: Racism. Only one student felt that Native American mascots could be racist. The student stated:

I can see why it's offensive, though, I keep thinking about why it would be offensive and there's no other, when you think of all, like, all the mascots, you never hear of any other race who is put into a mascot position. Like I don't see any Asian mascots, or African American mascots, and most mascots are, most mascots are like birds, or objects and not a lot of people, so.

Do you think that having a Native American mascot creates a hostile environment for any student? Do you think there could be a problem? One student answered with this statement: "I could see it being one, but it just seems very immature. I don't know...people would have to be very immature, to make it a big deal...and that is their own personal choice." Another student answered "No" after further clarification of the question.

Do you think that Native American mascots create an inaccurate stereotype of what a Native American really is? Or do you just not know? Two students had similar opinions regarding stereotypes. The first student stated:

Um, I don't, I think it does create a stereotype but um the stereotype was already there. And maybe not of Chief Illiniwek, as in, of um, maybe, the main type of Native American, but I would think that's what a Chief would dress like because that's how I've always known it. The headdress and like moccasins or whatever. Um, but I don't think it. You are going to have stereotypes everywhere no matter what, and so I don't think that it's creating a bad stereotype.

The second student stated:

But there's going to be a stereotype for like every kind of race. I mean, you know, when you see this Indian, you do think of them. When you think of white people, I mean, do you ask like a different culture what they think of white people, like they would stereotype us and I mean what you think of African Americans and there's a stereotype there. I mean, there's always going to be a stereotype but no matter what kind of culture it's gonna be.

Code S5: Not Offensive. One student indicated that Native American mascots do not create a bad stereotype. The student said, "I mean, it's not a bad stereotype at all. I mean it's just what they wear when they get together for their ceremonies". Another student responded with this statement: "That's what we think. That's what we think we know. That's all we know."

Code O1: Stereotypes. Two students indicated that universities have to be concerned about stereotypes they are condoning. The first student stated, “Well, the university is condoning the stereotype regardless if it’s good or bad. They are saying this is our school and we’re backing that this is what Indians do and how they dress and this is their culture”. The other student said, “I think that you should respect that universities have a, like a, right to kind of try to limit like what they are condoning.”

One student indicated that “it wouldn’t be mocking if they used and were believing in the traditional dance of Indians”. Another student mentioned how Native Americans are much more sentimental. The student stated:

But, they don’t, like, from what I know, everything, they’re a lot more sentimental, their dress and everything like mean something, everything means something, more to them, and we are just like “oh, he’s just dancing”. Well to them, no, that’s uh, you know, whatever kind of dance, or rain dance, or I don’t know, you know, it’s like, it’s something. It means something to them. When, it really, it wouldn’t, I wouldn’t even think anything about.

Code S10: History, heritage, and Trail of Tears. Two opinions indicating that Native American mascots portray an accurate history of Native American culture were expressed. One student stated, “I mean it’s history. It’s a fact.” Another student stated:

It’s how they used to [dress], it’s the history, that I mean, there’s, it’s, you can’t say that Indians at one point weren’t like that. This is history. At one point, you know, we wore bonnets, and you know, cultures change. At one point, that is an accurate depiction of what Native Americans

looked like. That may not be what they look like present day. That may not be the modern Indian. But the mascot was not made yesterday, it was made in 1920, you know, and the stereotype is, yes, that's what a Native American would look like, but back then. And it goes along with their tradition of what the mascot has always been and...

What's the university's obligation? We are an institution of education...are we miseducating what it is to be Indian or are we providing...? Before the researcher could finish the question a student said, "Are we miseducating that birds wear clothes when we put a t-shirt on our mascot? Nobody believes that birds wear clothes. I mean it's up to the person". Another student responded with, "But they're [birds] not people. That's different". The first student responded back with, "My point is it is up to the person to learn what is right and what is wrong". This exchange between two students continued with two more statements from each student. The second student said:

Well, obviously a bird isn't big and red and wears a t-shirt. I mean, but this is a person and they are wearing garb that everyone thinks is traditional garb, and you are kind of saying that this is, even if you don't intend, that's not your intention, you are kind of saying this is what Indians are. We are going to put this on display and people are going to take shots.

The first student responded with this statement:

If you can't wear that...it shouldn't be allowed that people can dress like Indians for Halloween...get rid of that...cause...that...puts that stereotype too because...kids go around with feathers in their head...and...moccasins

and stuff, that's the exact same thing and no one is like really thinking about it.

Following this exchange of opinions from students, one student asked, "Was it just one person who complained about it and that's what changed the mascot or was it several..." The researcher proceeded to explain what Charlene Teters did at the University of Illinois in 1989. Charlene stood up for her beliefs and protested with signs in front of athletic stadiums. The researcher also explained that some universities, such as Stanford, were very proactive and decided to remove their Native American mascots before anyone complained.

Code S4: Why Change? One student felt very strongly that Native American mascots should not be removed if only a small number of people are complaining. The student stated:

Well, I'm thinking, because if there's only a couple people who are offended by it and the other ones are fine with it, I don't understand why we have to change just because a couple people say that they were offended by it. Um, I just think that it should go with the majority. I mean if all of the Native Americans thought that this was bad and they were all offended by it, then, ya, I mean change it, but, if there's only a couple of them it's not really speaking for the entire, entire Native American culture.

The researcher then explained that part of the reason there are few people complaining is that Native Americans comprised a very small percentage of the people in the United States. Therefore, they do not have as much political power as ethnic groups

with larger populations. One student commented that “well, obviously it is though if this one lady...started it and got it changed”. One student felt that a student should just attend another school if they are offended by the mascot. The student stated:

Honestly, if somebody is offended by it, like a new person is offended by the mascot being an Indian they don't have to go to that university.

Maybe they can go somewhere where there's an animal or an object rather than an Indian. Don't sink your money into it if you are that offended by it. You don't have to be there. That is your choice to go to that university.

Another student responded with “that's not really fair.” Students discussed how Charlene Teters should have known there was an Indian mascot at the University of Illinois and some mentioned how they may be offended if Americans were being portrayed as Hillbilly mascots. Another student said that Indian mascots are not portrayed negatively, categorized as Code S5: Not Offensive. The student stated: “So the way we are doing it I don't see it in a negative way. We are not going around with a bow and arrow killing animals or anything. It's just dancing.”

So you don't see this as sacrilegious. Does anybody see this as sacrilegious? Some of you said that it could potentially, I guess, go against religious... One student stated:

If you are truly really mocking one of their specific dances, like if they are specifically calling, meaning to call out, one of their ceremonies and specifically trying to mock that ceremony, then yes, that is very rude and that is uncalled for- if they are particularly calling out that dance.

Code S5: Not Offensive. The same student also said, “If you’re just dancing...and she takes it as ‘Well, that looks like that’ and now...you are making it more than it is. He is dancing around. He is not trying to make fun of you, he is just dancing”. Another student said, “It’s really for entertainment.”

Two students agreed that since they are not Native American, they could not judge what is offensive or not offensive. One student mentioned that team names such as “Redskins” are racist but others based on tribes, such as the Sioux, could be acceptable if the tribe oversees the mascot. The researcher explained the negative connotation behind the term “Redskins”, actions such as tomahawk chops, and chants like “scalp em”.

So I guess, I mentioned uh, discrimination, um, is it discriminatory to use this kind of mascot? Feelings on discrimination? Do you feel like we are discriminating against people by having a mascot that’s [an Indian?] One student indicated that Native American mascots honor Native Americans, categorized as Code S1: Honor, Respect, and Pride. Two students indicated that Native American mascots do not discriminate against Native Americans, categorized as Code S5: Not Offensive.

Code S11: Symbol of Strength/fighting. One student discussed how the “Fighting Irish” mascot is similar to Native American mascots. The student stated:

Well, like fighting Irish, we are not saying that all Irish are going to get in a huge brawl, you know. The mascot is something that, it is a symbol of fighting, you know, the Fighting Irish, they’re strong, they’re going to win, you know. And we are not. It’s not like somebody who’s Irish is going to say, “Well, I’m not going to go there”. No, they are honored by it, you know, they are proud to be the Fighting Irish.

Code O1: They promote stereotypes. One student indicated that Native American mascots promote a generalization of the Native American culture. The generalization of a culture or race of people can be defined as a stereotype (Wood & Wood, 1999).

I think it creates a really big generalization. Like we are just being so general with everything that you can get mixed up. It's easy to, like, give someone false information. Like regardless of ...our intentions..we are just giving this huge generalization of this culture and people just look at it and they are just like 'Ok'. They just kind of have that picture in mind.

So, how do you...feel about us changing from the Indians mascot? Anybody have any thoughts about it? Two students mentioned that changing the Indian mascot affected alumni more than it affected current students. One of the students stated:

Um, I don't think it was like me personally that was, because I'm more connected with the Redhawk, but like my dad attended school here and like he still calls them the Indians, sometimes, like, "Oh the Indians, I mean the Redhawks", because when he went here that's what he associated with. So it doesn't really affect us as much as the alumni.

The other student said:

I feel like it's disconnected us from the alumni like she said. Her dad is rooting for two different teams, kind of sort of. You know, he said first "The Indians, or she calls us the Redhawks" so we are disconnected from, like, the alumni, like.

Three students brought some humor and perspective into the conversation. They all agreed that the school mascot did not play a major role in choosing the university.

One stated, “I just feel like I’m here for an education, I don’t care” The other student said, “Sorry, um, does it make a difference?” and the third student said, “Ya, I didn’t pick this school because of the mascot”.

Does anybody know why we finally did it? After 20 years of talking about it. Anybody know why we actually did it? Why we changed? One student answered with “because it’s a controversy?”

The researcher explained several reasons why the university changed mascots. The first reason was the disconnect of the alumni who were “Indians”. The university could not embrace or use the term “Indians” and could not market the term to alumni, current, or prospective students. The second reason was pressure from the NCAA to change mascots or the university could not participate in post-season competition. After this explanation, one student stated that the NCAA was discriminating against universities by not allowing them to participate because they have Native American mascots: “Right, but isn’t the NCAA discriminating against people with Indian mascots at that point?” Another student said:

I think it’s just how you look at it, some people are offended by the Indian and some people aren’t. Maybe if she was like called like a hillbilly or whatever she would be offended by it. Where I come from like I live way out in the country. A lot of people don’t take like being called a like a hick or like “country” as an offensive term. That’s like our way of lifestyle, like we would rather live out in the country than live in the city. I mean it just depends on your view.

I think students have accepted the mascot. Do you guys feel happy about the new mascot and nickname? Many students said “Yes”. One student stated, “We are all fine with it, but again, we weren’t here for any part of the Indians. I mean so, a bunch of people didn’t even know we were the Indians until you just told us.”

Conclusion

Common Themes

Comments Opposed to the Use of Native American Mascots

Ten Personal Interviews. The most common theme among people opposed to the Indian mascot was Code 01: Stereotypes. When participants were asked if Native American mascots create stereotypes, eight participants agreed. The second most common theme was Code 04: Racism. Seven participants agreed that Native American mascots could be considered racist. Six participants agreed that Native American mascots can be sacrilegious - Code 06: Sacrilegious - and six participants agreed that Native American mascots could violate university and NCAA anti-discrimination policies - Code 05: University/NCAA Policies.

Five participants thought that the mascot needed to be changed to promote marketing and school spirit – Code 07. Specifically, students and alumni did not have a mascot to embrace and a new mascot would help market, promote, and recruit students to the university. Two comments indicated that Native American mascots are harmful to minorities, which was categorized as Code 03: Harmful to Minorities.

Student Focus Group. There were very few opinions that were opposed to the use of Native American mascots. Three opinions indicated that Native American Mascots create stereotypes, categorized as Code 01: Stereotypes. Three opinions also indicated

that Native American Mascots are harmful to Native Americans and was coded as Code O3: Harmful to Minorities. One participant felt that Native American mascots are racist and was coded as Code O4: Racism.

Comments Supporting the Use of Native American Mascots

Ten Personal Interviews. Very few opinions supported the use of Native American mascots during the ten personal interviews. Three participants felt that Native American mascots honored Native Americans, categorized as Code S1: Honor, Respect, and Pride. Two participants felt that Native American mascots are not offensive, categorized as Code S5: Not Offensive. One participant felt that Native Americans are a significant part of the region's history, categorized as Code S10: History, heritage, and Trail of Tears.

Student Focus Group. Most of the opinions in the focus group supported the use of Native American mascots. The most common theme among the people supporting the use of Native American mascots was political correctness. Eight participants felt that there is too much political correctness in today's society, categorized as Code S8: Political Correctness. Seven participants did not feel that Native American mascots are offensive, categorized as Code S5: Not Offensive. Four students thought that Native American mascots are a symbol of strength or fighting, categorized as Code S11: Symbol of Strength/Fighting. Four students thought that Native Americans are part of the country's history, categorized as Code S10: History, heritage, and Trail of Tears. Three students thought that removing a Native American mascot would break traditions at the university, categorized as Code S3: Tradition. Two students felt that Native American mascots honor and respect Native Americans, categorized as Code S1: Honor, Respect,

and Pride. One student felt that the mascot should not be changed if only a small percentage of people are complaining, categorized as Code S4: Why Change?.

Summary

In the ten personal interviews, thirty-four opinions were opposed to the use of Native American mascots and six opinions supported the use of Native American mascots. Nearly all interview participants were educated about Native American mascots and were aware of the issues discussed during the interview.

The results were nearly opposite for the student focus group. Five individuals were opposed to the use of Native American mascots and twenty-nine individuals supported the use of Native American mascots. A few students were knowledgeable regarding the issues surrounding Native American mascots. Many students were not aware of the issue and did not know that Public University had adopted a Native American mascot from the 1920s until 2005.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Chapter 6 provides a summary of the study and an overview of the theoretical framework and methodology. In addition, the chapter provides a summary of the results, the method used for testing and confirming data, and addresses the research question. The chapter concludes by summarizing the implications of the study and recommendations for additional research.

Introduction

At the time this study began, there were approximately 60 senior colleges and universities using Native American mascots or nicknames to represent their athletic teams (Fournier, 2003). Many Native Americans, coalitions, organizations, and researchers (Connolly, 2000; Davis, 2002; King & Springwood, 2000; NCAA, 2002) believe that these mascots are racist stereotypes of Native Americans and recommend that they be banned. In contrast, other people believe that Native American mascots signify honor and tradition.

Differing meanings or opinions, such as the aforementioned examples, create an obvious conflict and each viewpoint includes a set of arguments to justify their beliefs. For example, many universities claim their alumni will stop contributing to the university if the mascot is removed. Some alumni and supporters also believe the mascot is a tradition and not offensive to Native Americans. Why do Native American mascots mean different things to different people? People find different meaning in images such as mascots as a result of individual difference, cultural background, the level of

education regarding the Native American culture, and exposure to the media's depiction of Native American culture.

Theoretical Model

For the purpose of this study, the theory of semiotics was used to explain different meanings associated with Native American mascots and nicknames. There are several reasons why semiotics is an appropriate theoretical model for this study. First, Native American mascots are "signs" that have different meanings for different people. For example, the words and symbols of "Indian", "Chiefs", "Braves", and "Redmen" mean different things to different people. The theory of semiotics helps to explain how people find meaning in signs.

Second, differing opinions or perceptions of mascots stem from differences in cultural values and education. Cultural myths also influence an individual's interpretation of the meaning of mascots. Barthes' theory of semiotics is the most appropriate model for understanding the meaning of Native American mascots. This theory takes the objective meaning of the sign and adds each person's cultural values and cultural myths to create one meaning, or ideology. The earlier works of Saussure and Peirce did not focus heavily on the cultural aspect of meaning.

Significance of the Study

The civil rights movement was successful in decreasing the number of offensive African-American images and caricatures (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2001). However, it did not diminish the use of Native American images. Native American images and caricatures are used in everything from company logos to sports team mascots. Why are companies and universities permitted to use images that are

discriminatory to Native Americans? This type of discrimination is not tolerated with any other race of people in the United States.

According to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (2001), the use of Native American mascots contradicts anti-discrimination laws. The use of Native American mascots is also inconsistent with many university mission statements and anti-discrimination policies (NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee, 2002). When it comes to equal employment and access to education, most universities do a good job adhering to their own anti-discrimination policies. However, some universities contradict their own anti-discrimination policies by choosing to retain a culturally insensitive and racial mascot such as “Indian”, “Savages”, or “Redmen”.

The use of Native American mascots gained national attention in 1989 when Charlene Teters, a Cherokee tribe member, protested the “Fighting Illini” mascot at the University of Illinois-Champaign Urbana campus. Although protests have been occurring since 1989, the NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee found that more than 30 universities were still using a Native American mascot or nickname in 2002. There are also community colleges, high schools, and professional sports teams using Native American mascots and nicknames. It seems like it would be an easy decision for a University to remove an offensive mascot that contradicts university discrimination policies. However, there are many issues surrounding the use of Native American mascots. As stated earlier, there are two basic viewpoints on this topic: some people are strongly opposed to the use of Native American mascots and others believe that this is a tradition for their university and their mascot honors Native Americans.

Many university administrators are caught between their own mission and policies and their alumni and other financial supporters. For many schools, this issue has been a struggle. Other, more pro-active universities have willingly changed their mascot. Some administrators have changed mascots with little input from their constituents while others have created committees of faculty, staff, alumni, community members, and students to address the issue.

Current Policies Regarding Native American Mascots

In 2002, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee conducted a study regarding the use of Native American mascots at NCAA member universities. The Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee found that 33 of the 964 NCAA participating athletic teams were using Native American team names or mascots. The NCAA asked the institutions to voluntarily remove their Native American mascots and several colleges and universities decided to adopt different nicknames or mascots (NCAA Minority Opportunities, 2002).

Since this study began, there have been several updates to policies regarding the use of Native American Mascots and the number of universities using Native American mascots. In 2005, the NCAA issued a statement about the new policy “to prohibit NCAA colleges and universities from displaying hostile and abusive racial/ethnic/national origin mascots, nicknames or imagery at any of the 88 NCAA championships” (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2005, ¶ 1). In 2005, 18 of the 33 colleges and universities were still using Native American mascots. The NCAA states (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2008):

The NCAA policy on Native American mascots does not require member institutions to change their names or mascots. The actual policy precludes member schools with Native American nicknames, mascots, or imagery from *hosting* NCAA championships. These schools are still eligible to participate in championships, but the policy restricts them from wearing uniforms or other paraphernalia that depict nicknames or images while competing in NCAA championship events. (§ 1)

According to the NCAA, only eight of the thirty-three colleges and universities are using Native American mascots (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2008). Two universities are currently subject to this new policy -- Alcorn State University “Braves” and University of North Dakota “Fighting Sioux”. Five universities are exempt from the policy because they are supported by a Native American tribe -- Catawba College “Catawba Indians”, Central Michigan University “Chippewas”, Florida State University “Seminoles”, Mississippi College “Choctaws”, and University of Utah “Utes”. Bradley University “Braves” were placed on a five-year “watch-list”.

The Native American mascots used at University of Illinois, Arkansas State University, Florida State University, and University of North Dakota were all mentioned in Chapter One of this study. As noted previously, the Florida State “Seminoles” gained permission from the Seminole tribe to use this nickname and mascot and are exempt from the policy. The University of North Dakota is subject to the NCAA policy. The University of Illinois and Arkansas State University have made changes so as not to be subject to the NCAA policy. According to the NCAA, “University of Illinois ‘Fighting Illini’ - Illinois is permitted to use the nickname ‘Fighting Illini’ at championship events;

effective February 21, 2007, [University of Illinois] will end the use of ‘Chief Illiniwek’ and related imagery” (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2007, ¶ 3). Arkansas State University recently removed their Native American mascot using the process developed by Public University.

Purpose of the Study and Research Question

There is minimal research that focuses on universities that successfully removed a Native American mascot. The purpose of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the removal of a Native American Mascot at one university. This study examined the following question: What is the process and experience for one university regarding the removal of a Native American Mascot?

Methodology

To explore the research question, qualitative methods were used to gather and analyze data for this study. Qualitative methods allowed the researcher to gain an understanding of the experience under study. The sample of participants was gathered from Public University which is a four-year public institution in the Central United States. Data for this study was gathered from three areas; 1) documents such as public and university records; 2) ten personal interviews with faculty, staff, alumni, and community members; and 3) one focus group with twenty-one students.

The study considered three main areas:

1. A review of historical documentation regarding the development of the university’s mascot/nickname including documentation regarding previous attempts to change the mascot

2. The collection of information about the recent process that was used to change the mascot/nickname at the university
3. The collection of information from students, faculty, alumni and the community regarding their opinions on university mascots in general, the university's former Native American mascot/nickname, the process used to select a new mascot, and the new choice for a mascot

Summary of Results

Research Area 1: Historical Information

A review of Public University historical documents resulted in information regarding the origin of the Indian mascot that was adopted during the 1920s, information on what types of Indian mascots were used from the 1920s through the 1980s, and a timeline documenting the attempts to change the mascot during the 1980s through 2002. Table 8 provides a timeline of the most significant historical events regarding the Native American mascot at Public University.

Table 8

Timeline of Significant Historical Events

Year	Date and Event
1920s	Indian nickname adopted
1983	First mascot committee formed due to the “unattractive appearance” of the mascot
1985	Ceremonial Indian mascots and Red mascot introduced

Year	Date and Event
1988	Mascot committee due to complaints about the Red mascot looking like a “country hick”
1989	Thunderbird mascot introduced
1990	Ceremonial Indian mascots disappear
1991	Large Indian figure removed from the top of football stadium
1993	Administration announces rules for fans at athletic events: No dressing as Indians or tomahawk chopping
1994	School spirit became a problem
1996	Mascot committee formed to address school spirit and attendance at athletic events
1997	An eagle mascot was recommended by the mascot committee but students protested because they wanted to provide input on the selection of a mascot
1998	Decision on mascot delayed
2001	Mascot committee developed to look at potential new mascots

Research Area 2: Mascot Change Process

A review of the local and university newspapers and Public University documents resulted in a timeline of events documenting the mascot change process. The review examined documents dated July 25, 2003 to May 14, 2005. The beginning date of July 25, 2003 was used because this was the date that information regarding the most recent effort to retire the Native American nicknames and adopt a new mascot was published.

The document review process terminated with the date of May 14, 2005 because it was the end of the semester in which the new mascot was introduced. Table 9 provides a timeline of the most significant events regarding the mascot change process at Public University.

Table 9

Timeline of Significant Events Regarding the Mascot Change

Year	Date and Event
2003	July 25 - Alumni Association votes to retire the Indian nickname
	December 9 - Student Government votes to retire the Indian nickname
2004	February 10 - Booster Club votes to retire the Indian nickname
	March 3 - The Mascot committee recommends that Indian name be retired
	March 24 - Committee asks public to submit mascot ideas
	April 8 - 800 mascot suggestions narrowed to top 5
	April and May - Public forums held for public to voice opinion
	April 24 - Board of Directors requests online alumni opinion poll
	May 6 - Redhawks and Red Wolves ranked highest by public
	May 9 - American Indian group worries about stereotype portrayed in mascot
	June 30 - Redhawks was the nickname presented to the Board of Directors; Alumni online opinion poll indicated that 60% favored the mascot change
	July 1 - Board of Directors votes unanimously to retire the Indian nickname and adopt the Redhawks

Year	Date and Event
2004	Sept 24 - Public asked to come up with a name for the physical mascot that would be present at athletic events
	October 22 – Indian mascot retirement ceremony held
	October 30 - Redhawks logos approved by Board of Directors
2005	January 23 - Redhawks mascot “Rowdy” introduced at basketball game. This was the first time the nickname and mascot were used at an athletic event.

Research Area 3: Opinions Regarding the Mascot Change

Opinions were gathered from the local daily newspaper, the mascot website, interviews, and one focus group. The start codes were acquired from the six most common meanings that oppose the use of Native American mascots (Codes O1-O6) and the eight most common meanings supporting the use of Native American Mascots (Codes S1-S8). A more descriptive version of each meaning is listed in Chapter 2, pages 32 through 34. The codes were applied and “O” is used to indicate those who oppose the mascot and “S” for those who support the mascot. A number was then applied to each reason that was classified as either an opposing or supporting idea. Some comments were coded multiple times. For example, if a person commented that using an Indian mascot is honorable and that the university is caving into political correctness, this comment was coded S1 and S8. The final codes for the study can be found in Table 10. Code S2 and Code S7 were removed from the final code list because they were not used.

Table 10

Final Codes for Documents, Interviews and Focus Group

Code	Description
O1	Stereotypes - They promote stereotypes
O2	Damaging to Children - They are damaging to children – educational institutions should not promote stereotypes and racism
O3	Harmful to Minorities - They are harmful to Native Americans and other minorities
O4	Racism - They are racist
O5	University/NCAA Policies - They contradict University anti-discrimination policies and NCAA policies
O6	Sacrilegious - They are sacrilegious
O7	Marketing and School Spirit - Students and alumni want a mascot to help market the university and promote school spirit
Name	New Mascot Name - Suggestions for the new name of the mascot
NA-O	Native Americans Oppose - People who claim to be Native Americans and oppose the use of the Indian mascot
S1	Honor, Respect and Pride - They are intended to honor or respect Native Americans or are a source of pride
S3	Tradition - The mascot is a tradition
S4	Why Change? - “Why are we changing mascots” and “Only a small number of people (or minority) are complaining”

Code	Description
S5	Not Offensive - It is dignified, not offensive, and not intended to harm Native Americans
S6	Alumni Support - Alumni say they will stop supporting or contributing if mascot is changed
S8	Political Correctness - “The Indian’s oppose the mascot today – who will oppose next?”
S9	Other Sports Teams/Landmarks - Reference to other schools or professional sports teams not changing mascots;References to changing names of landmarks, states, and parks
S10	History, Heritage, Trail of Tears - The mascot is a tribute to Native American history, heritage, or the Trail of Tears
S11	Symbol of Strength/Fighting - The mascot is a strong symbol or symbol of strength and fighting
Admin/ \$	University Administration - Complaints about the University Administration’s handling of the mascot and money spent or gained from this controversy
NA-S	Native Americans Support - People who claim to be Native Americans and support the use of the Indian mascot

Opinions Indicating Opposition to the Use of Native American Mascots

Overall, 153 opinions were coded in opposition of the Native American mascot.

One- hundred twelve comments resulted from the document review, thirty-four opinions

resulted from the ten personal interviews, and five opinions resulted from the student focus group. Figure E provides a breakdown of the 153 comments by code.

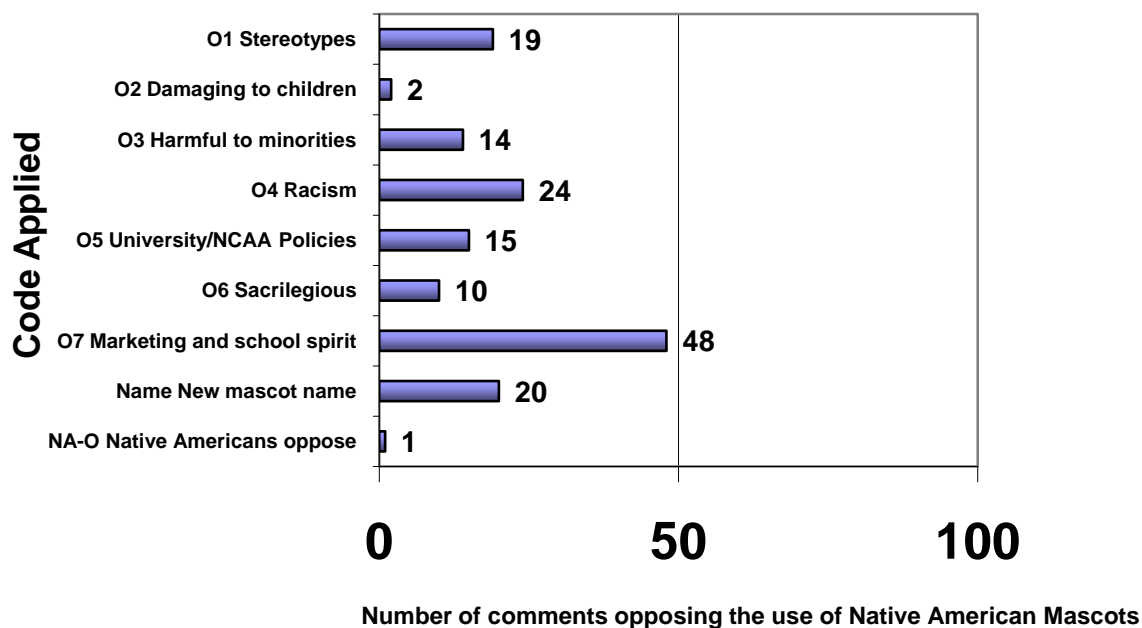


Figure E. All coded comments from documents, interviews, and focus group that oppose the use of the Native American mascot at Public University.

Opinions Indicating Support for the Use of Native American Mascots

Overall, 543 opinions supported the use of the Native American Mascot at Public University. Five-hundred eight comments resulted from the document review, six opinions resulted from the ten personal interviews, and twenty-nine opinions resulted from the student focus group. Figure F provides a breakdown of the 543 comments by code.

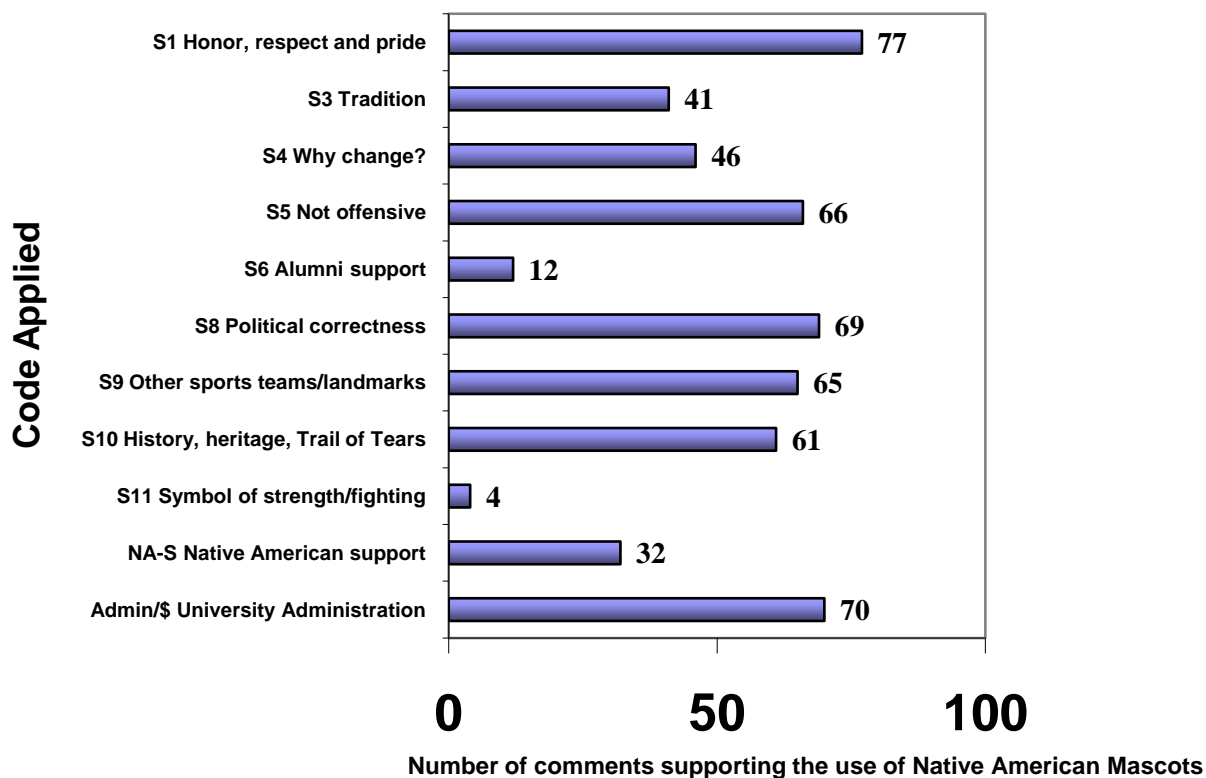


Figure F. All coded comments from documents, interviews, and focus group that support the use of the Native American mascot at Public University.

Testing and Confirming Data

A common method used to confirm the researcher's data coding in a content analysis is to request multiple coders to apply the researcher's code list to the data (Ryan & Bernard, 2001). This procedure determined whether multiple coders applied the same codes to the data (Ryan & Bernard, 2001). For this study, the researcher asked five colleagues with earned doctorates to apply the code list to approximately 5% ($n = 50$ opinions) of the coded data from this study. This procedure allowed the researcher to determine the percentage of accuracy rating among the coders of the data.

The researcher found that the coders applied the same code as the researcher 86% of the time. The highest inter-rater reliability among the coders was 92% and the lowest was 78%. Table 9 shows the percentage of accuracy for each coder. Triangulation, which allows the researcher to search for information using a variety of sources (Miles & Huberman, 1994), was also used in this study. Data was gathered data from university files, yearbooks, newspapers, websites, personal interviews, and focus groups.

Table 11

Multiple Coder Accuracy Rating

Accuracy Rating	Coder 1	Coder 2	Coder 3	Coder 4	Coder 5	Average
Percentage	92%	86%	78%	88%	86%	86%
Number of codes	46/50	43/50	39/50	44/50	43/50	215/250
same as researcher						

Response to Research Question

This study examined the following question: What is the process and experience for one university regarding the removal of a Native American Mascot?

The Mascot Change Process

The process for removing the Native American mascot at Public University was very inclusive. Faculty, staff, students, and community members were invited to provide their opinions about the removal of the mascot and offer suggestions for the new nickname and mascot. In addition, the mascot committee held forums that were open to the public.

Many colleges and universities have contacted Public University about the process the committee and administration used to change the mascot. Several years after the mascot change, Public University faculty and staff members completed a case study and also published the entire change process. The publications consist of an article by Easter, Leoni, and Wiles (2008) and a book chapter by Easter, Kaverman, Leoni, and Wiles (2007). The athletic department now refers universities who are interested in Public University's mascot change process to the publications. Members of the Public University athletic department and the majority of the mascot committee are proud of the mascot change process and are glad that the process has been helpful to other universities.

Although the process developed by Public University was used as a model for several other universities, this research study found that some individuals were disappointed with parts of the process. Several members of the mascot committee (that were interviewed) expressed frustration that the university did not follow through with its intent to honor Native Americans after the removal of the mascot. One participant stated:

Now, the other thing I want to, I'd like to talk to the President, you know. We were promised that there was going to be a statue, and Cherokee roses, and there was going to be a place. We don't know where that is. Where is it?

Another participant stated:

I have real mixed feelings about that [the process]. There were a lot of promises being made. Things they were going to do. Things they didn't do at all. You know, like I said. It's like once that issue is over with. It's like, 'Good. It's gone. Let's forget about. You know we've got the Indians behind us. We are moving

on'. Nothing else has ever been said and done about it again. It's just a bad memory they don't want to remember.

Another complaint about the process was that people who supported the use of the Indian were screened out of the mascot website and felt like their voice was not heard. The researcher anticipates that this type of situation would likely happen at other schools as well. There will always be a certain number of people who will be dissatisfied with the process and resistant to change.

According to Bolman and Deal (1997), "Change inevitably creates conflict. It spawns a hotly contested tug-of-war to determine winners and losers. Some individuals and groups support the changes; others are dead set against them" (p. 325). The tug-of-war was very evident with this change process based on the opinions that emerged. Who were the winners? The majority of the people who expressed their opinions in the local daily newspaper supported the use of the Native American mascot and resisted the change.

There were very few opinions that opposed the use of the Native American mascot. However, opinions that indicated opposition to the Native American mascot prevailed. The opinions did not prevail because they supported research studies that indicate Native American mascots are racist (Davis, 2002; King & Springwood, 2001a; NCAA, 2002; Pewewardy, 1999; Stuckey & Murphy, 2001). They prevailed because many individuals believed that a new mascot would help market the university, create identity, and enhance school spirit. This opposition was not a common theme stated by researchers. Marketing and School Spirit was a theme that was specific to Public University.

Opinions Regarding the Mascot Change

Native American mascots do mean different things to different people associated with Public University. According to Jandt (2001), “The meanings you attach to your perceptions are greatly determined by your cultural background” (p. 187). Cultural background and the education level regarding the use of Native American mascots play a role in the making of meaning. The cultural and educational background of the people who submitted anonymous opinions is unknown. However, it is known that the county in which Public University is located is not ethnically diverse. According to the US Census Bureau, the county in which this city is located is 91.2% Caucasian, 6.0% African American, and 0.4% Native American.

Although the researcher does not know the background of every person who submitted an opinion about the mascot, it is likely that people who supported the use of the Native American mascot were less educated about the issue. The majority of the interview participants were more educated and therefore understood why the mascot should be changed. Several of the interview participants initially supported the use of the Native American mascot and changed their opinion after becoming more educated on the issue. Therefore, the researcher believes that additional education on the subject could change someone’s opinion about Native American mascots. In addition, the lack of ethnic diversity and support of minority issues in this conservative community allows this situation to be further complicated.

Salisbury (2001) indicates that Americans are uneducated about the Native American culture because history books often began with Columbus’ “discovery” of America in 1492. There is evidence that some schools are now providing a more realistic

picture of Columbus and some institutions are even refusing to celebrate Columbus Day. Some teachers are now telling students that Columbus could not discover America because Native Americans were already living here. According to Armario (2009):

Columbus' stature in U.S. classrooms has declined somewhat through the years, and many districts will not observe his namesake holiday today.

Although lessons vary, many teachers are trying to present a more balanced perspective of what happened after Columbus reached the Caribbean and the suffering of indigenous populations. (¶ 4)

Opinions Indicating Opposition to the Use of Native American Mascots

As indicated in Table 9, the most common theme that indicated there was opposition to the use of Native American mascots was Code O7: Marketing and School Spirit. Forty-eight opinions were coded in this category. The researcher learned that one of the biggest problems facing Public University was the fact that they had a nickname – Indians – but were not using the nickname or a mascot. The Native American mascot was removed during the late 1980s because it was no longer being portrayed as a dignified figure. There was no mascot for 15 years. The Indian name was not used or marketed and there was a lack of school spirit without a mascot. It was not surprising that the most common theme that indicated opposition to the use of a Native American mascot at Public University was Code O7: Marketing and School Spirit. A student athlete commented:

The current situation has facilitated poor school spirit and a lack of student tradition or connection to Public University. In order to provide those things for future generations of students, we must be able to use our

nickname. As an athlete, I feel no connection with the Indian as a symbol of my team. Something is missing, and I see this debate as a chance to fill a void.

The majority of the people in this study who opposed the Native American mascot felt like a new mascot would help marketing efforts and school spirit at Public University. Easter et al. (2008) completed a study one year after the new mascot was introduced at Public University. A survey was conducted asking students to rank how they identify with the new Redhawk name. The researchers indicated that “student identification with the ‘Redhawks’ was stronger than we expected” (Easter et al., p. 112). Easter et al. (2008) found that basketball attendance, sales of Redhawks logo merchandise, and brand identity increased after the introduction of the new mascot. They also found that donor contributions to the athletic department did not decrease (Easter et al., 2008).

Marketing consists of more than ticket or merchandise sales. It also pertains to creating a positive identity for the university. The marketing and identity problem was a particular issue for the Public University Admissions department. Other schools referred to Public University as “Domies” because all they had was a logo with a dome. They did not have a mascot. One interviewee provided some insight into this issue. The individual stated, “Uh, the dome, Domehead, what are you? We hear all these things, they call them “Domeheads”. Well, you know, you don’t want [to be called] a building”. This study and the study conducted by Easter et al. (2008) conclude that marketing and brand identity were important factors in changing the Native American mascot at Public University.

The second most common opinion that indicated there was opposition to the use of Native American mascots was Code O4: Racism. According to researchers (Connolly, 2000; Davis, 2002; Dolley, 2003; Harjo, 1999; NCAA, 2002; Pewewardy, 1999; Rodriguez, 1998; Spindel, 2000), these mascots are racist depictions of Native Americans. This study found that the majority of the people who submitted opinions do not agree with researchers. Only 24 opinions out of the nearly 700 coded opinions indicated that the mascot is racist. The people in this study who agreed with this statement were those who were extremely educated on the subject.

Opinions Indicating Support for the Use of Native American Mascots

The majority of the opinions that were gathered in this study indicated that there was support for the use of Native American mascots. Five-hundred forty three opinions supported the use of Native American mascots compared to 153 opinions that were opposed. As indicated in Table 10, the most common theme that supported the used of Native American mascots was code S1: Honor, Respect, and Pride. Seventy-seven opinions indicated that the Indian mascot at Public University honored and respected Native Americans and was a source of pride. One alumnus stated:

I am a 1961 alumnus of Public University. My years at the university were full of pride to be an Indian. The Indian athletic team name was one of honor, respect and inspiration. Having the Chief on the heights overlooking the stadium was a dignified start to every football game.

According to researchers (Connolly, 2000; Davis, 2002; Dolley, 2003; Harjo, 1999; NCAA, 2002; Pewewardy, 1999; Rodriguez, 1998; Spindel, 2000), one of the primary arguments which support the use of Native American mascots is that they are

intended to honor Native Americans. The study conducted at Public University supported the research literature. Why do people at Public University and across the country feel that Native American mascots honor Native Americans?

The researcher theorizes that most people are uneducated about the Native American culture and do not understand that feathers, dances, and music are sacred rituals of the Native American culture. Informal education, such as the media, is the medium by which most Americans learned about Native Americans. In many schools, there was no formal education on the Native American culture. Therefore, many Americans do not understand that Native American mascots are demeaning to the Native American people and they create racist stereotypes.

Many people think that Native American mascots are only being removed for “political correctness” and colleges and universities should not surrender to a small minority who opposes the use of the Native American mascots. Unfortunately, Native American mascots have become a seamless part of the American culture. They are a cultural norm and most people do not even question their use until the mascot debate is brought to the public’s attention.

Another issue is that younger generations do not understand that in the 1920s, when many Native American mascots were adopted, equal rights laws had not been enacted. In the early 1900s, discrimination against African Americans and Native Americans was common. Unfortunately, minority populations did not have any power to reduce racism until the 1960s. The Equal Rights movement, which occurred long before traditional college students were born, changed the way that many minority populations are treated. The Civil Rights Act was successful in reducing the use of demeaning

African American images. However, it did not diminish the use of stereotypes against Native Americans. The following quote is from a student who participated in the focus group at Public University. It is obvious that the student is not educated regarding the history of equal rights in this country. This is yet another example of how the lack of formal education regarding Native Americans and minority issues is a problem in America.

Well what makes it racist now, but like wasn't racist when they first came up with it. Like when they first came up with the mascot, like, shouldn't they have said it was racist then? Why are they all of the sudden being like, 'Oh, it's racist'.

The second most common theme that indicated there was support for the use of the Native American mascot was Code Admin/\$ University Administration. Seventy opinions indicated that they did not like how the university administration was handling the issue and that money was being wasted changing the mascot. It is common for university administrations to be criticized regarding issues such as the removal of a Native American mascot. The university administration was very careful in making sure this was not a "top down" decision. The mascot change process was inclusive and the committee allowed university constituents to provide opinions. The administration, especially in the athletics department, was concerned about the policies that may be implemented by the NCAA.

Meaning of Native American Mascots

As discussed in Chapter 2 of this study, the theory of semiotics helps to explain how people find meaning in signs. Native American mascots are signs that have different

meanings for different people. As illustrated earlier in this chapter, there were 543 opinions that supported the use of Native American mascots while only 153 were opposed to the use of Native American mascots. Clearly, Native American mascots mean different things to different people.

For example, many students and younger alumni favored the change because they felt no connection to the Indian nickname. The nickname was not being used and there was no mascot associated with the Indian while they attended Public University. Older alumni developed traditions with the Indian mascot, particularly the solemn Indian Chief who stood on the hill before the football games. They were connected to this image and felt that their connection and memories of their alma mater would be stripped away through the removal of the Indian nickname. However, many older alumni were not aware that the Indian nickname or mascot was not being used. This study found that many people supported the use of the Native American mascot. A few people still complain about the change, but there are no outright protests. The following section provides an illustration of how the theory of semiotics can be used to explain the different meanings associated with the use of Native American mascots.

The model illustrated in Figure G combines Saussure's "signifier and signified", Barthes' "denotation and connotation and myth", and Fiske and Hartley's "ideology" to create a comprehensive example of the signification process. The first order of signification allows one to identify the objective meaning of the sign. During the second order of signification, connotation (our cultural values and beliefs) and myths (common beliefs accepted by a certain culture) are merged with the signified and signifier. This merge creates an ideology (our idea or conclusion), which Fiske and Hartley call the third

order of signification (O’Sullivan et al., 1983). To clarify how this model can be applied to the study of Native American mascots, the researcher provides an explanation in

Figure H.

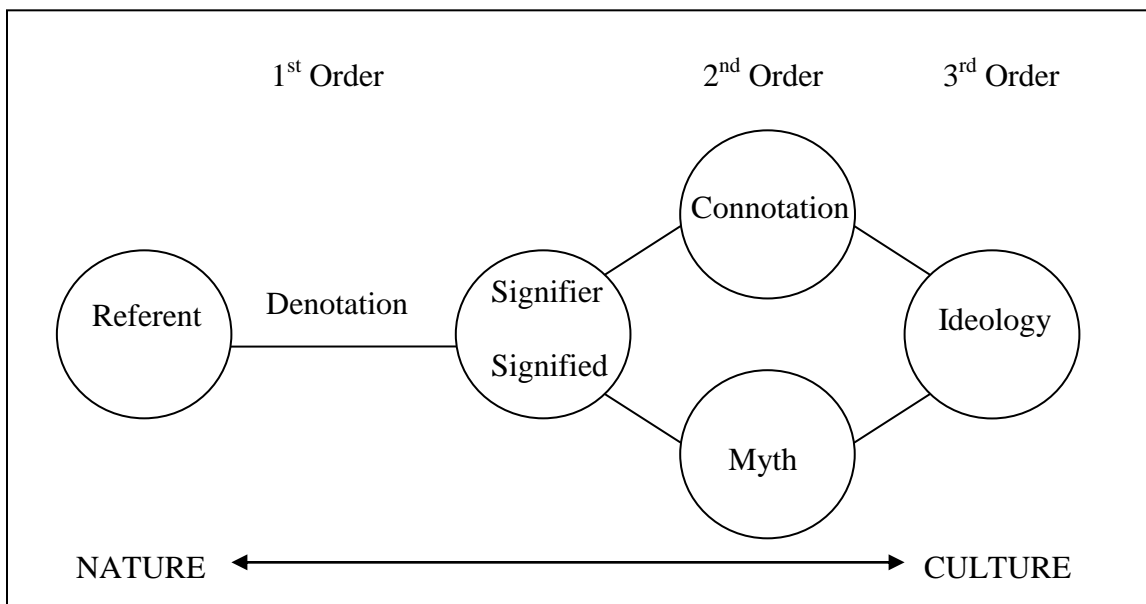


Figure G. Fiske and Hartley model of the signification (O’Sullivan et al., 1983).

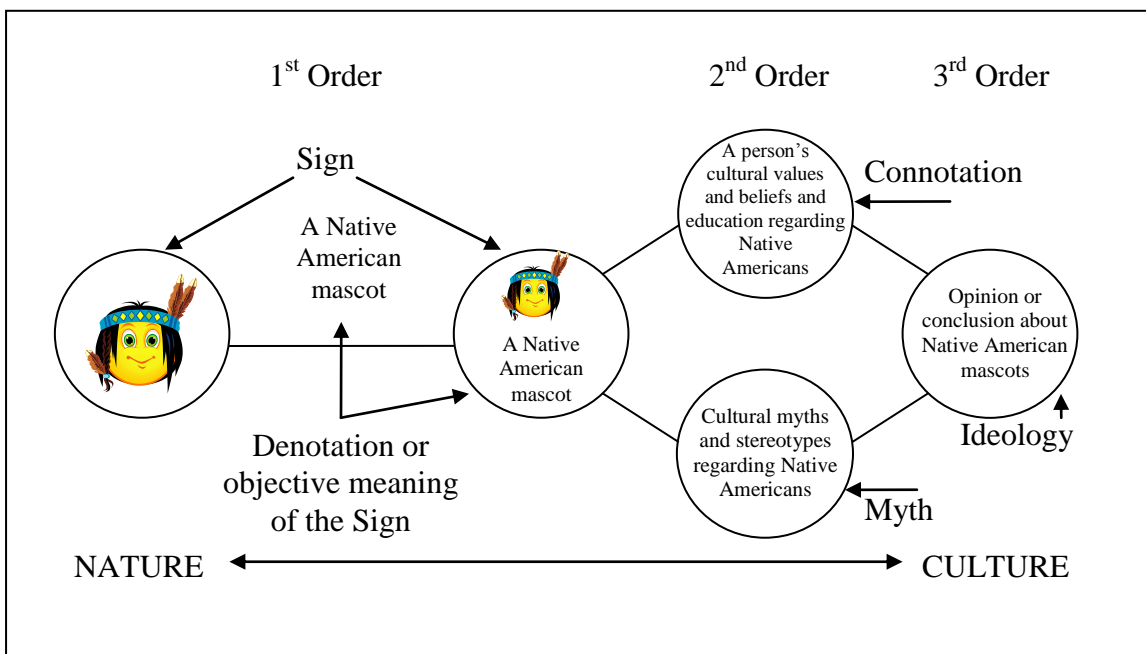


Figure H. Explanation of how Native American mascots can be applied to the Fiske and Hartley model of the signification (O’Sullivan et al., 1983).

In Figures I and J, the researcher uses opinions found in this study to illustrate how the meanings that support and oppose the use of Native American mascots can be applied to this model. The following quote from a student athlete is applied to the model in Figure I:

The current situation has facilitated poor school spirit and a lack of student tradition or connection to Public University. In order to provide those things for future generations of students, we must be able to use our nickname. As an athlete, I feel no connection with the Indian as a symbol of my team. Something is missing, and I see this debate as a chance to fill a void.

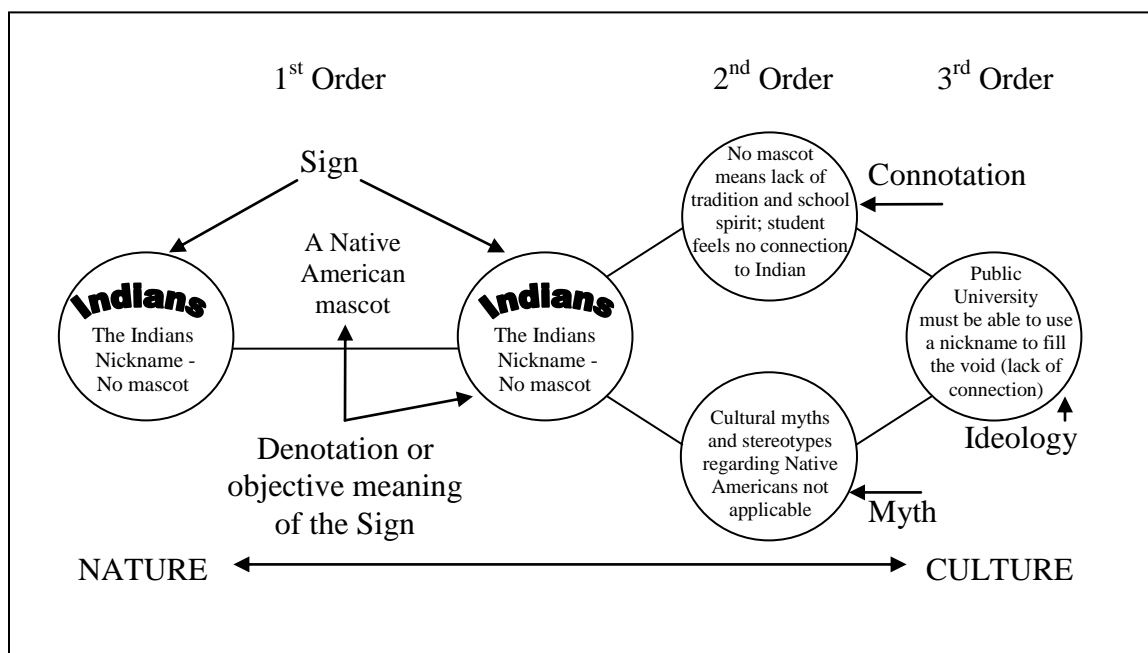


Figure I. Application of a meaning opposed to the use of Native American mascots using Fiske and Hartley model of the signification using a quote from a student athlete (O’Sullivan et al., 1983).

The following quote from an alumnus is applied to the model in Figure J. The photo of the Indian Chief on the hill at the football stadium was found in the 1961 Public University yearbook:

I am a 1961 alumnus of Public University. My years at the university were full of pride to be an Indian. The Indian athletic team name was one of honor, respect and inspiration. Having the Chief on the heights overlooking the stadium was a dignified start to every football game.

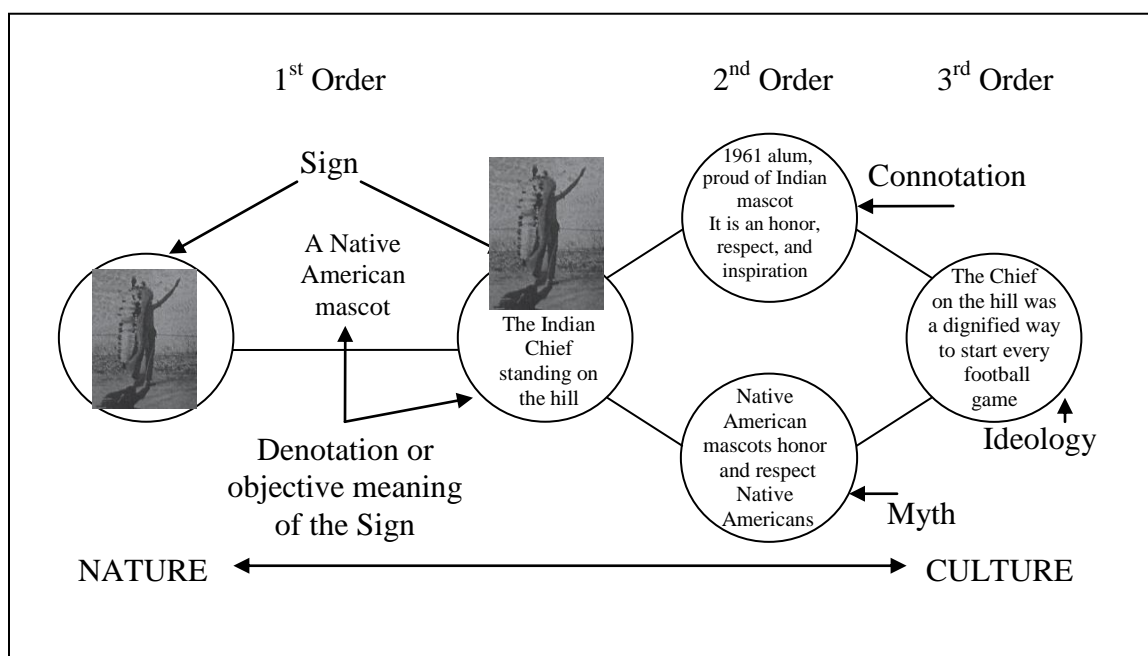


Figure J. Application of a meaning supporting to the use of Native American mascots using Fiske and Hartley model (O'Sullivan et al., 1983) of the signification using the a quote from an alumnus.

Summary

This study found that most of the core meanings regarding Native American mascots cited by researchers were also found at Public University (Connolly, 2000; Davis, 2002; Dolley, 2003; Garrod & Larimore, 1997; Harjo, 1999; Hatfield, 2000; King & Springwood, 2000; Mihesuah, 1998; NCAA, 2002; Pewewardy, 1999; Rodriguez,

1998; Spindel, 2000; Stuckey & Murphy, 2001; Sturm, 2000). Eighty-six percent (n=12) of the meanings that supported and opposed the use of Native American mascots found at Public University were the same as cited by researchers. The 14 start codes in Table 3, page 90, were developed based on work cited by researchers. The 12 final codes that correspond with the meanings developed by researchers can be found in Table 10, page 178.

The researcher anticipates that if this study was completed at another university or at the high school or middle school level, the same or similar core meanings would be found. Other meanings, or codes, that emerged from this study were particular to Public University. They included references to marketing of the university and school spirit; reference to other sports teams or landmarks that should also be changed; the proximity of the Trail of Tears National Park and history of Indians in the area; that the mascot is a symbol of strength or fighting; and complaints about the university administration and money spent to change the mascot. The researcher also used codes to identify comments suggesting new mascot names and those who claimed Native American heritage and whether they supported or opposed the Native American mascot. Based on this study, the researcher would anticipate that other schools or universities would have meanings emerge that are specific to their school, university, or community.

Implications

During the last seven years, all but eight NCAA participating institutions removed their Native American mascots. The three universities who are subject to the policy will likely change their mascot in the near future. Public University created an in-depth and successful process to remove their Native American mascot. Their process has already

helped several universities change their mascots. This study provides the experience of one university's history, mascot change process, and opinions of the university community and general public. The researcher anticipates that this study will allow other institutions with Native American mascots to gain an understanding of the process and outcome of the removal of a Native American mascot.

Although most colleges and universities have already changed their Native American mascots, it is estimated that over 2,500 middle schools and high schools are still using Native American mascots (American Indian Cultural Support, n.d.). It is hoped that universities, such as Public University, become a role model for middle schools and high schools. They can all benefit from the understanding of the process and opinions related to this change. In addition, there are still professional teams using Native American mascots. The researcher is hopeful that they will also become role models and remove their Native American mascots.

The researcher is also hopeful that this study will provide insight regarding the lack of formal education regarding the Native American culture. Educational professionals in this country need to provide students with accurate information regarding the Native American culture. The stereotypes and racist behavior toward Native Americans and all minority populations should be eradicated. Native Americans make up a small percentage of the United States population. That does not mean that they should be treated with disrespect. It is unfortunate that many Americans do not know they are disrespecting Native American culture when they tomahawk chop at a football game, wear a "Redskins" football jersey, or cheer for the "Lady Squaws".

Suggestions for Further Research

Over the next few years, it will be interesting to learn how many more Native American mascots are removed from colleges and universities and if middle schools, high schools, and professional teams remove their mascots. Exposing middle school and high school students to these mascots is wrong. Native American mascots create an inaccurate depiction and stereotype of the Native American culture. This is part of the reason that the general public accepts this stereotype and Native American mascots. Middle schools and high schools should provide more educational programs about the Native American culture.

Professional sports teams are a significant part of the American culture. When will they remove their Native American mascots? It would be interesting to study the experience of a Native American mascot at the professional sports team level. The NCAA played a critical role in creating policies to eliminate stereotypes and racist behaviors among college and university Native American mascots. Who will step forward to eliminate these mascots at the middle school, high school, and professional sports team levels? With each Native American mascot that is removed, this country becomes closer to eliminating racist stereotypes of Native Americans.

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Appendix A

**OFFICE OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION****Interdepartmental Correspondence**

Name: Michelle Brune

Title: A Qualitative Study of a Native American Athletic Mascot at a Public University

The chairperson of the Human Subjects Committee for UM-St. Louis has reviewed the above mentioned protocol for research involving human subjects and determined that the project qualifies for exemption from full committee review under Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 46.101b. The time period for this approval expires one year from the date listed below. You must notify the Human Subjects Committee in advance of any proposed major changes in your approved protocol, e.g., addition of research sites or research instruments.

You must file an annual report with the committee. This report must indicate the starting date of the project and the number of subjects to date from start of project, or since last annual report, whichever is more recent.

Any consent or assent forms, must be signed in duplicate and a copy provided to the subject. The principal investigator must retain the other copy of the signed consent form for at least three years following the completion of the research activity and they must be available for inspection if there is an official review of the UM-St. Louis human subjects research proceedings by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Protection from Research Risks.

This action is officially recorded in the minutes of the committee.

Protocol Number	Date	Signature - Chair
050504B	5-6-05	Carl J. Davis

Appendix B

“Public
University”
logo removed
for
confidentiality

**COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF THE DEAN**

**Crisp Hall 132
Mail Stop 8000
lprater@semo.edu
Phone (573) 651-2178
Fax (573) 651-5113**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Michelle Brune, Human Environmental Studies

FROM: Loretta Prater, Dean
College of Health and Human Services

DATE: February 23, 2004

SUBJECT: **A Qualitative Study of a Native American Athletic Mascot At Public University.**

This memorandum is your official authorization to proceed with the study named above after a human subjects review by the College review Committee (CRC). The CRC and I agree that this is a Category 1 project, meaning that subjects have no more than ordinary risk, by involvement in the study.

I appreciate your efforts in this scholarly work.

c CRC Chairperson
Department Chairperson
University Committee

Appendix C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This is a sample of interview questions. The principal investigator may ask other questions based on the participants responses to these questions.

Subject: General

Are you eighteen years old? (students only)

What is your affiliation with the University?

How long have you been affiliated with the University?

Subject: University mascots in general

What is the importance of a University mascot/nickname?

Does the mascot create more school spirit? Why or why not?

Does this school spirit create more connected alumni? Why or why not?

What is your level of awareness about the trend of removing Native American mascots around the country?

Researchers provide many reasons why Native American mascots and nicknames should be banned. How do you feel about the following statements?

Indian mascots and nicknames are racist

Indian mascots and nicknames create a hostile environment for all students

Indian mascots and nicknames provide an inaccurate depiction or stereotype of Native Americans

Indian mascots and nicknames are sacrilegious (mascot costumes mock those used in religious ceremonies)

Indian mascots and nicknames go against antidiscrimination policies of Universities

Subject: Historical information about the University mascot (for people affiliated with the University prior to 1989 – removal of Indian mascot [Indian nickname retained until Jan. 2005])

There have been many different University mascots over the years. Describe the ones you can remember at Southeast. What meaning do they possess for you (or the school)?

There have been several attempts to change the University mascots in the past. Were you involved in those attempts? If yes, please explain your involvement and your view of what happened.

Subject: Change of University mascot

How do you feel about the University's decision to change the Indian nickname/mascot?
Why was it important to change (or not to change)?

Why do you think the University decided to change mascots?

Do you feel this is an important decision for the University? Why or why not?

Subject: Process of changing the University mascot

What was your involvement with changing the University mascot? Please describe.

How do you feel about the process the University used to change the mascot?

Added question during Interview 1:

Do you think alumni and students have embraced the new mascot?

Do people still complain about the change of the mascot?

Appendix D

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Subject: General

Are you eighteen years old? (students only)

Sign consent forms – If under 18, please write this at the top of your form – you are not eligible to participate.

What is your affiliation with the University?

How long have you been affiliated with the University?

Subject: University mascots in general

What is the importance of a University mascot/nickname?

Does the mascot create more school spirit? Why or why not?

Does this school spirit create more connected alumni? Why or why not?

What is your level of awareness about the trend of removing Native American mascots around the country?

Researchers provide many reasons why Native American mascots and nicknames should be banned. How do you feel about the following statements?

Indian mascots and nicknames are racist

Indian mascots and nicknames create a hostile environment for all students

Indian mascots and nicknames provide an inaccurate depiction or stereotype of Native Americans

Indian mascots and nicknames are sacrilegious (mascot costumes mock those used in religious ceremonies)

Indian mascots and nicknames go against antidiscrimination policies of Universities

Subject: Historical information about the University mascot (for people affiliated with the University prior to 1989 – removal of Indian mascot [Indian nickname retained until Jan. 2005])

There have been many different University mascots over the years. Describe the ones you can remember at Southeast. What meaning do they possess for you (or the school)?

There have been several attempts to change the University mascots in the past. Were you involved in those attempts? If yes, please explain your involvement and your view of what happened.

Subject: Change of University mascot

How do you feel about the University's decision to change the Indian nickname/mascot?
Why was it important to change (or not to change)?

Why do you think the University decided to change mascots?

Do you feel this is an important decision for the University? Why or why not?

Subject: Process of changing the University mascot

What was your involvement with changing the University mascot? Please describe.

How do you feel about the process the University used to change the mascot?

Added question during Interview 1:

Do you think alumni and students have embraced the new mascot?

Do people still complain?