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## News Release

### **Statement by Chairman Lawrence C. Eppley On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois**

May 16, 2006

On Monday, May 15, 2006, the University of Illinois received a written statement from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in support of its final decision two weeks earlier to deny the University's appeal of an NCAA policy regarding the Chief Illiniwek tradition. The six-page letter provided supplemental notification and an explanation of the NCAA's Executive Committee decision on April 28, 2006. Both documents are posted on the University's website, [www.uillinois.edu](http://www.uillinois.edu).

The NCAA's final ruling bans the continuing use of Chief Illiniwek for athletics at the Urbana-Champaign campus and sanctions its athletic teams for violations.

The NCAA declared its decision was final and proclaimed that the rule and sanctions were effective immediately. The University fought the new NCAA policy for over nine months. As a result of its first appeal, the University won back the right to use the names "Illini" and "Fighting Illini" for all its athletic teams. The subsequent appeals challenged the NCAA policy on grounds of institutional autonomy and self-determination in regard to university traditions.

The Board and the University community have been engaged in an effort to reach a consensus solution to the issue of the Chief. The goal of the consensus process is to find a solution that serves the best interests of the University. The NCAA ruling does not change the Board's commitment to seeking consensus.

The consensus process includes the "consensus resolution," the heritage policy and eight guidelines. The heritage resolution and guidelines continue to provide insight and assistance, perhaps now with sharper focus. We seek a course of action that fulfills the heritage policy, recognizes the value of tradition and enables our student athletes to compete at the highest level.

We believe that this is an achievable goal.

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