

Courtesy of I Resist

Today some 40 to 50 people gathered in front of the Swanlund Administration Building for an event billed "Take back YOUR Campus Rally." The gathering was organized by Students for Chief Illiniwek (SFCF), the Orange and Blue Observer, and Illini Against a Mascot as a response to SFCF Freedom of Information Request findings showing the UIUC administration scrambling to articulate a post-mascot era policy regarding the display of their copyrighted property. The entire Pro-Mascot rally is available at I Resist.

Highlights from the IResist video footage include interviews with Gina Jenero, current President of Delta Delta Delta (the sorority who brought you Tacos and Tequila in the Fall 2006). At this Pro-mascot rally Jenero announced her candidacy for Champaign County Board - District 8. In further interviews, her sorority sisters comment about why they believe the mascot should return, and on what the sorority as a whole has learned from Tacos and Tequila.

Also available at I Resist is an interview with a Logan Ponce, the current, "Unofficial Portrayer of the former UIUC Mascot." Ponce offers his views on multiple topics including his opinions on UIUC's Native American House (NAH), and American Indian Studies (AIS) program. Additionally, he shares his experiences as a student enrolled in an AIS class, and reports that someone once ran out of the Native American House to break his windshield. None of these claims have been verified.

Finally, Board Member, Samantha Uher, of Students for "Chief" Illiniwek (SFCF) offers insight into the demographic makeup of SFCF and their experiences recruiting students of color at UIUC Cultural Houses. During this conversation, Uher describes how, "Nearly all of our problems come from the Native American House" and "They are very hesitant to try to learn from us." During this interview, a Dine woman expressing the burdens the former mascot creates upon tribally enrolled students at UIUC approaches Uher.

Following the above interviews, are the speeches made at this mascot rally. These include speeches by Ponce, Uher, Jenero, Tim Nuccio, and Jim Phillips. Tim Nuccio offers his opinion on freedom of speech and poignantly exemplifies its significance with colorful examples from past court cases, including the rights of Nazi's to rally and "burning a cross in the front yard of a black family" as protected speech. Nuccio, a senior in Economics, is also president of Illinois on Target, an RSO dedicated to mastering "pistol and rifle shooting." However, on Nuccio's blog, he appears to

distance himself from the pro-mascot group itself.

"The main purpose of the speech was to characterize the problems with the administration's attitude on this campus towards honest and free debate. It wasn't actually intended to be a Chief protest, but a local political candidate showed up with some large Chief posters, and some other speakers talked about the Chief, and, well, it kinda went from there."

It was also reported the Pro-mascot group, Students for "Chief" Illinewek attempted to recruit UIUC student chapter of the Republican party to participate in their rally. However, the Republican's choose to distance themselves from the mascot group, fearful they would tarnish their reputation.