**Implementation Plan on Native Imagery: Questions and Answers**
12/04/2020

**Q: What is the purpose of the implementation plan? Wasn’t there already a report on Native Imagery?**

A: The Chancellor’s Commission on Native Imagery was formed in the Fall of 2018 and asked to provide advice and suggestions to help the university explore institutional strategies to begin the process of moving our university community forward after the retirement of Chief Illiniwek. The Commission’s report was issued in May of 2019.

Informed by the Commission’s report, Chancellor Jones established working groups to execute opportunities and develop an implementation plan that identifies short- and mid-term strategies to address the suggestions from the Commission report. The Implementation Plan brings together the suggestions from the working groups.

**Q: Who was involved in creating the Implementation Plan?**

A: More than 20 campus administrators, staff and faculty representing a variety of colleges and units from across campus participated in the three working groups that created the Implementation Plan.

**Q: What are some of the short-term goals and new initiatives identified in the Implementation Plan?**

A: The working groups identified a variety of immediate opportunities or short-term goals. The full list can be found in the plan, but some of the short-term (0-1 year) goals include:

* Offer waivers for out-of-state Indigenous students enrolled in federally recognized tribal nations, as well as explore options to allow Indigenous students to gain access to University programs such as Illinois Promise.
* Facilitate the development of and public engagement with a historically accurate account of Native Imagery at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, including utilizing displays at the Alumni Center.
* Establish the Illinois Spirit & Traditions Council to solicit and support new traditions.
* Develop a year-long series promoting Indigenous Peoples’ Day Every Day, including events hosted by Native American House and American Indian Studies, with funding to ensure success of these programs. Current initiatives include Krannert Art Museum’s Native Artists Series.
* Engage all key stakeholders in identifying new traditions, ensuring that these do not rely upon Native American images or traditions.
* Partner with the Peoria and other Native Nations that called Illinois their ancestral home to better actualize their conceptualization of reciprocity and honor.
* Create training for campus staff, faculty and administrators around Indigenous protocol and relationship building.

**Q: What are some of the goals and initiatives that will take longer?**

A: The following:

* Ensure that information about Chief Illiniwek and the University’s process moving forward are included in new student orientation, first-year student seminars and new faculty and staff orientation.
* Develop and fund an elder-in-residence program with American Indian Studies.
* Create service-learning initiatives to introduce University of Illinois students to the work of modern tribal governments.
* Hire a cohort of faculty for American Indian Studies
* Hire a tenured faculty member in American Indian Studies who would serve as the campus tribal liaison, who will serve as a conduit to Native American organizations and tribes.
* Explore permanent structures on campus that would acknowledge and represent Peoria and other Native nations.
* Develop programs to help students from Native Nations take their degree back home to work, such as social entrepreneurship or internship programs.

**Q: How will new traditions be created according to the Implementation Plan?**

A: Several approaches are suggested to help establish new traditions.

The first would be to create and utilize the Illinois Spirit and Traditions Council. The Council would be co-sponsored and co-advised by Student Affairs, the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics and the Illinois Alumni Association. The intent in creating this council is to have a dedicated group of students working toward the enhancement and promotion of Illinois school spirit and traditions. A wide variety of student life would be represented on The Spirit and Traditions Council, with students from Housing, Marching Illini, Native American House, United Greek Council, Illinois Student Government, Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center, Illini Pride, La Casa Cultural Latina and eight other student life groups.

Additionally, to assist with engaging all key stakeholders in identifying new traditions, the Implementation Plan recommends engaging an external, third-party agency with experience in assisting campuses in a process to identify and engage all key stakeholders in identifying new traditions.

Finally, it is suggested that the university create an inventory of historic traditions that could be re-initiated, as well as existing or emerging traditions, all mindful of traditions that promote belonging, inclusiveness and school spirit.

**Q: Does this plan mean that the university will be getting a mascot?**

A: The Implementation Plan suggests that the university “identify an external agency to provide feedback and a process to move forward for promoting spirit and traditions.” However, in light of current circumstances and the need to focus on the financial health of the university during and after the pandemic, we are not currently moving forward on work with an external agency. We will prioritize our efforts with the Illinois Spirit & Traditions Council to solicit and support new traditions.

**Q: Does this plan address the continued use of the “Fighting Illini” as our Athletics team name?**

A: No.