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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DEVILS LAKE, N.D., -- The Native American Guardian's Association (NAGA) has delivered an ultimatum-based [letter](#) to the National Collegiate Athletics Association detailing why the NCAA needs to immediately reverse a sports identity policy that is discriminatory in its eradication of only one ethnic group's cultural icons or, as the data demonstrates, these schools will continue to suffer both significant financial losses while experiencing disturbing drop offs in Native student recruiting and retention.

NAGA's Navajo President signed the five-page dispatch's centerpiece arguments including the trend details showcasing rapid and steep drop offs in Native American student enrollment once schools began the process of expunging their long-standing native identity. Additionally, the letter points out that the name Fighting Sioux was born out of an agreement between the University of North Dakota (UND) and leaders of the Sioux Nation which provided UND its name and identity in a culturally important 1969 <http://www.muiniskw.org/pgCulture2f.htm> Pipe Ceremony for educational opportunities which reinforced the tradition that the Fighting Sioux name was meant to last forever.

And while both UND and the NCAA claim they “recognize the right of the indigenous Plains People to decide for themselves how their name should be used or not” neither the NCAA nor the UND Administration allowed Sioux representation when the university decided to jettison their eternally gifted Sioux identity.

The University of Illinois and North Dakota were the only two institutions with actual tribal affiliations to be denied an NCAA Executive Committee exemption. After enduring 2 years of NCAA sanctions, Illinois reluctantly eliminated the iconic Chief Illiniwek tradition and emblem in 2007. The loss of Native American identity continues to be an open wound to the vast majority of the students, alumni, and fans of both Illinois and North Dakota, but even worse to the American Indian whose enrollment has plummeted by more than 50% at both universities.

NAGA plans to escalate its education and outreach campaign regarding the NCAA, UND, and the U of I in the coming months. Updates, interviews, data and graphics may be found at [www.naguardians.org](http://www.naguardians.org) and interviews may be arranged by request via: [naguardians@gmail.com](mailto:naguardians@gmail.com) or reach the NCAA [here](#).