

Board Memorandum

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Governing Board
Southwestern Community College District

FROM: Serafín A. Zasueta, Ph.D.
Superintendent/President

PREPARED BY: Rosemary Sullivan Zins
Vice President for Institutional Advancement

SUBJECT: College mascot

OVERVIEW:

The college adopted the “Apache” as its mascot in 1961. In recent years, the use of Native Americans as mascots has become increasingly sensitive and the US Civil Rights Commission has now issued a formal opinion denouncing the use of people as mascots.

ANALYSIS:

The College’s 40th anniversary presents a timely occasion to change the college’s mascot.

In response to the increasing public sensitivity to the issue of using people as mascots, the college’s coaching staff brainstormed alternatives to the Apache as the mascot since the use of the mascot is primarily associated with athletic teams. The jaguar was one of the final recommendations and has been selected based upon its prominent role in Mayan civilizations, tying into the Mayan architecture used throughout the campus.

Jaguars are the largest cat in the Western Hemisphere and are found from the southwestern United States to Argentina. Similar to the leopard, it is a tawny yellow in color with black spots, but heavily pigmented coats may appear almost black with the rosette pattern only appearing in strong light.

The Tucano Indians of the Amazon believe the roar of the jaguar is the sound of thunder.

Although occasional attacks on humans have been reported, jaguars are rarely aggressive towards humans, and, unlike leopards, have not developed man-eating tendencies.

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend replacing the existing college mascot, the “Apache”, with the “Jaguar”.

Whereas, the US Civil Rights Commission has publicly denounced the use of Native Americans as mascots by schools and colleges; and

Whereas, the Southwestern College mascot is, and has been, the Apache since 1961; and

Whereas, the Southwestern Community College District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation), disability, or age in any of its policies, procedures, or practices; and

Whereas, the jaguar has been recommended by Southwestern College's coaching staff and Associated Student Organization as an appropriate mascot; and

Whereas, the jaguar is a fitting symbol of Mayan culture and is in concert with the college's Mayan architecture on campus; and

Whereas, Southwestern College is celebrating its 40th anniversary, now therefore be it resolved that the Governing Board of the Southwestern Community College District replace the Apache with the jaguar as the office college mascot.
Passed and adopted