



January 2, 2006

Alumni and Friends:

ULM opened its doors this morning after the holiday break and is looking forward to a very successful Spring 2006 semester. As mentioned in the last *Good News*, the new hours of business for ULM are 7:30 – 5:00 M-Thursday and 7:30 – Noon on Friday's.

This year, a year in which we will celebrate ULM's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, brings with it challenges and the excitement of meeting those challenges. The opportunity for our alumni and friends to get involved in our university has never been greater and I encourage each of you to seize the moment in helping to guide ULM through the next seventy-five years.

The first *Good News* of 2006 is dedicated to a subject which will surely dominate discussion for the coming months and that is our "Indian" Mascot.

I encourage you will read the letter below from President Cofer and visit the Mascot Link on the ULM home page (which will be continually updated):

<http://www.ulm.edu/mascot/>

These are challenging, yet exciting times for ULM and with your support, the future of our university is indeed bright.

## **TOP STORY**

### ***Mascot Committee Formed – ULM Exploring All Options President Cofer Solicits Input From Alumni and Friends***

Dear Alumni and Friends:

As many of you know, the National Collegiate Athletic Association Executive Committee recently ruled to restrict the use of Native American imagery and mascots by NCAA member institutions. This ruling concerns the University of Louisiana at Monroe and the future of its Indian mascot. As I greatly value the insights of our alumni and friends, I want to explain how ULM is addressing this ruling.

In November 2004, the NCAA asked 33 schools, including ULM, to submit self-evaluations explaining why their use of Native American imagery was not "hostile and abusive." In response to the request by

the NCAA, ULM conducted an exhaustive self-study that detailed positive practice relative to the mascot.

Subsequent to the self-study, the Minority Opportunity and Interests Committee and the NCAA Executive Committee adopted a new policy at its August 2005 meeting to prohibit NCAA institutions from using hostile or abusive racial/ethnic/national origin mascots, imagery, or nicknames at any of the NCAA's national or regional championships. The University of Louisiana at Monroe was included in that policy. In essence, the NCAA rejected ULM's self-evaluation.

The NCAA stated, "Colleges and universities may adopt any mascot that they wish, as that is an institutional matter. But as a national association, we believe that mascots, nicknames or images deemed hostile or abusive in terms of race, ethnicity or national origin should not be visible at the championship events that we control."

The policy takes effect February 1, 2006. At that time, institutions with student-athletes wearing uniforms or having paraphernalia with hostile or abusive references must ensure that those uniforms or paraphernalia are not worn or displayed at NCAA championship competitions; nor will such institutions be permitted to host any NCAA championship competition. The committee also strongly suggested that institutions follow the practice of not scheduling athletic competitions with schools that use Native American nicknames, imagery or mascots.

The NCAA did state that institutions could appeal the NCAA's decision if a "namesake" tribe formally approved use of a university's mascot, name and imagery. The mascot adopted by the university in 1931 did not reflect any specific indigenous tribe of northeast Louisiana or south Arkansas, but rather was generic in nature, inculcating the quality characteristics of the entire Native American culture.

After being notified by the NCAA of ULM's placement in the rejected category, the University, following the directives stipulated by the association, embarked on an effort to obtain support from the three tribes that are recognized federally in our part of Louisiana: the Tunica-Biloxi, the Chitimacha, and the Coushatta. This sojourn has been an uncomfortable one because, as stated previously, the ULM mascot is and has always been generic in form. Additionally, it is impossible to make a statement of prior association with a tribe in the case of the University of Louisiana at Monroe. Nevertheless, ULM contacted the three identified tribes, explained ULM's efforts and, provided a copy of the ULM/NCAA Self Study. ULM respectfully requested an endorsement of the efforts to maintain the mascot. ULM received support from only one of the three local tribes.

Recognizing the importance of prior "namesake" tribal support in any appeal decision by the NCAA, we asked the NCAA if they would reconsider our formal appeal to continue using the Indian mascot if a local Louisiana Native American tribe supports that use. . In a letter dated December 15, 2005, Dr. Bernard Franklin, Senior Vice President for Governance and Membership, stated that ". . .the use of a generic Native American reference like 'Indians' or 'Braves' cannot be mitigated by the concurrence of any Native American tribe." He further added, ". . .while the support of the Coushatta Tribe would likely be sufficient to endorse the university's use of the official tribal name (Coushatta), it does not suffice as an endorsement of the use of the generic term "Indian."

Due to the importance of this issue, I asked George Luffey, long-time supporter of ULM, to chair a Mascot Committee. The committee is comprised of representatives from each of the university's

constituencies, including students, faculty, alumni, ULM Foundation, L Club, Indian Athletic Foundation, Alumni Association, coaches and student-athletes. It is our intention to provide the committee all of the information regarding this issue and ask that they make a recommendation to the ULM administration concerning the future of our mascot. It is an extremely delicate task that we ask of George, and we already owe him a debt of gratitude for accepting the challenge.

In addition, we are maintaining contact with Arkansas State University and sharing information on a regular basis on the mascot issue. I am confident that our Mascot Committee will review material and strategies of our Sunbelt Conference colleague.

The University of Louisiana at Monroe is on the move academically and athletically. I believe it is important to communicate fully with you about this issue. That is why we established a Mascot website that includes a copy of the Institutional Self-Study, letters to and from the NCAA, information on area mascots, and up-to-date information on the committee and its recommendations. It is our intention to continue to involve all of the university's many constituencies in this process. ULM values your opinions and input, and we promise decisions that reflect the exciting future of our institution, its students, faculty, staff, community, and region.

James E. Cofer, Sr.  
President

### ***Great Ambassador for ULM Passes***

The intent of this ***Good News*** e-mail was to concentrate solely on the Indian Mascot issue. That changed, however, with the passing Saturday of former Dean of Men "Cactus" Jack Collins. Cactus served at ULM from 1960 until his retirement in 1985 and touched the lives of countless individuals.

Funeral services will be at 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, at First United Methodist Church in Monroe. Memorials may be made to the Jack V. Collins Memorial Scholarship Fund at ULM, c/o ULM Foundation Office, Monroe, LA or to First United Methodist Church, 3900 Loop Road, Monroe, LA 71201.

Please keep the Collins' family in your prayers.

And that concludes this edition of ***Good News***. As always, thanks for helping spread the ***Good News*** about our University. Our next ***Good News*** e-mail should arrive in your inbox around the 15<sup>th</sup> of January.

ULM wishes you and yours a great day.

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**GOOD NEWS** is e-mailed around the 15th and 30th of each month by your ULM Alumni Association. This e-mail contains a brief sampling of all the ***Good News*** surrounding our university. If you would

like to be removed from this list, please contact Tom Walpole (contact information is below). Thanks for your continuing support of **ULM**.

**10,842** Alumni & Friends received this *Good News* e-mail.

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