



SGA distributes survey to create school mascot


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Abbie Robinson (<http://www.cm-life.com/staff/abbie-robinson>) | Staff Photographer

Fans cheer during a football game on Oct. 3, 2015 in Kelly/Shorts Stadium.

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The Student Government Association's Spirits and Traditions committee is asking for student input on creating a school mascot.

SGA President Chuck Mahone said the survey is being distributed via social media (https://docs.google.com/a/cm-life.com/forms/d/1x0mdGy5_2LG1g209bXorH1gZEMvKgXoQkbIKt-cG9yM/viewform) through SurveyMonkey and is open until midnight on Sunday, March 20.

The survey's options for a new mascot include keeping the "flying C," a "flame," a "C on fire" or writing in a mascot idea.

"We realize that the Chippewa cannot be a mascot for (sporting events) so we are looking elsewhere," Mahone said. "(SGA) has been talking about doing this forever, and now we are looking at other (mascot ideas) to consider."

Once the data is gathered and gone over, Mahone said, the committee will decide

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"It gives us something to look at or maybe nothing at all," he said. "Maybe students are content with being the Chippewas and (not) having a mascot. Maybe they want one to cheer with at (football) games. It's all up to what the student response is."

Royal Oak junior Kit Skoog, chairperson of the Sprints and Traditions committee, said the idea came to her while at a football game with her sister at the beginning of the fall semester.

"I told her because we are the Chippewas, it would be disrespectful to have someone dress up as a Native American for our mascot," she said. "But then my sister made me realize that there are so many other things that apply to us which we can use (as a mascot) and still be respectful to the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe."

As of March 16, 263 students have taken the survey. Skoog's goal is to reach 500 by Sunday.

"Right now we're focusing on forming legislation and making sure this is something students want. If it's voted on in SGA then we'll go through the proper channels with athletics and administration to make this a reality," Skoog said.

Former assistant football coach Lawrence Sweeney suggested the nickname Chippewa in 1941 to replace then-mascot, the Bearcats. He argued that bearcats had nothing to do with the school, whereas the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe was closer to campus and the community.

In the 70s and 80s, the university was urged by the Michigan Civil Rights Coalition to drop the name Chippewas. Instead, it created programs in conjunction with the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe to strengthen ties and familiarize students with proper ways to honor Tribe traditions. Along with creating these programs, the university also eliminated any Native American logos, stopped using tom-tom drumbeats in the pep bands and educated students on proper use of face paint for football games.

Creating a mascot students identify with and can "rally around" may increase school spirit during sporting events, Illinois senior Joseph Hall said.

"While it doesn't necessarily matter what the mascot is, it's more about the culture that revolves around it," he said. "It's more going to be about what the school puts into it than what (students) think. You want it to look good, but more importantly, you want it to (accurately) reflect what it means to go to school (here)."

Rockford senior Kyle Hurley said a mascot change is only going to be worth what

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"The most logical answer would be to (keep the 'flying C') and have someone on the sidelines in a 'flying C' costume," he said. "But it really just depends on how hype people are going to get around (supporting) the mascot. If people are just going to blow it off and not care (about the mascot), then it's not worth the time and effort."

Due to SGA elections taking place in late March and a new president being announced in mid-April, Mahone said if students are in favor of creating a mascot it will likely be a project taken on by next year's administration.




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