

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Board of Regents

Official minutes of January 30, 1991.

The Board meeting was called to order by Chairman Burton at 11:02 a.m.

Chairman Burton introduced Dr. Gayle P. Thomas, of Dearborn, Michigan, a new member of the Eastern Michigan University Board of Regents. Regent Thomas expressed her pleasure at being named to the position and her desire to work with the various constituents of the University.

Chairman Burton asked Secretary Reid for an attendance roll call.

The Board members present were:

Chairman John Burton
Regent James Clifton
Regent Anthony Derezinski
Regent Thomas Guastello
Regent Richard Robb
Regent Gayle Thomas

The Board members absent were:

Regent Robert DeMattia
Regent Robin Sternbergh

Administration present were:

President William Shelton
Executive Vice President Roy Wilbanks
Provost Ronald Collins
Vice President Janet Pichette
Vice President Laurence Smith
Secretary to the Board and Executive Associate
to the President Juanita Reid

.4303M PRELIMINARY MINUTES

Section A

Regent Robb moved and Regent Derezinski seconded that the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board on October 24, 1990, be approved.

Motion Carried.

.4325M FACULTY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MONTHLY REPORT

Section 15

Regent Derezinski moved and Regents Clifton and Robb seconded that the Faculty Affairs Committee Agenda for January 30, 1991, and the October 24, 1990, minutes be received and placed on file.

Motion Carried.

.4326M BOARD CONFLICT OF INTEREST/CODE OF ETHICS

Section 16

Regent Derezinski moved and Regents Clifton and Robb seconded that in accordance with the Board's annual schedule for compliance with the Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics requirements, each member of the Board of Regents execute a Conflict of Interest Disclosure statement and a Code of Ethics statement for calendar year 1991.

Motion Carried.

.4327M ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Section 17

Chairman Burton thanked the Board of Regents for giving him the opportunity to serve as Chairman for the past two years and turned the meeting over to Secretary Reid for election of new officers.

Secretary Reid opened the floor for nominations of officers. Regent Burton nominated Regent Derezinski for Chairperson and Regent Clifton for Vice Chairperson. Regent Robb seconded the motion. There were no other nominations. Regent Robb moved that a unanimous vote be cast for those named.

Motion Carried.

Regent Derezinski moved that Juanita Reid be named Secretary and Janet Pichette be named Treasurer of the Board of Regents. There were no other nominations.

Motion Carried.

.4328M HURON LOGO

Section 18

Chairman Derezinski asked the President for his suggestion on the use of the Huron name and logo. The President made the following remarks and recommendation.

Several months ago, when the Board of Regents charged me with the responsibility to make a recommendation regarding the future use of the Huron name and logo, I knew a formidable and complex task awaited. I recognized then that the path would be difficult to traverse because it is filled with passionate advocates and valued constituencies who represent opposing and incompatible viewpoints. Their disparate perspectives and strong allegiances have historic roots which cannot and should not be denied or ignored. And the difficulties are further confounded by profound cultural differences among many of the advocates which strain to the limit their ability to communicate and understand each other. What is a source of pride to some is a source of degradation and pain to others. What is a source of enjoyment and commitment to some is a source of discouragement and humiliation to others.

The Huron logo and name are only symbols. That is, of course, the basis of their power and significance as well as the roots of our dilemma. The logo has no reality beyond the thoughts and feelings it inspires. And these thoughts and feelings include very different and personal meanings for our various constituencies. If these were symbols which carried similar meaning for all of us, there would be no controversy. But the Huron logo and name invite a range of social and cultural connotations and, therefore, are particularly subject to changing social values, sensibilities, and awareness.

I accept that any recommendation, or indeed NO recommendation, will alienate and affront some individuals in our community. There has been no shortage of advice and direction offered to me during the last few months! I reviewed the proceedings of the Logo Review Committee, explored relevant resources, talked with individuals representing a full range of views and expertise on these issues, and spent a great amount of time in contemplation. What should be the basis of my recommendation? Should it simply reflect the most popular position? Should it be based on economic considerations? To what degree should it be influenced by past practices and traditions? Should the deliberations of other institutions using Native American symbols determine Eastern's decision? While I gave some thoughts to these and other questions, there was really only one dominant issue which steadfastly drew my attention. What is the responsibility of an institution of higher learning? Is there a higher obligation entrusted to the academic community in a democratic society? Allan Bloom, in the CLOSING OF THE AMERICAN MIND, wrote, "In a nation founded on reason, the university was the temple of the regime, dedicated to the purest use of reason and evoking the kind of reverence appropriate to an association of free and equal human beings."

Having given this issue thorough consideration, I recommend that Eastern change the Huron logo and name to symbols more compatible with our own institutional values and goals, now and in the future. Symbols promote and perpetuate values, defining those who use them, creating their future as well as reflecting their past. As an educational institution, Eastern Michigan University cannot justify the continued use of symbols which we now know offend and denigrate, however unintentionally, members of our community.

This recommendation in no way implies that the university and supporters of the Huron logo and name ever intended disrespect or dishonor toward Native Americans. The evidence suggests quite the contrary: the Huron logo and name were intended to honor Native Americans, and the Huron image was a source of school pride to many members of the Eastern family. Nonetheless, the reality of their impact, despite the good intentions, is all too often negative in both overt and subtle ways.

Numerous advocacy groups for Native Americans and human rights have long opposed the continued use of Indian symbols for sports teams, contending they are injurious and humiliating. In good conscience, we cannot dismiss these pleas without defying our own institutional values to promote respect, equity, and cultural diversity and sensitivity. To do so, I believe, would compromise our integrity.

One of the lessons of multicultural awareness is that we cannot assume that what offends us, offends others or that what DOES NOT offend us, DOES NOT offend others. Our views of the world are often culture bound. True respect for others is based on acknowledging the legitimacy of world views and perspectives other than our own, even when we do not share them. We cannot decide for other people what is offensive to them. Nor can we mandate that they accept our good intentions, overlooking and denying their feelings and needs. Social justice demands more of us than that. This is not an issue which can be justly decided by a simple majority vote. By definition, the voice and needs of the minority would be forever silenced because they are fewer in numbers and have neither institutional tradition nor power to protect them.

Derek Bok, the recently retired president of Harvard, wrote that, "an educational institution cannot proceed in violation of its basic commitments." Eastern's commitment to diversity and the respect for all is well documented. Ernest Boyer, in CAMPUS LIFE, defined the vision of a "just" university community: "A just community is a place where the dignity of all individuals is affirmed Affirming justice is one of the most urgent obligations higher education must confront."

In our new statement of Mission, we have affirmed our commitment "to continually interpret and respond to a changing world." We have said that we "seek to demonstrate through all our programs and activities appreciation of human diversity and to maintain an atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect that will nourish human liberty." And, we have affirmed that we "seek to provide an environment that serves . . . and empowers a pluralistic community."

These are not meant to be empty words, rhetorical promises with no application or relevance to the way we conduct ourselves. The issue of the logo is a testing ground, a bellwether, of our good intentions. For all the pain and consternation this issue has caused, it has also given us an opportunity to stand behind our words and support them with actions and policies that will breathe life into them, giving them meaning and reality.

Eleanor Holmes Norton declared that an institution of higher education should "be committed to ideals and standards that transcend the realities of daily life . . . it must always respond to 'the pull of basic values.'"

That "pull of basic values" is the basis of my recommendation, providing the framework in which I have interpreted the extensive testimony, documentation, historical materials, reports, and recommendations previously compiled. I believe that any proposed solution which does not include the removal of the Huron logo and name is insufficient.

Change is difficult, even painful for some. But we can minimize the challenges of change by actively involving our community in selecting and inaugurating a new symbol, one consistent with our hopes for our future. We can also smooth the transition by affirming what has been most positive and respectful in the Huron image.

Thomas Bender wrote that "a university worth affirming must have an ethos, a sense of its own integrity." This change will give us cause to celebrate as we affirm our institutional integrity. It is my hope that those who most love the Huron logo and name do so because of their abiding pride in and commitment to our university and its values. If indeed that is the basis for their affection, I firmly believe they will continue their support, recognizing that this change is an honest effort to live up to those values.

The heritage of this great university is not attributed to a graphic symbol, logo, or mascot.

The strength of this great university has not emanated from a caricature.

The quality of this great university is not so shallow as to require artificial or extraneous representations.

No, Eastern Michigan University has a proud heritage, great strength, and exceptional quality because of the thousands of individuals who have contributed to the 140 year history of this institution as students, teachers, staff members, alumni, governing boards, and friends. I am confident that Eastern's future will reflect similar contributions.

A few weeks ago, I joined with some 5,000 other individuals in Bowen Fieldhouse to watch a basketball game. In the excitement of both the women's and men's contests, there was an emotional fervor I had not seen here during the last two years. The teams played splendidly and both emerged victorious. The pep band and cheerleaders continually rallied the fans. And the students, faculty, staff, and friends responded with thunderous support. During those few hours, there was a common bond which transcended individual differences. My attention was drawn to this welding of spirit and emotion. It did not occur because of a logo or name; it did not occur because all participants and spectators came from similar racial, ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds; it did not occur because some had to be denigrated at the expense of others. It happened because the measure of this institution is its


people. It happened because of the just and caring spirit of our community. The pride of Eastern Michigan University is its people. I am honored to be associated with those people.

Regent Guastello moved that the Board accept the observations and recommendation of the President and Regent Clifton seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was carried unanimously.

Motion Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Juanita M. Reid
Secretary to the Board of Regents