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THE DAILY UTAH CHRONICLE

on November 4, 2009 at 12:00 am

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By Joseph Simmons

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MULTIMEDIA

There are plenty of people who have taken offense to the U's use of the Ute nickname through the years, both in and out of the American Indian community. On ways took comfort because I was under the impression that part of the U's efforts to foster a good relationship with the Ute Nation was providing scholarships just for Ute tribe members. The only problem is that this "Ute scholarship program" doesn't really exist.

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When I decided to research the Ute tribe scholarship program's role at the U, I looked for it in different departments on the U's website...and looked and looked and looked, never finding a Ute scholarship program. It's not that there aren't scholarships at the U available to students from the Ute tribe, there just doesn't appear to be anything special or specific for them.

The conflict arises from the fact that American Indians have a unique relationship with the United States government and consequently a unique relationship with government-funded schools such as the U. The Utes aren't just a tribe; they are considered a nation, not to be grouped with other ethnic minorities.

When the NCAA began to restrict school mascots and nicknames in 2005, it created problematic situations at many schools with American Indian mascots or nicknames. For a time, it looked as if the U would be forced to exclude the Ute name from all team nicknames.

From those conflicts, many programs began developing the relationship between schools and their American Indian tribal ties. Although the controversy about the mascots got most of the attention, the focus drifted away from scholarships. Many schools, including the U, were only allowed to keep their nicknames because the attached tribe appealed directly to the NCAA in their defense. In return, the U agreed to change the school mascot from a Ute to Swoop. Whether or not

the U agreed to provide scholarships, many people began to believe that there was a Ute tribe scholarship program.

This caused a furor in 2006, when, according to a report in the Deseret News, the Ute tribe was left feeling disappointed by the U's lack of commitment to what they felt was a mutual desire to institute a Ute scholarship program. In the report, then-Ute tribe education director Marilyn Hetzel openly voiced concern that the U was just giving the tribe "lip service," and was not serious about establishing a real scholarship program.

"I honestly don't feel like they're moving forward beyond saying they'd set aside a scholarship," Hetzel told reporters at the time.

The Roger Leland Goudie Scholarship was briefly made available specifically to Ute tribe students coming to the U but is now available to several ethnic minorities.

Cristina Caputo, a scholarship coordinator for the U's department of undergraduate studies in the Student Initiatives Office, said she has seen many American Indian students receive scholarships through the U's different departments, but there isn't a definite Ute tribe scholarship program in the way that it's perceived by many students.

"In a sense, it's unclear what the university's relationship is with the Ute tribe in terms of working with scholarships," Caputo said.

The good news is that even though the U doesn't seem to have a Ute tribe scholarship program, there are still scholarship options available to Ute students, as well as students from other tribes.

Dale Tingey, the national director of American Indian Services, said he has seen firsthand how much good scholarship programs can do for all American Indian tribes. American Indian Services helps about 1,200 students get scholarships for higher education every year, but he said demand continues to increase. Last year, more than 1,800 American Indian students applied for scholarship aid, and that figure will likely increase.

Depending on the school that the student chooses to attend, the scholarship programs through American Indian Services boast an 85 to 90 percent success rate, Tingey said. Still, these numbers are national. As local information wasn't immediately available, it's hard to say how well this

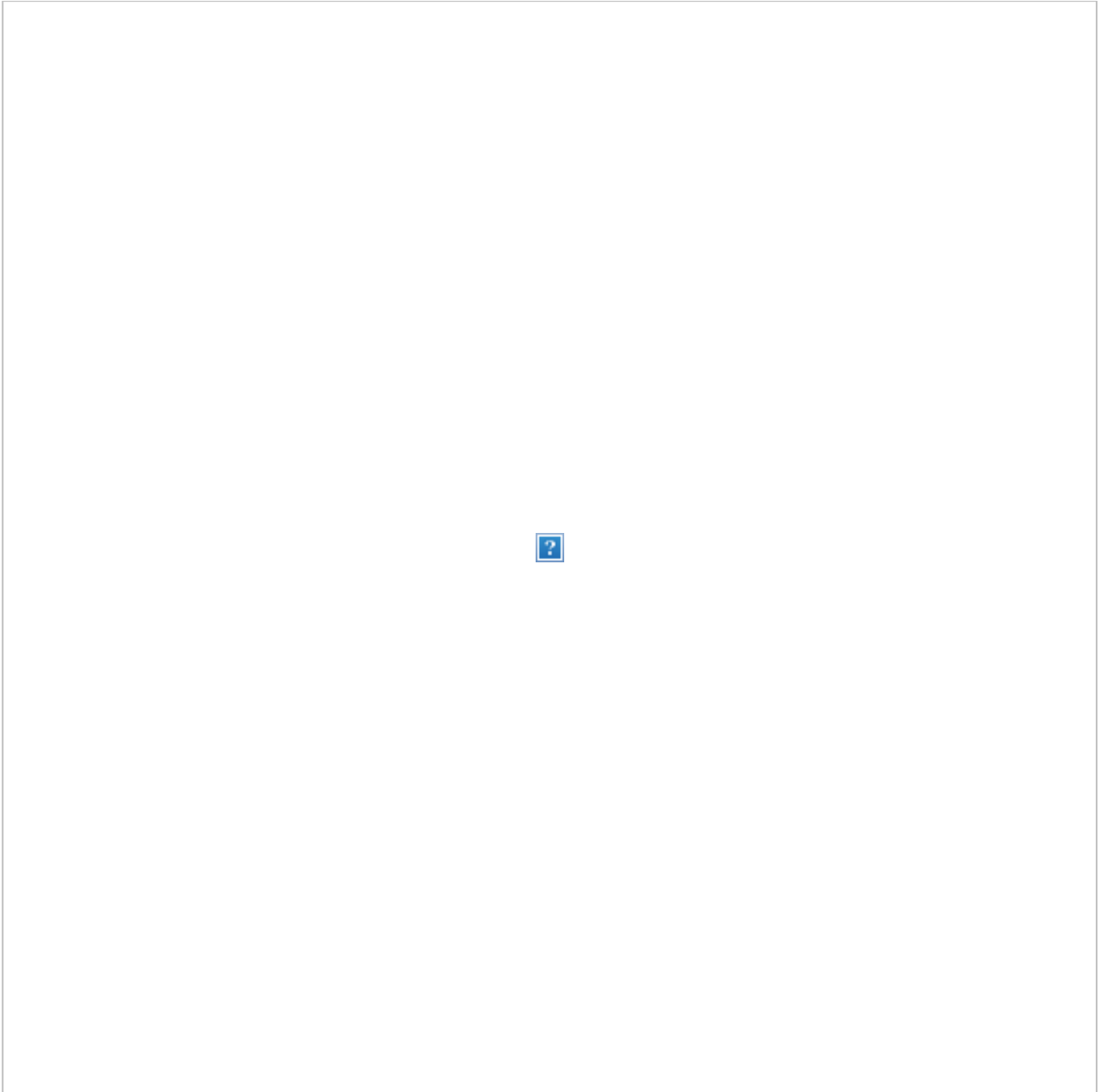
reflects the experience of members of the Ute tribe or other American Indians in Utah.

The best thing that the U can do to avoid problems with the Ute tribe is to strengthen the tribe community, and that's done best through higher education. When considering the value of being able to be the Runnin' Utes, we need to remember that it's a part of our community both as a college and a state. The Ute tribe stood up for the U, and there should be a true effort from the U to set up a real and lasting Ute tribe scholarship program.

Antonio Arce, director of education for the Ute Nation, was unable to prepare a statement before deadline.

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