



# New policy distinguishes "Utes"

Starting today, the *Chronicle* has a new policy which you may or may not have noticed: The word "Ute" (as in "Ute" football, Lady "Utes," etc.) is set off with quotation marks unless it specifically refers to those people or things which are part of the Ute Indian tribe.

From your end of the paper, this may not seem like such a big deal. But before you turn the page, please let me explain the background behind this decision.

As anyone who read yesterday's issue knows, the *Chronicle* Editorial Board opposes the University of Utah's use of the Ute Indian as a glorified cheerleader for athletic and other events. This opposition is based on a firm belief that exploiting a group of people for entertainment purposes is racist—even if such exploitation is respectfully intended.

After re-evaluating our final stance, however, members of the board wondered whether we had done enough. Although we stated our opinion as clearly and powerfully as possible in the house editorial, we worried our arguments against the "Ute" mascot would be glanced at over breakfast and forgotten.

We couldn't allow this to happen. Yet we also realized, as members of a newspaper Editorial Board, our influence on university policy must remain limited. We wanted the right to comment openly on the mascot, but we didn't want to overstep boundaries of objectivity by taking our concerns outside of the *Chronicle's* pages. Nor did we want to bombard the U. community with a progression of anti-"Ute" editorials.

### Taking responsibility.

Based on our still-developing, pre-professional ethics, we refuse to "make the news." And in our opinion, repetitive commentary on an issue which fails to interest the U. does just that.

What we will do, however, is take responsibility for the racist aspects of the "Ute" mascot as it appears within this publication.

That's why we changed our policy on the word "Ute"—because even though the U. fails to separate human beings from mascots, the *Chronicle* thinks this distinction is necessary.

In this paper, Utes are a group Native American people. "Utes" is a nickname which the U. has attached to an endless number of activities and events, none of which have anything to do with actual Utes.

This sudden influx of added quotations may seem ugly at first, and it may lack the journalistic streamlining we usually strive to attain. Nonetheless, we hope it will clarify things and eliminate at least some of the racist implications which accompany our mascot.

### It's really nothing new.

This isn't the first time the *Chronicle* has plopped quotation marks around normally unquoted words.

Two years ago, under Peter Behle's leadership, the Editorial Board opted to quote the word "Greeks" when it referred to fraternal organizations rather than people of Greek decent.

We had a little help back then. Shia Kapos, then-editorial editor, cared enough about the distinction to offer an articulate and thoughtful

argument against confusing true Greeks with members of a college social club.

She convinced us that the interchangeable use of the word "Greeks" misleads many readers. (Does a Greek function take place in a Greek Orthodox Church or on frat row?)

She also assured us the mix-up was insulting to many members of the Greek community—especially those who deliberately avoided affiliation with U. "Greeks."

Using the quotes seemed funny and intrusive at first, but in a short time, they became a convenient way of keeping things clear and inoffensive.

### Mixed feelings.

We care enough about readability to hope the transition from Ute football to "Ute" football will be just as uncomplicated. However, a small and admittedly biased part of us hopes the added quotes will shake you up at least a little.

Maybe then you'll realize there is a difference between Cougars, Cardinal and "Utes" that goes beyond the fact that they represent BYU, Standford and Utah.

And it's this difference, not a desire to offend or preach, which forces us to alter our style.

We'd prefer to stick with traditional style, leaving quotes off of both "Greeks" and "Utes." But until U. organizations stop borrowing racial and ethnic terminology, our decision to distinguish meaning with quotation marks will have to stand.

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