**LSA passes resolution opposing use of Native American-themed mascots in sports**

February 2015

A resolution opposing the use of Native American-themed mascots and symbols by sports teams has been passed overwhelmingly by the membership of the Linguistic Society of America.

The resolution, drafted by Andrew Garrett and Geoff Nunberg of UC-Berkeley, "calls for abandoning the use of Native American nicknames, logos and mascots in sport, while respecting the right of individual tribal nations to decide how to protect and celebrate their respective tribal heritage". The resolution was proposed and approved by acclamation at the LSA's annual Business Meeting in Portland, Oregon, on January 9, 2015, then presented to the full LSA membership for a vote during the month of February. The resolution passed with 93.3% of the vote.

As the resolution notes, "since its founding, the Linguistic Society of America has been committed to the documentation, study and preservation of Native American languages and cultures, to collaboration with Native communities, and to the principle that all languages and cultures are equally deserving of respect by scholars and the public". The LSA joins organizations including the American Anthropological Association and the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport in making this call.

The full text of the resolution is reprinted below.


**WHEREAS**, since its founding, the Linguistic Society of America has been committed to the documentation, study and preservation of Native American languages and cultures, to collaboration with Native communities, and to the principle that all languages and cultures are equally deserving of respect by scholars and the public; and

**WHEREAS** the use of Native American-themed mascots, logos and nicknames by sports teams and educational institutions reduces Native cultures to crude, one-dimensional stereotypes and shows disrespect for Native American spiritual and cultural practices; and

**WHEREAS** such stereotypes distort the historical record and disparage present-day Native Americans, undermine education about Native American history and life, harm Native
Americans, and encourage racial prejudices and preconceptions that coarsen American culture in general; and

WHEREAS the continued use of Native American nicknames, logos and mascots in sport has been condemned by numerous academic and educational organizations, including the Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas, the American Sociological Association, the American Anthropological Association, the American Psychological Association, the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport, the Modern Language Association, and the National Education Association, among others;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE LINGUISTIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA calls for abandoning the use of Native American nicknames, logos and mascots in sport, while respecting the right of individual tribal nations to decide how to protect and celebrate their respective tribal heritage.

UPDATE (6/26/2015): The LSA has joined the Central Council Tlingit Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska and other allied organizations in a boycott of FedEx services, due to their continued sponsorship of the NFL's Washington Redskins.