

# KINGFISHER MASCOT FAQ



## **Q: Why does Illinois need a mascot?**

A: Mascots are a fun way to symbolize the community and keep everyone connected with the University, particularly within athletics. They're an opportunity to represent who we are, what we stand for, and who belongs to our community. We've gone **17 years** without an official mascot, and it's time to let our students past and present know that they belong.

## **Q: Why should the mascot be a Kingfisher?**

A: Belted Kingfishers are Orange and Blue birds that reside in Illinois year-round. She can dive up to **45 mph** to spear fish right out of the water, she lines her nests with the bones of her prey, her beak was the inspiration for the Shinkansen Bullet Train, I could go on and on.

## **Q: What was wrong with the old one?**

A: According to the APA, Native mascots, even those that claim to respect, have been repeatedly proven to create a hostile and abusive learning environment. It is dangerously easy to embrace reductive stereotypes in place of truly coming to understand Indigenous peoples through their own **nonfictional** history and experiences.

## **Q: Who's leading the effort to get the Kingfisher going?**

A: Students, alumni, and community members have been working together **since 2019** to make the Kingfisher official. They continue to make headway by creating and distributing merchandise, speaking before various University departments and governmental bodies, and spreading excitement with their physical mascot costume at various athletic, RSO, and spirit events.

## **Q: If we get a new mascot, would alumni stop donating?**

A: According to NACUBO, the wealth of UIUC has kept growing since the former one was retired, and other schools that retired and replaced their Native mascots have maintained a healthy endowment **throughout the process**. There is no evidence to suggest that we'd be any different.

Visit [KingfisherUIUC.com](http://KingfisherUIUC.com) or [@KingfisherUIUC](https://twitter.com/KingfisherUIUC) to learn more.