

Statement Supporting Mascot Vote

As a student body that is lacking in diversity, the controversial issue over the mascot change needs careful consideration. Many have argued that our Rebel is separate from the Confederate Rebel, and while the Confederacy was not in mind when adopting our mascot in 1971, this doesn't mean that the name doesn't raise eyebrows when taken out of context. As read in the information handout, there have been points in our history where the Confederacy has had associations, regardless of original or current intention.

This is a moment when we need to take a step back and look at the situation from the perspective of those around us, especially people of color. Considering the shameful history of slavery and racism that comes along with the Confederacy and what it continues to symbolize even today, it's time that we stop celebrating it and recognize that even if that's not what the Rebel mascot represents to us, rebel is synonymous with racism to the rest of the country.

The idea of changing the mascot is difficult to fathom because change is not easy to make. However, now is the time for change; with a new building comes a clean slate which gives us an opportunity to rebrand without going through the hassle of painting over old murals. Even with change to the name, the student body will be unaffected. The spirit and community of Juanita doesn't come from the Rebel name, and both would be present under any mascot.

The overall sentimental attachment many feel towards the mascot is understandable and relatable, but one must look past emotional reactions to consider the greater good. Having a name with such connotations puts Juanita in a less than respectable view to the rest of the world and to our opponents, and, more importantly, the mascot puts some in the position of feeling rejected and victimized by the offensive connotations – again, regardless of actual intentions.