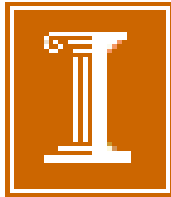


**ETHNOGRAPHIC REPORT ON THE JUBILEE
COMMEMORATION OF THE *BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION*
SUPREME COURT DECISION, University of Illinois**



Prepared for the
Jubilee Commemoration Organizing Committee

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2003-2007

1.0 Executive Summary

In the 2003-2004 academic year, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign hosted an extensive "Jubilee Commemoration" of the fiftieth anniversary of the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. The Ethnography of the University Initiative (EUI) was commissioned to document the commemoration, which brought nationally and internationally renowned civil rights figures and many others to campus and sparked continuing dialogue and initiatives. Our report of this extraordinary commemoration is remarkable in that it is the product of undergraduate student researchers who reflect on significant attempts by their university to increase and honor diversity during a time of considerable conflict and controversy on campus. To capture the feel of this year, students attended events, took field notes, interviewed key stakeholders in the *Brown* Commemoration, and recorded their own reactions. This report was written with the collaboration of the then faculty directors of EUI, one additional faculty member, a graduate student, and one of the undergraduate researchers. It documents key events of the commemoration, records reactions to those events, and reflects on the process and potentials of undergraduate student research. From these efforts we have distilled seven recommendations to improve campus climate and programming on race and diversity topics.

1. Participants in dialogues on race and diversity should "bring it home" by addressing race and diversity as they pertain to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
2. Programming on race and diversity topics should not shy away from intellectual and emotional discomfort as such programming provokes change in how people think.
3. Programming on race and diversity topics should be integrated into the daily routines of campus living, learning, and working if it is expected to produce lasting change. Such integrated programming is often expensive, and so should be made a budget priority as the university plans for its future.
4. To increase the likely efficacy of programs treating the issues of race and diversity, students should be given substantive roles in planning efforts.
5. Many campus units sponsored *Brown* Commemoration events, including some that were relatively new to dialogues on race and diversity. This broad sponsorship should be sustained and not allowed to narrow to just those units directly charged with addressing diversity issues on campus.
6. Dialogues on race and racism should contribute not only to a stronger multiracial campus community, but also to a multiracial society. Toward this end, programming that articulates with concerns of the Champaign-Urbana community should be encouraged.
7. In the February 16, 2007 press release announcing that Chief Illiniwek is no longer to be used as an athletic symbol of the university, Board of Trustees Chair Lawrence Eppley stated, "It will be important now to ensure the accurate recounting and safekeeping of the tradition as an integral part of the history of the University." Our research on the *Brown* Commemoration year suggests many constituencies should be included in planning the accurate recounting of the history of Chief Illiniwek.