

**FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE
NICKNAME/MASCOT SPECIAL COMMITTEE**

**For review and consideration by
Susquehanna University President L. Jay Lemons**

February 15, 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On Nov. 7, 2015 President Lemons convened the Name Mascot Special Committee (NMSC), following an Oct. 26 decision by the university's board of trustees to accept a recommendation to change the longstanding Crusaders nickname. Composed of 23 people who broadly reflect the alumni, students, faculty and staff of the SU community, the NMSC was charged to present back to the president no more than 3 but no fewer than 2 recommendations for nicknames capable of generating widespread support by mid-February 2016.

Over the next 80 days, the committee worked to meet its charge by:

- identifying criteria reflecting community values, needs, potential strengths and weaknesses in the nicknames to be suggested by the community
- selecting an external design/branding firm to eventually develop logo, iconography and other creative elements of nickname and mascot identity
- requesting suggestions from the SU community for nicknames meeting the criteria
- evaluating over 400 eligible unique nickname recommendations
- producing a group of five semifinalists which we felt best met the criteria and were thus most capable of receiving widespread support
- asking members of the SU community to rank the five semifinalists in order to produce a set of three finalists, and ultimately select the new nickname

Those three finalists, conveyed via this report, are: **Bobcats, Phoenix, and River Hawks.**

The following pages present, in greater depth, the committee's work process and information that lead to the delivery of these recommendations for consideration by President Lemons.

We have all taken very seriously our responsibility to assist the SU community in selecting its new nickname. We appreciate the privilege and opportunity to engage in this important mission, which to our knowledge has never before been undertaken at SU. We cannot predict how future generations will view the name that is selected, but our efforts reflect a sincere hope that the name to be chosen by the community in 2016 will serve the entire SU community well for many years to come.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR NICKNAME

In 1924 a Philadelphia newspaper reporter called Susquehanna University the “little crusaders” because the university’s director of athletics fought to reform and preserve college athletics for students, not hired professionals. The students liked the name, and although there is no record of formal adoption, this became SU’s nickname for the next 90 years.

However, for more than 25 years there has been growing concern within the SU community that this nickname unavoidably associated SU with the many negative aspects of the Crusades. Resulting concerns included the impact of this name upon recruitment of students and faculty, as well as the inability to have a mascot or school symbol directly connected with our nickname.

In June 2015, the Board of Trustees charged President Lemons with engaging the SU community in a process that would inform his recommendation to the Board about whether to keep the “Crusaders” nickname or change to something new. From Sept. 7 through Oct. 13, 2015, a series of “Crusader Conversations” was held in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Maryland and alumni, students, faculty, staff and friends of the university participated. Also, several email, social media and print communications encouraged over 20,000 members of the SU community – alumni, students, faculty, staff – to view an online video presentation and comment on the advantages of keeping or changing the “Crusaders” nickname. Roughly 1,300 people participated by attending an event, viewing the video and/or offering their comments through a survey, emails or letters.

On Oct. 23, 2015, for the reasons set forth in his letter to the Board of Trustees, President Lemons recommended changing the nickname (*See Appendix A*). On Oct. 26, 2015, SU Board Chair John R. Strangfeld Jr. ’75, announced that the Board had discussed this issue and had voted to replace the “Crusader” nickname and mascot for the reasons set forth in President Lemons’ letter. The Board asked President Lemons to convene a committee of alumni, students, faculty and staff to initiate a process in which all Susquehannans would have the opportunity to contribute to the selection of a new nickname and mascot (*See Appendix B*).

The Board’s decision to change the name angered some and was applauded by others, reflected in direct messages received by the university or observed in social media. Most community members did not express an opinion, at least not in the form of a communication with the university. In an early-November communication, President Lemons, responded to concerns raised by those upset with the decision to change (*See Appendix C*).

On Nov. 7, 2015, President Lemons met with the 23 members of the newly formed Nickname Mascot Special Committee (NMSC). In assembling the committee, the president wanted to draw upon the insights and inputs of:

- Students, with a mix of student-athletes plus other student leaders not involved in athletics AND limited to students who will be enrolled during the 2016-17 academic year and thus be in position to be part of the introduction of a new nickname and mascot;
- Alumni, including:
 - voices on both sides of the Crusader decision

- leadership from the Alumni Association Executive Board
- a spectrum of ages and geography
- varsity athletes during their undergraduate years at SU
- relevant professional/work experience
- Faculty respected by current and former students and whose length of service would likely expose them to discussions on both sides of the Crusader decision; and
- Staff whose job responsibilities have a bearing on institutional identity and the communication of it.

See *Appendix D* for more background information on committee members.

The president charged the committee with requesting nickname suggestions capable of generating widespread support from the SU community and asked that the NMSC return to him no more than three, but no fewer than two such suggestions for consideration by mid-February 2016. He asked Ron Cohen, vice president for University Relations, to chair the NMSC. The 23 members separated into five subcommittees charged with tasks integral to this mission.

HOW WE ORGANIZED

The NMSC divided into four primary work groups:

1-Business Case Development: Identified 10 criteria reflective of the SU community's values and needs in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each eligible nickname suggestion. The criteria were adapted to a rubric/scoring system used to compare our individual evaluations of the many names submitted as a basis for our group discussions. (*See Appendix E*). Following approval by the entire NMSC, the criteria and rubric were utilized in the review process.

Team Members: Scott Heller '82 (Subgroup leader), Brad Brown, Tom Dodd '92, Emily Leboffe '17, James Norman '18, Pam Samuelson, Caitlin Newman Thistle '09.

2-Communications Coordination: Designed the communications plan for the NMSC and the SU community to share the criteria, suggested names, evaluations (internal to the NMSC only), ranking and voting procedures, as well as other elements of the decision making process.

Team Members: Madeleine Rhyneer (Subgroup leader), Zachary Clinchy '18, Tyrone Croom '97, Aminata Diallo '19, Kate Hastings, Jamie Malachowski '09, Courtney Purnell '18.

3-Design Partner Selection Management: Selected [Joseph Bosack & Co.](#) as SU's design partner in early December 2015 and coordinated efforts with Bosack & Co. to create design concepts for the three "finalist" nickname/mascot suggestions.

Team Members: Angela Burrows (Subgroup Leader), Brent Papson '05, Karyn Kern Pinter '01, Will Starace '90, John "CJ" Williams '17.

4-Infrastructure: Created and coordinated with Bosack & Co. the system for collecting, analyzing and utilizing the data created by the evaluation of hundreds of unique name suggestions. Additional major contributions came from Dan MacArthur in University Communications and Chris Praul in University Relations. We could not have met our obligations

within the timeframe necessary without their considerable help, and we want to be certain their efforts are recognized and appreciated.

Team Members: Jerrell Habegger (Subgroup Leader), Keith Costello '73, P'00, '04, David Imhoof.

Finally, a **Process Planning** group consisting all subgroup leaders plus Keith Costello and Ron Cohen, communicated, coordinated and facilitated the simultaneous efforts of each subgroup as needed for the NMSC to meet the timetable set by President Lemons.

SUMMARY OF THE SUGGESTION AND SELECTION PROCESSES

Dec.1: The NMSC sent an introductory email message to more than 14,000 members of the SU community, requesting their suggestions for nicknames. Letters were also sent to approximately 6,000 alumni for whom SU has no current email address. Submitters were asked to provide rationale supporting their suggestions. The committee's communications stated that evaluations would be based on the degree to which a nickname met these criteria:

1. Consistent with the university's mission and values (link was provided to p.3 of SU's current strategic plan describing same in detail)
2. Inclusive, meaning respectful, non-offensive, and capable of universal support
3. Enduring
4. Unique
5. Relevant to SU's heritage, culture or location
6. Reflective of competitive spirit
7. Intuitive, meaning clear and instantly recognizable
8. Distinguished
9. Logo-friendly, for ease of display on uniforms and memorabilia
10. Mascot-friendly, capable of representation by a live mascot or a student-worn costume

Dec. 2-23: SU received over 1,800 responses from people in the SU community who, collectively, suggested more than 400 unique nicknames. Those submitting name/mascot suggestions were asked to provide their name, email address, and relationship to SU. We agreed that multiple suggestions would be accepted from any individual during the suggestion phase in December. However, during the ranking of semifinalists in January and the anticipated voting for the final selection in March, there would be one ranking or vote per person. Bosack & Co. assured us the information gathering system would allow for protection of the integrity of the process in this manner and has provided that to date.

Dec.24-Dec. 30: We reviewed all eligible* names submitted (again, approximately 400 unique candidates):

- 1) There were approximately 100 recommendations which were immediately recognized as offensive, insulting or otherwise lacking in effort to meet the criteria (ex. Cowards, Jellyfish, PC Liberals). These names were reviewed and eliminated.

- 2) Also, names already in use by other Centennial or Landmark Conference members were eliminated, i.e. Bears (Ursinus), Eagles (Juniata).

**Based on President Lemons' recommendation for change and the Board of Trustees' affirmation, "Crusaders" or its variations were not eligible for consideration. Despite notification of its ineligibility, submitters put this name forward approximately 300 times.*

The remaining 302 unique, eligible names were divided into two groups of 148 names. Each group of 148 was reviewed by 11 committee members, and six "control group" names were reviewed by all 22 members for purposes of intergroup scoring comparison and adjustment. We estimate that our members invested at least 150 hours of aggregated time evaluating the candidates during this week. Chairman Cohen abstained from evaluating names in order to organize and facilitate the evaluations by the rest of the committee.

The compilation and analysis of data generated by the individual committee members' application of the criteria/rubric to each eligible name provided some objective analysis to inform an otherwise subjective process. This allowed us to focus discussion on many of the names we had rated highly when we gathered for our group meeting on Jan. 2, 2016.

Jan. 2, 2016: We met to discuss in detail the aggregated results of our evaluations and to identify the names that best met the criteria and that provided choices among the "semifinalist" names to be submitted to the SU community for ranking. Twenty-one of the 23 NMSC members participated in this meeting.

The strengths and weaknesses of the names submitted were discussed in a lengthy, candid, yet respectful meeting. Everyone expressed views and opinions worthy of an educated, diverse group of community members, all of whom love SU and who took very seriously our role in the community's journey to a new nickname.

We are deeply grateful to the many people who gave careful thought to the criteria, as reflected in the many fine names submitted. We all knew there would be no "perfect" name, but the quantity and quality of these names made it challenging for us to narrow the field to a group of five semifinalists to present to the community.

We agreed the five semifinalist names best met the 10 criteria and therefore were most capable of generating widespread support and serving SU well for many years to come. In arriving at these five names, each of us put aside personal preferences in order to serve the best interests of the entire SU community. Some names were recommended by multiple submitters, and yet our examination of those – and all names – placed greater weight on what we believed would be most capable of gaining wide support throughout the SU community over time.

Jan. 11-25: We returned five semifinalist names to the community on Jan. 11 for consideration and ranking in order of preference (along with summary justifications provided by submitters):

BOBCATS

- Native to the Susquehanna River valley

- Beautiful, fierce, majestic, smart, tough
- Adaptable and resilient like SU students and alumni

EXPLORERS

- Ties to the Global Opportunities program
- Forward-looking, new frontiers, searching, demonstrates spirit of curiosity, entrepreneurial
- Relevant to our past and Rev. Benjamin Kurtz, whose different ideas about educating rural pastors led to our founding

PHOENIX

- A mythical creature/bird that is a sign of new beginnings
- Representative of the student experience, rising up to meet new challenges over 4 years
- Remarkable and unique; evolving

RIVER HAWKS

- Hawks are native to the Susquehanna River valley
- Broad reach/wingspan, keen vision and perspective: symbolic of how students grow and develop
- Fierce, determined, powerful

RIVER OTTERS

- Native to the Susquehanna River valley
- Curious, playful, social, intelligent – all representative of the SU student experience
- Relational to Selinsgrove’s high school nickname/mascot (Seal)

We determined that: 1) the name which received the most “first choice” rankings; and 2) the two names which received the best overall weighted scores based upon the rankings by the community, would be the three names we would present to President Lemons. In the event of one nickname receiving the most first choice rankings AND achieving one of the two best weighted scores, the nickname achieving the third best score would become the third finalist.

Jan. 25: 3,466 members of the SU community responded to our request to rank the semifinalist nicknames. Alumni and students comprised 84% (2,911) of those responding. The community ranked the five semifinalist names as follows:

<u>NAME</u>	<u># 1st CHOICE RANKINGS / WEIGHTED SCORE*</u>
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**lower weighted score is better*

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1) River Hawks: | 1,713 / 9,379* |
| 2) Bobcats: | 474 / 18,074* |
| 3) Phoenix: | 460 / 24,784* |
| 4) River Otters: | 455 / 27,475* |
| 5) Explorers: | 364 / 27,734* |

Translation of above: the results were such that the three finalists were the same under either scoring methodology.

The breakdown of the community members who responded:

- Alumni: 2,040 (59% of responders and approximately 11% of all alumni)
- Student: 871 (25% of responders and approximately 41% of all current students)
- **Friend: 247 (7%)
- Parent: 148 (4%)
- Faculty: 104 (3%)
- Staff: 56 (2%)
- *TOTAL* 3,466 (100%)

*** Friends include: members of the local/regional community, trustees, donors, or other individuals who have a relationship with the university that is not one of the other categories listed above.*

See Appendix F for more detailed information on the ranking results.

Jan. 26-Feb. 6: We sent a communication to the community about the 3 finalists on Jan. 26. We also asked Bosack & Co. to begin design work for review by the President and the Board of Trustees. We recognize that the ability to provide some visual representations will be important to the President and Board when considering their approval, and also for the community in making its final selection.

Feb. 6: NMSC had its final formal meeting to see initial designs from Bosack & Company, and to review a draft of this report and provide comments.

THE FINALISTS

The NMSC is proud to present to President Lemons the three finalist nicknames selected by the community for review:

- **Bobcats**
- **Phoenix**
- **River Hawks**

We believe each of these three names is capable of generating widespread support and serving SU well for many years to come.

ONE ADDITIONAL SUGGESTION

We have met our charge by 1) creating and following a process that reached out to and engaged the SU community, and 2) presenting three finalists. We understand and respect that all further decisions rest with President Lemons, the Board of Trustees and the SU community. However, we would like to offer one additional suggestion: that the ultimate selection process should produce a majority (at least 50%+1) of votes to confirm the chosen name.

If the Board presents two candidates for a final vote, a majority would be achieved with 99.9% certainty.

If the Board presents all three candidates, the one receiving the most votes may or may not achieve a majority. If an initial election were to fail to produce a majority, we would recommend eliminating the name with the fewest votes and quickly conducting a second election with the remaining two names, which should then assure a majority.

We ask the Board to consider preserving all three finalists if all are advanced by President Lemons. Again, we recognize the Board's authority and discretion to eliminate any name, and yet we hope the Board will trust this process by allowing the community to select its own nickname from the three that remain. If a second vote is needed, we believe that is preferable to lending any aid to those who would want to claim interference or manipulation of the outcome.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

It has been our privilege and honor to serve the SU community over the past three months. We have appreciated the opportunity to engage in this mission, which to our knowledge has never before been undertaken at SU. We cannot predict how future generations will view the name selected, but the many hours each of us has devoted to this process reflect a sincere hope that the name chosen by the community in 2016 will serve the entire SU community well for many, many years to come.

We know that some in the community have expressed a belief that this process is a sham, intended to ordain a predetermined result. We would not compromise our integrity, our intelligence, and our responsibility to the community we are serving, nor take time away from our families, friends, occupations and other pursuits to participate in any such charade. Rumor and continuing uncertainty over the new name are not helping anyone through this time of transition. We, as a community, cannot move forward until a new name is chosen.

From the start our goal has been to create a process reflecting the community's values and needs. We requested and evaluated hundreds of names suggested by the community (not by us), then after extensive discernment produced a list of the five names that best reflects community values and needs in a nickname and provided choices among different types of nicknames. We confirmed our trust in the community by assuring that the ranking of the five semifinalists, the choice of the three finalists and the final selection of our new nickname would ultimately be made by the SU community.

Each of us has willingly made the sacrifices necessary to meet this goal because we recognize the importance and urgency of the task. As we have seen, a nickname can be a powerful force in uniting or dividing a community. The decision to change the nickname has been painful for many whom we know are hurt. "Crusader" is tied to their experiences here and to the history of the university, and it is part of the foundation upon which Susquehanna's present and future will be built.

Several members of our committee opposed the change but nevertheless agreed to participate in this process to help the entire SU community begin to heal and join in finding a new name capable of generating widespread support. Those within our group who preferred the change, and those who opposed it, have come to better understand and respect each other through our mutual

efforts in this process. Some of us who thought our education at Susquehanna ended years ago discovered there are still valuable lessons to be learned here.

We now regard as friends people whom we might previously have seen as enemies. We came to know people who are not from our “era.” We shared and genuinely considered ideas with people who think differently than the circle of friends who tend to share our opinions. We relied upon each other to accomplish the many tasks necessary to serve the community’s best interests at each step of this process. These combined efforts helped us to recognize that our common bond is our love for SU and that this bond is stronger than any difference of opinion we might hold on any single issue, such as our nickname. We hope other members of our community will share this unifying experience in the future, perhaps in rallying around a nickname and mascot everyone can support.

We look forward to the announcement by the Board of the candidates from which the SU community will select our new nickname.

Sincerely,

The Nickname/Mascot Special Committee

Brad Brown	Jerry Habegger	Karyn Kern Pinter ‘01
Angela Burrows	Kate Hastings	Courtney Purnell ‘18
Zach Clinchy ‘18	Scott Heller ‘82	Madeleine Rhyneer
Ron Cohen, Chair	David Imhoof	Pam Samuelson
Keith Costello ’73 P’00 P’04	Emily Leboffe ‘17	Will Starace ‘90
Tyrone Croom ‘97	Jamie Malachowski ‘09	Caitlin Newman Thistle ‘09
Aminata Diallo ‘19	James Norman ‘18	John “CJ” Williams ‘17
Tom Dodd ‘92	Brent Papsen ‘05	