



DENVER
THE MILE HIGH CITY

February 22, 2008

On Monday, February 18, a columnist at The Campus Press, an online news service provided by the University of Colorado, published an extraordinary column that played upon racial stereotypes and promoted a hateful and alarming message. Needless to say, the Asian Pacific American (APA) community in Denver and throughout Colorado is outraged not only by the words of this particular columnist, but also by The Campus Press' decision to publish the column online.

There is neither a good time nor place for such a message, but the timing of this column was especially dubious. The column appeared the same week CU-Boulder planned to host a Diversity Summit, and a day before the "Day of Remembrance", when Japanese-Americans were rounded up and relocated to internment camps during World War II. We can hardly take seriously CU's commitment to diversity when its journalism department publishes a racist column online. In addition, calls by the columnist to, among other things, "find them all" reopened wounds that still run deep in this community over sixty years later.

There are those at The Campus Press who defend this article under the guise of freedom of the press. Just because there is a freedom of speech does not mean that freedom should be abused. Denigrating a race or ethnicity and defending it as free speech is to make a travesty of said freedom. Standing behind this columnist's words is not making a stance for free speech; it is a flat-out endorsement of racism and bigotry.

Furthermore, we live in an era where high school and college students have vented their anger on others by using firearms and taking lives. What if students heeded this columnist's wishes to go to "war" against APA students? What if angry APA students retaliated in a destructive manner? These words are not satire, as The Campus Press and their columnist would like to have everybody believe. We are supposed to make the educational experiences of our sons and daughters as safe as possible, but words like those from this columnist serve only to endanger the well being of CU's community as a whole, not just the APA community there.

As those who are able to vote for members of CU's Board of Regents, as well as send our children to CU, we think we have a stake in how the University of Colorado conducts itself. We would like to believe that the people who work for and study at the University of Colorado do represent some of the best and the brightest the state has to offer. For the sake of promoting diversity, a safe learning environment and the sharing of thoughtful ideas, we call on the leaders at the University of Colorado to do what is right. We urge the leaders of the University of Colorado, as well as the staff of The Campus Press, to open dialogue with ethnic communities and organizations, in order to improve the environment at CU not just for Asian Pacific Americans, but for everybody.

Respectfully submitted,

Denver Asian Pacific American Commission

With support of:

The Denver African American Commission and its members

The Denver American Indian Commission and its members

The Denver Commission for People with Disabilities and its members

The Denver Commission on Aging and its members

The Denver GLBT Commission and its members

The Denver Latino Commission and its members

The Denver Women's Commission and its members

Karen Nakandakare, Advisory Board At-Large member, Agency for Human Rights and Community Relations

Pat Steadman, Advisory Board At-Large member, Agency for Human Rights and Community Relations