



February 21, 2008

On behalf of the Advisory Board of the Agency for Human Rights and Community Relations of the City and County of Denver (“Advisory Board”), we would like to express our disappointment and anger regarding the recent column published in The Campus Press that focused on stereotypes of Asian Americans in a hateful and alarming manner.

The Advisory Board consists of representatives from the African American Commission, American Indian Commission, Latino Commission, GLBT Commission, Commission on Aging, Women’s Commission, Commission for People with Disabilities, and the Asian Pacific American Commission. The Board members represent their communities in an advisory and advocacy capacity to the Agency and to the Mayor’s office.

CU’s Campus Press’ decision to print the article deeply concerns all representatives of the Advisory Board. The minority or marginalized communities represented on the Advisory Board have historically been targets of hate speech and will rally behind their Asian brothers and sisters to combat the Campus Press’ intolerable conduct.

The Advisory Board is also concerned with the timing of this article. The Japanese American Community is preparing to honor their elders and ancestors on Sunday through the Day of Remembrance. The experience of being interned in camps simply because of ancestry and ethnicity is truly a most painful Japanese American experience. That dark period in the history of this country was a human rights atrocity and the Campus Press has disregarded the tremendous pain felt during the anniversary of that historical crime by publishing the article now.

As a collective body, we urge the University of Colorado to strongly reflect on the damaging repercussions of this article. Its tenor and blatant disregard for circumstances in the Asian Pacific American community has worsened that community’s pain. We hope the University of Colorado understands that the other communities represented on the Advisory Board share in that pain. Reinforcement of stereotypes and insinuation of physical harm against any ethnic group is not to be taken lightly and should not be promoted anywhere, especially at Colorado’s institutions of higher education.

Mr. Benson, we congratulate you on your recent appointment as CU’s President and hope that under your leadership the University of Colorado can work to overcome these issues and fortify the effort to value diversity and promote respect for all students, cultures and communities.

Sincerely,

Lucia Guzman, Executive Director, Agency for Human Rights and Community Relations
Corrine Lindsay, Denver American Indian Commission
Ron Abo, Denver Asian Pacific American Commission
Sandra Mann, Denver African American Commission
Dede de Percin, Denver GLBT Commission
Derek Blass, Denver Latino Commission
Vicki Jordan, Denver Commission on Aging
Dawn Russell, Denver Commission for People with Disabilities
Muriel Arvay, Denver Women’s Commission
Pat Steadman, At Large Advisory Board representative
Karen Nakandakare, At-Large Advisory Board representative

