

February 26, 2008

Dear CU community:

The recently published opinion article authored by a Campus Press assistant opinions editor and a companion piece expressing an alternative perspective both underwent the College Media Advisers (CMA - who provide advice for editorial content in student publications) Code of Ethics process.

[http://www.collegemedia.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=11&Itemid=45](http://www.collegemedia.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=11&Itemid=45). Although the assistant opinion editor for the Campus Press stated the intent of this article was satirical, this nuance was lost on many readers. Many readers from diverse backgrounds, myself included, found the article offensive. Moreover, the written responses of many readers voiced concerns that included feeling the ugly sting of racism and the deafening resound of hateful speech. Some others felt physical fear and relived the bitter memories of historical and contemporary social injustices as well.

While it does not excuse the publication of this article, I think it is important for everyone to understand that the Campus Press is a critical component of an undergraduate course that also serves as a learning laboratory for students in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. Student articles published in the Campus Press do not undergo "pre-editorial review" by faculty and staff. School of Journalism Dean Paul Voakes explains that CU-Boulder, like many other campuses, utilizes guidelines that have been formulated by the CMA for managing editorial content in student publications called the Code of Ethics. In the CMA Code of Ethics process, students provide editorial review and make final editorial decisions. Faculty and staff reviews are provided post production.

There is no question that the substantive content of this article does not support CU-Boulder's institutional commitment to and value for practicing and achieving diversity.

Many are aware that one of our important strategic campus goals is to create a campus that values and practices inclusive excellence in which respect for diversity is fundamental and non-negotiable. Hundreds of people have written to the university to express their outrage about this article and many have asked us about next steps. One respondent asked, "Do you plan to sweep this under the rug with empty apologies?" The answer is an emphatic, "NO."

The process of healing is necessary and responding proactively is challenging but possible. In my role as Vice Chancellor for the Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement (ODECE) I can assure you that we are committed to ending any and all semblances of overt and/or covert racism on our campus. In our desire to create an inclusive and diverse intellectual community, we do not shirk from difficult discussions. I also believe that we can accomplish this goal only by working together. To heal requires that our students, faculty and staff work cooperatively as we seek to understand and overcome the complexities of societal racism. We must constantly ask

and answer the question, "What behaviors and strategic actions must we develop and take to eradicate racism on our present-day campus?"

Through our actions, words and intentions we determine the campus climate and only we can improve it. Toward this important goal ODECE will work in cooperation with students, faculty, staff and community leaders to institute a series of deliberative campus dialogues to plan and enact action steps to eradicate racism on our campus. Initially, this integrative work will be cosponsored by Student Affairs, University of Colorado Student Union, Academic Affairs, Administration and members of the Chancellor's Diversity Advisory Board. We welcome help and witness from other communities. Please call ODECE (303-735-1332) or email [ode@colorado.edu](mailto:ode@colorado.edu) if you would like to work with us to build a stronger campus community that intentionally strives to eradicate the ugly sting of racism.

For updated information on actions taken by the university in response to the Campus Press opinion piece and feedback from the community, visit the website:

<http://www.colorado.edu/news/reports/campuspress>.

Sincerely,

Sallye McKee, Ph.D.

Vice Chancellor

Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement (ODECE)