CU UNSAFE?

Prof unfairly disparages school

Without a doubt, many members of the University of Colorado-Boulder faculty are deeply troubled by the events of the past year surrounding the university's football program. But Joanne Belknap, a professor of sociology, went too far when she commented on the university in an article on the football program in The New York Times (Sept. 4) that, "I wouldn't send my kid here." This comment unnecessarily disparages the entire university, its many faculty members, and its 30,000 students.

The University of Colorado-Boulder is much, much more than a football program — it is home to many outstanding academic and research programs in areas of science, law, engineering, and policy, and is one of the nation's leading research universities in the environmental sciences, my own area of specialization.

For many of us on the faculty, we observe events associated with football program and the university administration through the media, just like members of the general public. Our day-to-day work at the university is, believe it or not, relatively far removed from the football program and is focused on achieving excellence in research, education and outreach to the community. I can speak with first-hand knowledge about the programs at the University of Colorado-Boulder that I am associated with; these programs are ones that anyone can feel proud about sending their children to, knowing not only that they will receive a valuable education, but also that they will be treated with respect and dignity. Any faculty member who encourages students to avoid the University of Colorado-Boulder, rather than working to make the university a desired destination, is part of the problem, not the solution.

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POPULATION

U.N. fund wrongly targeted by Bush

The United Nations Population Fund is the world's largest international source of funding for population and reproductive health programs and works in more than 140 developing countries to promote safe motherhood, provide family planning and other reproductive health services, prevent HIV/AIDS, address the special needs of adolescents and protect universal human rights.

For the last three years, the U.S. Congress has authorized a total of $93 million for this important humanitarian work, but the funds have been blocked by the current U.S. president because of erroneous information that the funds might be used to support abortions. However, none of the UNFPA funds are used for abortions.

The president doesn't seem to understand that education about and access to family planning, including various practical birth- and disease-control measures such as condoms, is one of the most effective ways to diminish the number of unwanted pregnancies worldwide, and is thus a powerful weapon in the arsenal of measures to greatly reduce the perceived need for abortions. Release of those funds should be a no-brainer for thoughtful people concerned about the abortion issue.

Each year that the funding is withheld, an estimated 4,700 women and 77,000 infants and children needlessly die. These