
Dangerous professors?

Re: "Dangerous professors," March 5 John Andrews column.

It was just a matter of time before John Andrews joined the smear fest that has been provoked by David Horowitz's shoddily researched, error-filled and irredeemably awful book. Readers interested in the other side of the story can independently evaluate Andrews' claims about me at www.portfolio.du.edu/dsaitta (click on the "Discovery" tab). They will find a response to Horowitz that puts my statements about Ward Churchill and Dick Lamm in context, and shows Horowitz's accusations to be groundless. Readers might also be surprised to discover that my warning about "thought police" holds for both liberals and conservatives.

Andrews himself is clueless about my scholarship and the quality of my classroom teaching. He was just as clueless back in 2003 when his legislative hearings into alleged liberal bias in Colorado universities impugned the character and reputation of professors without giving the accused an opportunity to defend themselves. In the wake of that inquiry I sent Sen. Andrews a long and respectful letter (also accessible in my DU portfolio) informing him about how those of us who actually work in the university approach teaching, hiring and promotion. I received no response.

Horowitz and Andrews carp about propagandizing professors, but fail to see that theirs is the pedagogy of disempowerment and control. If my rejection of this pedagogy and my personal commitment to the values of academic freedom and open debate make me "dangerous" to ideologues like Horowitz and Andrews, then I accept their characterization with honor and pride.

Dean J. Saitta, Denver

The writer is an associate professor of anthropology at the University of Denver.
