

March 9, 2006

Dear John Andrews,

We are writing on behalf of the undergraduate and graduate students in the Anthropology Department at the University of Denver in response to your comments on “Dangerous Professors” in the Sunday, March 5 edition of the Denver Post.

We are aware of David Horowitz’s list of the “top 101 most dangerous academics,” and appalled that Dr. Dean Saitta has been described as someone his students must “endure,” let alone someone who is “dangerous.” Students who have taken any of Dr. Saitta’s courses immediately recognize that he encourages open dialogue and discussion.

We also felt that Horowitz’s assessment, as well as your article, was condescending and patronizing to all university students. The article implied that we somehow lack intelligence and backbone to challenge our professor’s opinions or otherwise think for ourselves. We realize that given recent media attention to the high school situation at Cherry Creek and Jay Bennish that you may be tempted to “victimize” all students as passive recipients of their teacher’s views. This is insulting at best. While it may be hard for some to believe, the majority of university students have an acute awareness of current political issues, and are capable and eager to form their own assessment of those issues. It seems Horowitz forgets that an essential key in the “university experience” is the diversity of opinions and open dialogue shared between professors and students.

As students who have taken courses with Dr. Dean Saitta in the Anthropology Department at DU, we know that he is much more interested that his students *have* an opinion than if they agree with him. He has never intimidated or chastised a student for having a view different from his own. It is true that Dr. Saitta demands his students be able to defend their position with a well-supported argument; he will not tolerate blatant ignorance. But if that is the mark of a “dangerous professor,” then we need more of them.

Sincerely,

Jennie Sturm and Kelly Goelz

Graduate Students in the Anthropology Department at the University of Denver