

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 22, 2013

Mr. Frank T. Brogan
Chancellor, State University System of Florida
325 W Gaines Street
Tallahassee FL, 32399

Dear Chancellor Brogan,

I am writing to respectfully express my serious concerns over the events that recently transpired at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) regarding the rights of our students and the integrity of the material being taught in our classrooms.

It is my understanding that during an Intercultural Communications Class (SPC 3710) at FAU, students were instructed to participate in an exercise where they write "Jesus" on a sheet of paper, reflect on it, place the sheet of paper on the floor, step on it and report how that made them feel.

It has also been brought to my attention that a student named Ryan Rotela was offended by the exercise, refused to participate for religious reasons, had the courage to tell the Professor that this exercise was inappropriate and informed the Professor that he would be reporting the exercise to his superiors. It is my understanding that Ryan has now been suspended from the class. Chastised by the FAU Administration, Ryan appears to have been singled out for standing up for his religious beliefs.

I appreciate FAUs' apology for the exercise and assurance that it would not be conducted again. Such an exercise has no place in Florida's State University System. But I remain troubled by his claim that he has been suspended. Our public institutions of learning should respect the religious freedom of all people. No student in our state should be punished for respectfully expressing his religious and conscientious objections about a classroom activity and also advocating for transparency and accountability in our post-secondary educational system.

I would appreciate a response to the concerns I've brought to your attention. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio

cc. Governor Rick Scott
cc. Senator Don Gaetz, President, Florida State Senate
cc. Representative Will Weatherford, Speaker, Florida House of Representatives
cc. Dr. Mary Jane Saunders, President, Florida Atlantic University