

Fla. Professor in 'Jesus Stomping' Case Reinstated

Florida Atlantic University has reinstated the professor who had students stomp on a piece of paper with the name *Jesus* written on it.

The school exercise provoked a strong reaction, including a request from Florida Gov. Rick Scott that university officials investigate the matter.

"As we enter the week memorializing the events of Christ's passion, this incident gave me great concern over the lessons we are teaching our students," Scott wrote in the letter to Chancellor Frank Brogan in late March.

"The professor's lesson was offensive, and even intolerant, to Christians and those of all faiths who deserve to be respected as Americans entitled to religious freedom," he said.

Professor Deandre Poole said the point of the lesson was to show the power of words, not denigrate Christianity.

But some conservatives say the exercise would never have been done using a Muslim name like Mohammed.

Meanwhile, Heather Coltman, interim dean of the College of Arts and Letters, defended the university's decision to retain Poole.

"We thought it was in the university's best interest," Coltman said. "We need experienced, qualified faculty members, and all things considered, we decided he would be a valuable asset to the college."

"I understand this decision may not be popular with all members of the community," she acknowledged. "But it was based on months of thorough research and consideration."

Poole will only teach online because of security concerns.