

CHRISTMAS PANIC AT FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIV.

Here is what we told the press about the panic over Christmas that hit Florida Atlantic University (FAU):

“On most campuses, the night before finals is when students cram until they’re exhausted, but not at FAU this term: last Thursday, many attended an ‘EMERGENCY’ meeting about the controversy surrounding the school’s ‘Finals Week’ tree. For the past six years, the ‘Finals Week’ tree—adorned with lollipops, Fritos, etc. (courtesy of the faculty)—has been on display at the end of each semester. This year, Mark Tunick, a professor and interim dean, made the mistake of e-mailing 57 employees encouraging them to support ‘the traditional finals week Christmas tree with snack.’ That was too much to bear for Professor Martin J. Sweet: he said religious symbols don’t belong on campus, and it was his panic that triggered the ‘EMERGENCY’ meeting. Student government officials and faculty said they would hold ‘multiple meetings’ next semester to deal with this issue.

“FAU has a strange way of handling religious events. To begin with, the Christmas tree is not a sacred symbol; ergo, the protest is based on ignorance. Moreover, FAU held religious services on Yom Kippur in the main auditorium last October, all without protest. And there will be a Holiday Fundraiser at FAU’s Live Oaks Pavilion on December 17 where a group will ‘perform a medley of Jewish, Hanukkah and Christmas classics, with a particular emphasis on Yiddish music.’ No protests are likely. The state school also has an *officially endorsed* black Gospel Choir.

“FAU is not without values: this past summer, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, students were given a real necessity—condoms were promiscuously distributed. This is the

same school that caught our attention in 2001 when it hosted the anti-Catholic play, 'Corpus Christi.'

"Some students say the 'Finals Tree,' which is an evergreen, should be replaced with a Palm Tree, a hammock or a basket. We suggest that all lollipops be deposited in a baby carriage."