

Letters: Why James Tracy, FAU's conspiracy theorist, should resign.

OPINION

By Post readers - Submissions from Post readers



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Florida Atlantic University associate professor of communications James Tracy infuriated the public with his conspiracy theories about the Sandy Hook massacre and is doing the same with the Boston Marathon bombing.

In each instance, he claimed that the events as we know them may not have happened and were perhaps staged using crisis actors. Despite the suffering that he has caused to victims' families, the poor example he has set for his students and the damage that he has done to the university's reputation, Mr. Tracy continues to blog unabated.

He and his supporters quickly reference his First Amendment right to express his ideas. Ideas, they proclaim, lie at the heart of the academic pursuit. What James Tracy does not understand is that ideas represent the end product of the intellectual process. Before they can be publicly espoused, ideas must be subjected to rigorous and intensive examination. Academics test ideas to prove their worth; commentators simply state them. Academics expose their theories to other academics; conspiracy theorists blog them to each other. Academics build on a rich intellectual tradition, people like James Tracy spin tall tales out of nothing.

James Tracy should not resign from FAU because he has upset people or brought shame to the university. He should resign because he is not an academic.

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