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## AP New Jersey

### School employee fights reprimand after insulting lesbians

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WAYNE, N.J. -- An employee at William Paterson University who was reprimanded for using a private e-mail to describe homosexuals as "perversions" says his rights were violated.

Jihad Daniel, 68, of Hackensack, made his comments in March in response to an e-mail he received that had been sent university-wide by professor Arlene Holpp Scala. That message invited people to a film about lesbian relationships, titled "Ruthie and Connie: Every Room in the House."

Daniel, who works repairing the university's computer networks, responded in an e-mail to Scala that he did not want to receive messages about "Ruthie and Connie."

"These are perversions," he wrote as part of his one-paragraph response.

Daniel went on to write that "the absence of God in higher education brings on confusion. That is why in these classes the Creator of the heavens and the earth is never mentioned."

Scala forwarded the e-mail to a university office responsible for handling discrimination complaints, saying she thought it was threatening and also went against the school's anti-discrimination policy.

The publicly funded university reprimanded Daniel, saying his comments were derogatory and demeaning.

Daniel, who also takes communications classes part-time at the university, challenged the reprimand.

"Even if someone didn't like what you said, you still have the right to say it," said Daniel, who told The Record of Bergen County that he was expressing his Muslim beliefs.

Daniel's appeals have been rejected by the university. A Philadelphia-based organization, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, has taken up the case and says it will fight to have the reprimand removed.

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