

# FAU findings go to state attorneys

## Investigators remain quiet about alleged Corvette gift

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BOCA RATON • Prosecutors are reviewing allegations that gifts to Florida Atlantic University's money-raising foundation were funneled into a sports car for a former FAU president, according to state investigators and FAU officials.

State investigators and campus police have spent two months looking into whether FAU Foundation money was used to buy former President Anthony Catanese's 2002 red Corvette as a parting gift.

Investigators won't say what they've found. But Florida Department of Law Enforcement spokeswoman Paige Patterson Hughes confirmed Friday that the investigation is "essentially complete" and being turned over to Palm Beach County state attorneys.

The prosecutors, who would decide whether to file criminal charges based on investigators' findings, wouldn't comment Friday. Nor would the university or its lawyer in the foundation inquiry, beyond a short statement noting the developments.

"I am sorry that it appears so vague," FAU President Frank Brogan told trustees and foundation board members in a memo

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Friday. "... Unfortunately, in that the investigation is still 'open' as far as [the State Attorney's] Office is concerned, we are not in a position to discuss the contents."

Catanese left FAU in July for the private Florida Institute of Technology. Sources knowledgeable about the investigation have said \$42,000 was routed from the foundation to Catanese's wife through an interior design firm then working on FAU's presidential house. She was involved in designing and decorating the president's house but hadn't worked for the firm.

By its account, the design

firm got a \$42,000 bill, along with a memo from then-foundation chief Carla Coleman promising a reimbursement. The design firm paid, and was repaid. Within a month, Catanese bought a new Corvette for about \$42,000, the sources said.

Foundation leaders have said they never agreed to give Catanese a car or the cash to get one.

Both Coleman and Catanese, through lawyers, have denied wrongdoing. Coleman, who was barred from her office and placed on paid leave when the investigation began in February, since has resigned.

Her lawyer, Kenneth Lipman, said Friday he and Coleman had heard nothing about the investigation's progress.

"Our position has always been that nothing criminal has

ever occurred here. We hope that is what the state attorney will also conclude, and that Carla will be able to get on with her life," Lipman said.

Meanwhile, FAU is looking for a headhunting firm to help find a replacement for Coleman, who was a university vice president as well as the foundation's executive director, Brogan wrote Friday.

Results are expected within weeks from an outside audit of foundation records, said foundation vice chairman Herbert Gimelstob. The audit is intended to address the alleged Corvette gift and other issues.

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