

Chancellor White's Friday Letter of December 7, 2012

Dear Friends,

S.O.S.

Save Our Souls – talk about a quintessential abbreviation that just about everyone knows from their youth... Morse code...an international indicator of distress... a cry for help in three dots . . . three dashes - - - and three dots . . .

Let me provide a different perspective: the fast-approaching end of the fall academic quarter. If you hear Morse code from a student or a colleague on the faculty or staff...at this time of the year that S.O.S. means, “*Support our Souls.*”

First-time undergraduate and graduate students are facing the rigor and demands of finals for the first time – final exams, papers, projects and performances. Indeed, it is the final moment in the term for students to demonstrate their ability.

For faculty and graduate teaching assistants, the end of the term creates a significant push – additional work to evaluate students’ efforts on top of their already impacted lives, preparing for next term’s teaching, ongoing expectations for research and creative activity, as well as engagement with community and professional organizations.

And for our staff, it means a final effort to deal with the mechanics of processing grades, transcripts, and the like, as well as preparing for winter quarter, just around the corner in January.

Our students in particular had just a brief a chance to come up for air over Thanksgiving, and then dove right back in to finish up the term, all the while mindful that many celebratory events are just on the horizon – Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, and Ashura as well as the Winter Solstice.

It is a time of many professional demands for everyone ... on top of balancing the added dimension of a personal life during the holiday season.

I encourage friends and family to offer extra support by word or deed, most importantly to our students.

If you have gone through finals earlier in life as a student, pause and reflect on your feelings back in the day. It will help inform how you might be supportive now. A word or two of loving support – a call, a text message, or a tweet. Send along ear plugs or energy bars. An unannounced visit to their residence halls or apartment may be less advisable ... but try a box of cookies and chocolate milk, or whatever comfort food works. Perhaps guacamole and chips??

This afternoon and again Monday afternoon, my trusty pooch Bella and I will search out students huddled somewhere - in the HUB, Orbach and Rivera libraries - in deep study. Jessica Darin from my office will help by offering cookies, as we interrupt for a moment or two and express our support.

S.O.S. – the time of year at UCR where a little extra support, love and encouragement from friends and family goes a long way.

Warmly,

Tim

Tim White
Chancellor

Share your thoughts: <http://fridayletters.ucr.edu/leavefeedback>

What happened after graduation?

Stories of UCR graduates are told through video on a blog designed for UCR alumni to keep in touch with their colleagues and friends.

<http://alumniblog.ucr.edu/category/video/>

Spotlight on an ecology of toil

A stunning display of illuminated life-size sculptures of domesticated animals provokes a multi-layered critique of consumerism and disposable culture at the Culver Center through Dec. 29. Captured in moments of struggle, these familiar creatures mirror the cycle of work and toil that also holds humans in a cycle of buying and throwing away.

<http://www.culvercenter.ucr.edu/exhibitions/?event-ID=3.2012.0013.0001>

A neighbor in combat

Sabino Osuna's stunning photographs of the Mexican Revolution capture a life-and-death struggle in progress. This exhibition and accompanying book are drawn from a UCR Special Collections archive of glass negatives covering the period 1910 to 1914. The exhibition, which goes on tour after this opening presentation at California Museum of Photography, lasts through Jan. 5. The event is sponsored by UCR Special Collections and UC MEXUS.

<http://www.artsblock.ucr.edu/events/index.php?content=event-entry&event-ID=1.2012.0009.0001#.UI7bIYbAH7c>

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What else is going on at UCR? <http://www.ucr.edu/happenings/>