Dear Friends,

As the multidimensional horrors, worries, and sorrows continue to unfold in Japan, all of us at the University of California, Riverside, and indeed the greater Riverside community, extend our thoughts, prayers and helping hands to those affected.

This is particularly meaningful for us because the heavily hit city of Sendai is a sister city of Riverside.

UCR also cherishes a rich and productive academic relationship with a number of Japanese institutions, including Tohoku University in Sendai, Josai University and Josai International University in Tokyo, and 18 other academic institutions. Our campus has 6 graduate students, 16 undergraduates, and 109 extension students who are from Japan. In addition, nine UCR students were studying in Japan at the time the earthquake hit. Thankfully, all are safe.

The stories on campus this week have been moving and agonizing in and of themselves. Our Japanese students watched in horror as images of their country's destruction replayed on TV. One young woman, a student in University Extension, watched in horror as her coastal village of Minami Sanriku was wiped out by the tsunami. For three agonizing days, Akiko Kosaka searched for clues to the fate of her family. Then on Sunday night, her home-stay mother heard her weeping and feared the worst. But Akiko was watching a video clip of her sister holding up a sign for a passing videographer saying that the Kosaka family was OK and asking to get word to her sister in America. Here is that moving clip:


Several of our Japanese students from Josai University near Tokyo return home this weekend, where they will undoubtedly face the blackouts, bare supermarket shelves and closed gas stations that our colleagues there write about. Life is nowhere near returning to normal, even far from the disaster area.

One other returning student Maya Suzuki, 20, comes from Iwake in Fukushima, an area close to the damaged nuclear reactor. Her mother and brother evacuated but her father, a physician, has stayed at the hospital, where he is being exposed to dangerous levels of radiation. Many students have friends and family who have not survived. Many survivors are homeless and report a severe lack of food, water, and supplies.

At the same time, U.S. parents and friends of UCR students studying in Japan have also been scrambling for news. Furthermore, many staff members have relatives there, and faculty worry about the safety of their research collaborators. The Bourns College of Engineering anxiously awaited news of Tohoku University, in Sendai, where the faculty have many collaborations. We
are relieved to learn Tohoku reported no immediately apparent significant structural damage, but they closed down operations for the next month or so to make a careful analysis and conserve energy.

The UCR spirit of community has kicked into gear. Recognize that it is finals week here – a time of high stress, anxiety, focus and commitment. And yet on Wednesday night 70 people, mostly students, set aside their books to gather with Oronne Wami from The Well Center and Billy Caganap from Asian Pacific Student Programs to share ideas and coordinate future relief activities for people halfway across the world.

And last night after returning home from the Regents meeting, I stopped by a gathering hosted by our student affairs professionals for our students from Japan. Our students were so very grateful for the support and advice on many of the matters confronting them.

I commend our leadership in University Extension, Student Affairs, as well as Graduate Division, the International Education Office, the Asian Pacific Student Program, and the Counseling Center for immediately springing to action to support our students.

Let me close this Friday letter by reminding us that the immediate needs in Japan are for cash. The City of Riverside has established a donation site where 100% of the collections will go to the hard-hit sister city of Sendai; please join with Karen, me, and so many members of our campus and broader community if you can: http://www.riversideca.gov/sendairelief/.

Sincerely,

Tim

Tim White, Chancellor

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

Why open UCR’s School of Medicine now?
I will be officially opening the School of Medicine Research Building today. Here Dean G. Richard Olds talks about why, despite the dire budget news, we simply must go forward to open UCR’s School of Medicine. California’s health depends on it.
http://www.youtube.com/user/ucriverside#p/u/0/36oOqrLuqlQ

Contamination respects no borders.
A one-day environmental health symposium highlighting research related to toxic exposure and contamination in Mexico and the United States will be held at UC Riverside on Tuesday, April 5.
http://newsroom.ucr.edu/news_item.html?action=page&id=2578

Research to make your screen more colorful
Chemists have developed tiny, nanoscale-size rods of iron oxide particles in the lab that
respond to an external magnetic field in a way that could dramatically improve how visual information is displayed in the future.
http://newsroom.ucr.edu/news_item.html?action=page&id=2571

Find out what else is going on at UC Riverside: http://www.ucr.edu/happenings/