

## Tragic Loss

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Dear Friends,

It is with profound sorrow that I write today about the loss of Colin Roche, a UCR student who died in a motorcycle accident on a local area freeway. There is nothing more difficult, sad and horrifying for us than when we lose one of our own.

Colin was a first-year transfer student from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge Community College and Riverside City College. He was enrolled in the Bourns College of Engineering as a Material Science and Engineering major. Colin was doing very well both academically and as a member of the UCR community. He was known to be enthusiastic, curious about most everything, and had a strong drive to engage in research as an undergraduate.

What do we, as a campus community, do when such horrific events occur?

Our first priority is to meet the needs of the family, and provide as much care and support as we can to Colin's fellow students and friends, as well as faculty and staff who have been directly affected.

UCR is very fortunate to have remarkably caring and thoughtful individuals in the division of Student Affairs who respond immediately. I am very grateful that Vice Chancellor Jim Sandoval and Dean of Students Susan Allen-Ortega are on point for us in such matters, and orchestrate communications and counseling support for those directly affected in the academic and living community of our late student.

Sadly, it is the case that parents are not supposed to bury their children, nor are college students and faculty supposed to grieve such a loss. Thus, to say the least, it is a difficult and emotionally wrenching task, but one that is so vital to begin the healing of the family and our campus community.

Students impacted by Colin's death are able to find support through the Counseling Center <http://counseling.ucr.edu/>. Counselors are available throughout the day during business hours on a walk-in basis, and arrangements can be made for counselor consultations with departments or student organizations as well. The Center additionally offers 24-hour telephone support that can be accessed through the main number (951) 827-5531.

Earlier this week, Jim and Susan met over dinner with Diana and Cindy Roche (mother and sister of Colin). They are natives of Louisiana and still live there, and are very gracious and loving people. They shared many fond memories of Colin, which was very emotional for both of them. But sharing such stories is vital to start the journey through the grieving process.

Colin clearly had some very special qualities and it quickly became apparent how great the loss

is to his family – as well as to campus. Colin’s mother indicated that he loved the beach and hiking in the mountains. Consequently, she asked to see if some of his fellow students and friends would be willing to spread some of Colin’s ashes in the ocean and at the mountains. That will occur.

When a loved one is away at college, parents and family members “back home” aren’t as up-to-date on the student’s activities and accomplishments as they were earlier in life when living together. So it was understandable that Diana also asked if faculty and students would write some thoughts about Colin’s achievements at UCR. Our dean of students is working with Dean Reza Abbaschian and the faculty and students in engineering to do so. Those perspectives will be delivered by the family deacon at a memorial service yet to be held in Louisiana.

I wrote a letter to the family expressing condolences on behalf of the entire UCR community – faculty, staff, students and alumni. I also presented them with an Ansel Adams’ photograph of the campus bell tower, an image that is befitting the sadness and serenity of Colin’s passing, and yet balanced by the intellectual and personal growth and contributions that he made while he was with us.

I close this *Letter* by getting a bit out of my lane as Chancellor, and imploring our students to be safe while driving the sometimes crazy Southern California roads and freeways...and also as a reminder to all of us to be sure we “square up” on a daily basis with those who matter most to us. I do so because today, April 6th, is a particularly poignant and reflective day for me personally, as it is the date I lost my father in a horrific auto accident some years ago.

Sincerely,

Tim

Tim White, Chancellor

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

### **Riverside – One Hub of the Literary World**

The Los Angeles Review of Books, created by UC Riverside Professor Tom Lutz, will debut a new website April 18, with the help of a \$25,000 grant from Amazon.com. Congratulations to Professor Lutz for this great new resource for the literary world.

<http://ucrtoday.ucr.edu/4096>

### **Run, Walk and Cash**

Tomorrow there is an opportunity for giving on campus – the 11th Annual César E. Chávez 5K Run/Walk. The event is sponsored by Chicano Student Programs at UCR and was created in 2002 to help raise funds for student scholarships at UCR as well as Riverside-area youth programs.

<http://ucrtoday.ucr.edu/4503>

### **Real Plants – Fantasy Planets**

Allow yourself to be drawn into the mysteries of Hollywood on April 12 with “Avatar” botanist Jodie Holt. She answers the question “What Can Hollywood Teach Us About Our Planet?” This free public lecture is part of the Science Lecture Series of the College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences.

<http://ucrtoday.ucr.edu/4549>

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