

## **A Message to the University Community**

October 22, 2009

Dear Members of the UConn Family,

I know you share my sadness and utter dismay over the violence that occurred early Sunday morning at the University of Connecticut and that took from us one of our students, Jasper Howard. Any assault of this type is an affront to what we stand for as a community and the kind of environment we all strive to create at UConn.

We are still a community in grief over the loss of our Jasper, a promising student who was a member of our football team, which is how many of us came to know him. Jasper's death represents for us a terrible, incomprehensible loss. We are diminished by his death, and we know it.

We are thankful for all of the expressions of support pouring in for Jasper's family and our local community in these past few days. Those kind thoughts and prayers for the Howard family and our community have made a difference.

Many of you are interested in ways that you can participate in the different events that are being held to remember Jasper, express your condolences to the family, and help. We are posting this information on our Web sites, in particular, the Official Athletics Web site (<http://www.uconnhuskies.com/>). We will continue to communicate with you via this Web site, our news Web sites, and e-mail, as additional information becomes available.

While we mourn this day, we have Jasper's memory and spirit to help us carry on, and to remain a place where students can flourish, hope can endure, and evil will forever be banished. These sentiments were so beautifully shared in Wednesday night's candlelight vigil, where we came together to honor Jasper. Our interests are in seeing justice served. I am grateful to the UConn and state police for their outstanding work on the case. I am reassured by their progress and have offered the University's assistance in any way they think we can be of help.

In the weeks ahead, all of us will experience a range of emotions. We need to take care of each other and reach out to those among us who are struggling. Few of us deal easily with shock and grief in isolation. Talk together. Students, call home. Parents, call your daughters and your sons. Listen and talk to one another, and in that contact seek the beginnings of solace and comfort.

I want to reemphasize that help is available to anyone in our community who needs assistance. The number for Counseling & Mental Health Services is (860) 486-4705

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Assistance is also available to faculty and staff through UConn's Employee Assistance Program at (860) 679-2877 begin\_of\_the\_skype\_highlighting (860) 679-2877 end\_of\_the\_skype\_highlighting.

We have suffered, individually and collectively. I want everyone to know how grateful and proud I am for the compassion that I see in people's gentle kindness toward one another and in the calls and e-mail communications I'm receiving from students, staff, faculty, parents, alumni, and friends of the University.

UConn is a family. Many of us have parents, daughters and sons, sisters and brothers, and friends who are UConn alumni. Many of you are accustomed to visiting the Storrs campus for athletic events and academic gatherings. However near to or far from UConn and its people each of us may be, tragic events like this remind us of how important it is to care for each other, to do our parts to ensure that, as a University, we continue to place the highest value on respect, tolerance, kindness, and civility.

Sincerely,

Mike

Michael J. Hogan

President

University of Connecticut

[president@uconn.edu](mailto:president@uconn.edu)