

Janette De La Rosa Ducut

From: staff-bounces@scotmail.ucr.edu on behalf of Charles J Rowley
<charles.rowley@ucr.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, August 29, 2012 11:15 AM
To: faculty@scotmail.ucr.edu; staff@scotmail.ucr.edu; students@scotmail.ucr.edu;
ans@scotmail.ucr.edu
Subject: [Staff] UC Regents and Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office (LADA) Settlement
- UCLA and UC Lab Safety
Attachments: ATT00001.txt

Dear Campus Community,

As many of you are already aware, on December 29, 2008, 23 year-old UCLA research associate Sheharbano "Sheri" Sangji was involved in a chemical fire at a UCLA research laboratory. She was working in an organic chemistry lab and was in the process of transferring a pyrophoric chemical agent, tert-Butyllithium (a chemical that ignites when exposed to air), when the fire occurred. Ms. Sangji succumbed to her injuries and died several weeks after the accident. A detailed account of this tragic event can be found at the C&EN (Chemical and Engineering News) web site (<http://pubs.acs.org/cen/science/87/8731sci1.html?featured=1>).

Last month, the University of California Regents reached a settlement agreement with the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office (LADA) concerning this tragedy. In consideration of the LADA's dismissal of criminal action (against the Regents and the University of California), the Regents have agreed to comply with a number of requirements which are set forth in the terms and conditions of the agreement. I am writing today to inform you of this agreement and to alert you that UCR (like all UC campuses) will be acting to implement these new requirements, some of which call for immediate changes to policies and procedures. Chemistry and Biochemistry departments are most significantly affected; however, the health and safety programs of all research labs will be impacted. The agreement may be viewed in full at the following web site: www.ehs.ucr.edu/laboratory/ucregentsagreement.

Importantly, over the past several years, UC Riverside has dramatically enhanced its lab safety program, including an emphasis on laboratory inspections, training programs, and informative websites. While we have much to be proud of relating to faculty, staff and students efforts to enhance lab safety, our work must continue. I have asked Mike Miller (Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities) and Russell Vernon (Director of Environmental Health and Safety) to develop a plan that builds on UCR's existing lab safety program, but ensures that UCR is fully compliant with the terms of the agreement noted above. Please note that as this plan and associated communications material is developed over the next 45 days, UCR will act on any immediate requirements associated with the legal settlement between the Regents and the LADA.

Again, please expect additional communications in the weeks and months ahead. Please do not hesitate to contact EH&S Director Vernon (russell.vernon@ucr.edu) should you have immediate questions or feedback.

Chuck Rowley
Interim Vice Chancellor Finance and Business Operations and CIO
University of California, Riverside