

From: Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs <Provost@csusb.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 9:12 AM
To: Colleagues <colleagues@groups.csusb.edu>
Subject: Remembering Professor Tom Provenzano

Dear Colleagues,

As you know, we recently lost one of CSUSB's kindest souls. Professor Tom Provenzano passed away nearly three weeks ago, and many members of our campus community are still grappling with the loss.

Tom began his career at CSUSB in 1994, first as a lecturer and then joining the tenure track as an assistant professor in 1996. By all accounts, Tom was an outstanding mentor to students and a terrific colleague. In a recent article on teaching in the hybrid classroom, Justin Marquis wrote, "Ask any experienced educator, and they will tell you that an important part of teaching is acting. You need to entertain and engage your students in order to be effective in the classroom because good classes are partially good theatre." Tom mastered both domains, receiving numerous recognitions for his contributions to our campus and the larger theater community.

In 2020, after teaching who knows how many students to be vulnerable for the entertainment of others – vulnerabilities they may not yet (or ever) have the tools to come to terms within themselves – Tom began his transition to retirement, earning status as an emeritus faculty member and beginning his FERP in 2020.

I'm not going to attempt to eulogize Tom; I admired him and appreciated his presence every single time I was in his company, but others certainly knew him more intimately. As Prince (yes, that Prince) said in his cover of the Stylistics' classic "Betcha by Golly Wow,"

*Sometimes, a man can't find words to express all the things he feels inside
But every just so often
The words of another seem to work out fine*

So as Steven Morris, another Coyote and close colleague of Tom's, wrote in a tribute processing his own grief at Tom's passing:

Tom "touched the lives of hundreds of students for decades, and the lives of countless L.A. area artists whom he wrote about in the pages of LA Weekly...I can't pretend to set a tone of objective indifference. This is personal...It's because of his ebullience, his love for his students whom he touted with such pride. They loved him back. As did his colleagues, who can barely collect themselves when now remembering him."

I'm not a theater aficionado, so in writing this, I had to Google "What present do you give a theater actor at the end of a play?" If you know the actor personally, Google tells me the

traditional gifts are flowers and a card delivered to the stage door on opening night. But, those to whom I've volunteered all of my personal and financial information (i.e., Google) also said booze was an acceptable alternative. I once spent a lovely evening in Tom's company at a colleague's house, where delicious red wine and other libations flowed. So, in lieu of flowers, I'll pour one out for Professor Provenzano.

Please don't hesitate to make use of the following resources available to our students, faculty, and staff.

- For students: You can call (909) 537-5040 for **Counseling & Psychological Services** or go to <https://www.csusb.edu/caps/services-offered>.
- For faculty and staff: You can contact our Employee Assistance Program, **Life Matters**, 24/7, at 1-800-367-7474.

On behalf of all of us in the Office of Academic Affairs, we extend our deepest condolences to his family.

Remembering Tom

A memorial for our beloved friend and Professor, Tom Provenzano, will take place Saturday, April 13, 2024, from 1:30-3:30 p.m. in the CSUSB Performing Arts Recital Hall.

Please join us as we celebrate his life and how he touched the lives of so many around him.

[Click here and let us know if you plan to attend. \[forms.gle\]](#)

You may also leave a memory or a message to be read at the memorial.

Sincerely,

Rafik Mohamed
Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs
California State University, San Bernardino