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MIT mourns death of graduate student

By **Matt Rocheleau**

| GLOBE CORRESPONDENT | SEPTEMBER 05, 2014



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The Massachusetts Institute of Technology campus is mourning the death of a 26-year-old graduate student.

Austin Travis, 26, studied chemistry and was a member of a lab that takes a “cross-disciplinary approach to exploring protein structure, function and design,” L. Rafael Reif, MIT president, wrote in an e-mail to the university community Friday.

Travis lived off campus in a Cambridge apartment and was a native of Pleasantville, N.Y., Reif said. “Our hearts go out to his family and friends in their sorrow.”

MIT has not released details on the death.

Cambridge police said a 26-year-old man, whom they declined to identify, was pronounced dead in his Forest Street apartment shortly after his girlfriend called authorities just after 6 p.m. Wednesday.

Police spokesman Jeremy Warnick said a hazardous materials team was called and found one or more substances that have not yet been identified. The case is under investigation, Warnick said.

Charles Wood of East Wareham said that Travis was planning to marry Wood's daughter.

Wood said they had been a couple for about two years, lived together in the Forest Street apartment, and were scheduled to wed in about a year.

"It's a very sad situation," he said by phone Friday. "This was a young man who had a lot to look forward to."

Wood said Travis was finishing up studies to obtain a doctorate. He also said Travis was a triathlete.

He said Travis and his daughter liked to travel and were planning a trip to Germany soon.

"This was a kid who loved life," he said. "He always had a smile on his face and he and my daughter were tremendous together."

Reif wrote that MIT mental health services department and other support staff are available for students and others affected by the loss.

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