

N.S. university student dies during trip to Mexico

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A Nova Scotia university student has died during a graduation trip to Cancun, Mexico.

Police in Cancun confirmed to CTV News that a female student from Acadia University died at the Hotel Gran Caribe early Tuesday morning.

Police say the 21-year-old victim died from a severe brain injury after slipping and falling about ten metres from a second-storey balcony at the resort.

Investigators believe alcohol was a factor in the incident.

Sydney Taylor was originally from the United States but attended high school at Halifax Grammar in Halifax.

She recently completed the political science program at Acadia University after spending four years at the school.

The honours student was on a week-long trip in Cancun to celebrate graduation with more than 100 students.

University officials say the trip was organized privately by a large group of students through an independent travel group.

"It has an enormous impact," says university spokesman Scott Roberts. "We are a very small community."

Taylor is being remembered as a musician, an athlete and a top student.

"I think students will know her for her leadership," says friend and classmate Matthew Rios. "She was very strong on different ideas she had, and within that tight-knit group of political science students, but on the campus in the greater sense, she was quite well-known and well-liked."

Todd Abbass hired Taylor two years ago as a hostess at his restaurant in Halifax. He says he was honoured when she asked to come back to work for him again.

"I was really looking forward to her coming back this summer because of her positive energy," says Abbass. "Whenever you'd see her coming you'd get a sense it was going to be a good day because she just brought that cheeriness, enthusiasm, energy. I am just devastated, I really am."

University officials say Taylor was to attend a graduation ceremony this Sunday along with 800 of her peers, and that her accomplishments as a student will still be honoured and celebrated at convocation.

Taylor's family, who lives in Nova Scotia and in the U.S., is calling her death a terrible accident.

The Department of Foreign Affairs released the following statement on Wednesday:

Canadian consular officials in Mexico are in contact with local authorities to gather additional information. Consular assistance is being provided both in Mexico and to the individual's relatives in Canada.

Grief counsellors are being made available at the university for all faculty and staff as they try to cope with the young woman's tragic death.

With files from CTV Atlantic's Kelland Sundahl

PHOTOS



Sydney Taylor died Tuesday after falling about ten metres from a second-storey balcony at a resort in Cancun, Mexico. (Photo taken from Facebook)

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