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Professor remembered amid calls for safer intersection

John Macaluso

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TUCSON, Ariz. (KVOA) - A University of Arizona associate professor was killed in a vehicle versus pedestrian crash at an intersection in Tucson's Eastside.

It happened May 7, 2026 at the intersection of Sabino Canyon and East Snyder Road.



Misha Stepanov, a University of Arizona associate professor, was killed in a vehicle versus pedestrian crash at an intersection in Tucson's eastside.

The victim has been identified as Misha Stepanov, an associate professor in the university's math department. Sebastian Pojnan-Malo was one of his students and says Stepanov was dedicated to helping his students succeed.

"He really helped us. If you emailed him any time of the day, any time of the night, any day of the week, he would respond back with a really detailed response," Pojnan-Malo said.

Pojnan-Malo was taking a complex analysis class taught by Stepanov. He said the professor cared deeply about his students.

"He cared a great deal about his craft and his students," Pojnan-Malo said.

Pojnan-Malo learned about the crash when the university quietly announced Stepanov's death. The university's statement read: "It is with a heavy heart that I share the recent passing of Math Department Associate Professor Mikhail Stepanov. Professor Stepanov was a valued member of our community, and his presence will be profoundly missed."

After hearing the news, Pojnan-Malo visited the intersection to learn more about what happened. He said the location's design raised immediate concerns.

"I went to this intersection on google maps and I thought, it's no coincidence that he passed here. It's a death trap," Pojnan-Malo said.

While at the scene, Pojnan-Malo met Hannah Turner, who works in the area. Turner said she has witnessed several crashes at the intersection and warned him about its dangers.

"Coming up from Snyder it is a completely blind hill and I think that is a big part of the problem. You cannot see anything when you are that car coming. And when you're heading down this way, you don't know if anybody is crossing either," Turner said.

Turner said the intersection needs significant improvements to prevent future crashes. She pointed to multiple safety concerns at the location.

"More signage, more lighting, I think it needs arrows too. Arrows and clear distinction of when and where you can and should walk and when you need to not drive basically. And there are no sidewalks here," Turner said.

The driver of the vehicle in the incident stays on scene and cooperated with investigators.

News 4 Tucson reached out to Pima County for a response and was directed to the sheriff's department but has not received a response.

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