



UNIVERSITY  
OF  
LOUISIANA  
*L a f a y e t t e .*

# STUDENT AND EMPLOYEE DEATH NOTIFICATION POLICY

**Policy #** PR.002.1

**Responsible Executive:** President

**Responsible Office:** Office of President

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## I. Policy Statement

The death of a University of Louisiana at Lafayette (“University”) Student or Employee affects the entire University community. This Policy describes guidelines to be followed to provide an orderly, effective, and caring response in the event of the death of a Student or Employee.

## II. Purpose of Policy

This Policy provides guidelines for the University community’s use at the time of a Student or Employee death and sets forth procedures to support communications and notifications of the death to various entities on campus. Considering the very sensitive and unpredictable nature of a death, no policy or protocol can describe in complete detail all the steps that must be taken by the University. This Policy sets forth guidelines to support communications and notifications in the event of a Student or Employee death. Those responsible for implementing this Policy should be guided by the essential communication needs required in these situations, as well as by empathy, sensitivity, and support for the bereaved and the need to preserve important evidence in some instances.

Recognizing the grief and emotional trauma that usually accompanies the death of an individual, the University wishes to minimize the administrative and procedural actions that must be completed by the Next of Kin, family members, Faculty, and Staff to close University records and accounts for deceased Students and Employees by delegating responsibilities to the appropriate individuals.

For this reason, the Dean of Students will coordinate the closing of a deceased Student’s records and accounts with the University and of contacting the Next of Kin. The Associate Vice President for Administration and Finance and Chief Human Resources Officer (“CHRO”) will coordinate the closing of all University business of a deceased Staff member. The Provost will coordinate the closing of all University business of a deceased Faculty member. No other office should contact the Next of Kin of

deceased Students, Staff, or Faculty for the purpose of resolving administrative issues. All such matters should be brought to the attention of the Dean of Students, the CHRO, or the Provost, respectively, who shall then contact the Next of Kin and/or responsible family member(s) to resolve any pending administrative issues.

Procedures concerning communications and notifications with respect to the death of a Student or Employee, as well as media matters, memorials and expressions of sympathy, records disclosures, and other pertinent matters are stated herein in Section V (Procedures).

### III. Applicability

This Policy applies to all University Students and Employees.

### IV. Definitions (alphabetical order)

1. **Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (“CISD”)**: is the process by which individuals who have experienced or been exposed to a traumatic event or critical incident can be helped to address and resolve concerns and anxieties after such an event; CISD is led by professionals in the University’s Counseling and Testing Center and, when necessary, will take place between one to three (1-3) days of the incident.
2. **Employees**: are all full-time Faculty and Staff employed by the University.
3. **Faculty**: are emeritus or current, full-time academic professionals of the University whose main responsibility is to teach or impart knowledge to Students, which include teachers, instructors, professors, and researchers.
4. **Flag Lowering**: is the act of the University lowering only the University flag in front of Martin Hall in honor of the deceased on the day of the scheduled funeral services or other appropriate date if no funeral services should be held.
5. **Honor Escort**: consists of University Police escorting the family of a deceased Student or Employee from the funeral home to the church and/or place of burial.
6. **Next of Kin**: are the person(s) responsible under Louisiana law for an individual’s estate in the event of death. For unmarried students, the Next of Kin is the parent(s) recorded with the University. For married Students, the Next of Kin is the spouse/partner. For unmarried Employees, the Next of Kin is the children, if any, then parents or another designated by the Employee. For married Employees, the Next of Kin is the spouse/partner.
7. **Night of Remembrance**: is an annual event held during the Spring semester preceding final exams to which families of deceased Students and Employees are invited where the University recognizes the contributions of those who died within an academic year (Summer, Fall, and Spring).
8. **On-Campus Death**: is a death occurring on any part of the University campus, including campus residential properties, academic buildings, administrative buildings, and grounds on main campus and at satellite campus locations.
9. **Off-Campus Death**: is a death that is not an On-Campus Death.

- 10. Primary Contact:** is the official who serves as the University’s principal point of contact for the deceased’s Next of Kin. Unless an alternate designation is made by the President, the Dean of Students is the primary contact for the death of a Student; the Provost (or Dean if so delegated) is the primary contact for the death of a Faculty member; and the CHRO is the primary contact for the death of a Staff member.
- 11. Public Notification:** is the use of electronic/social media (e.g., Facebook, Website, email) in order to notify the general public about a death.
- 12. Staff:** are emeritus or current, full-time Employees of the University in non-teaching roles of various types in support of the educational, research, and service mission of the University.
- 13. Student:** is a degree-seeking individual who is enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program at the University at the time of death; or an individual who has completed the immediate preceding term at the University and is eligible for re-enrollment, in the event the death occurs during the recess period between semesters.
- 14. University Sponsored Travel** – is travel, including field trips or international programs, that is led by a University Employee or for which academic credit is awarded, as well as any other travel administered by, conducted under the direction or, or with financial support from, any University department, program, or office.
- 15. University Study Abroad:** sponsored through the Division of Global Engagement, these are academic programs where Students earn University credit outside of the United States (“U.S.”) and include Faculty-led groups, programs/field experiences, and semesters abroad for individual Students.

## V. Policy Procedure

### A. Student Death Procedures

#### 1. Student On-Campus Death

- a. The first individual on the scene should IMMEDIATELY call 911. University Police (337-482-6447) will respond and take charge of the scene until all appropriate actions are taken. The first individual on the scene should take utmost care not to disturb the area of the incident.
- b. At first opportunity, University Police will contact the Dean of Students by the quickest means possible (e.g., telephone, text message, TEAMS message/call, or e-mail). The Dean of Students or Vice President for Student Affairs will immediately notify the President by the quickest means possible (e.g., telephone, text message, TEAMS message/call, or e-mail). Other notifications are outlined in Section V(A)(3) below.
- c. If the Student death occurs on campus residential properties, the Director of Housing, the Director of Residential Life, and/or highest-ranking staff member in the residence property should be contacted by the quickest means possible (e.g., telephone, text message, TEAMS message/call, or e-mail).

- d. If the deceased Student is an international Student, the Division of Global Engagement should be contacted by the Dean of Students as soon as possible by telephone.
- e. University Police or other law enforcement shall notify the Next of Kin.
- f. The Dean of Students will serve as the Primary Contact for the Next of Kin after initial notification by University Police or other law enforcement.
- g. If the circumstances warrant and University Police believes there is an on-going safety threat associated with the death of a Student, then emergency notification of the campus community shall occur via the University's Emergency Notification System.

## **2. Student Off-Campus Death**

- a. Anyone that becomes aware of the death of a Student that occurred off-campus should promptly contact the Dean of Students by the quickest means possible (e.g., telephone, text message, TEAMS message/call, or e-mail).
- b. After verifying the information to be accurate, the Dean of Students or Vice President for Student Affairs will notify the President by the quickest means possible (e.g., telephone, text message, TEAMS message/call, or e-mail). Other notifications are outlined in Section V(A)(3) below.
- c. If the deceased Student is an international Student, the Division of Global Engagement should be contacted by the Dean of Students as soon as possible by telephone.
- d. The Dean of Students will serve as the Primary Contact for the Next of Kin in dealing with University matters.
- e. If a death occurs during University Sponsored Travel, the University Employee accompanying the group should immediately contact 911 or local emergency services. As soon as the situation is secured, the University Employee should contact University Police and the Dean of Students by the quickest means possible (e.g., telephone, text message, TEAMS message/call, or e-mail).
- f. If a death of a Student occurs while the Student was participating in a University Study Abroad program, the University Study Abroad Site Director and the third-party study abroad vendor should also contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate, as well as the University's Division of Global Engagement. In the case of a Student studying independently, the international university or business should contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate, as well as the University's Division of Global Engagement. Global Engagement will contact the Dean of Students and/or Vice President for Student Affairs who should contact the University President and Provost as soon as possible (all aforesaid contacts should be made as soon as possible by the quickest means possible (e.g., telephone, text message, TEAMS message/call, or e-mail)). In conjunction with the Dean of Students, Global Engagement will assist in making non-financial arrangements with the Next of Kin to bring the body back to the U.S. The return is coordinated by Next of Kin with the assistance of Global Engagement office personnel, the associated insurance company, and the third-party study abroad vendor

or the international university of business for Students studying independently, should Next of Kin request such assistance.

### 3. Notification of Student Death to Campus Officials

- a. Upon receiving the verification of the death of a Student, the President shall notify the University Council, the Deans, and the Associate Vice President for Communications and Marketing. This communication will occur as expeditiously as possible via email, Teams, text message, or other electronic methods.
- b. On the next business day, the Dean of Students' Office will forward a formal letter to the following campus administrators who will perform the noted activities, among others:
  - i. *Student's Academic Dean.* The Dean will notify the Student's instructors, the Student's advisor, and the entire college of the Student's death. The Academic Dean shall not contact the Student's Next of Kin and/or family unless coordinated through the Dean of Students, who serves as the University's Primary Contact.
  - ii. *Registrar.* The Registrar will update the Student's record with a deceased indicator. The classes of Students who die before the enrollment census is conducted are removed from classes resulting in removal of tuition and fees due for that semester. If the Student dies after the enrollment census is finalized, the Student's classes are resigned with a "W" grade. When a Student is in the final semester before graduation and has the necessary cumulative GPA for graduation, the Registrar will notify the Academic Dean to discuss possible posthumous degree. See Section V.F.2 below(D)(2).

Prior to archiving the Student's record, the Registrar will provide the President's Office with a report listing the following information: Student's full name; Student's hometown; Student's high school; Student's academic college, major, minor, and classification; Student's parent(s)/ guardian's name(s), and/or spouse's/partner's names and mailing addresses.

- iii. *Information Technology.* The Chief Information Officer ("CIO") directs staff to deactivate the Student's email, ULink, and other technology related items. The CIO will ensure that any equipment that was in the deceased Student's possession is returned to the University.
- iv. *Cajun Card Office.* The Director of Cajun Card Services will deactivate the Student's Cajun Card and proceed pursuant to the Cajun Cash Policy.
- v. *Financial Aid.* The Director of the Office of Student Financial Aid will deactivate the Student's financial aid and notify the appropriate agencies. The Director will work with the Bursar to determine if any refund is due or balance owed.
- vi. *Housing & Residential Life.* If the Student was a resident, the Director of Housing & Residential Life will restrict access to the Student's room, remove the Student from the housing roster, and cancel the Student's

contract. The Director will cancel the Student's food plan (if applicable) and will work with the Bursar to determine if any refund is due or balance owed to the University. If the Student was a current resident, the Director will work with the Primary Contact to assist the Next of Kin and/or family in gathering the Student's belongings. The Director will also ensure the well-being of the Student's roommate(s) and provide support and resources as needed.

- vii. *Bursar.* The Bursar will, after consultation with the Registrar, Student Financial Aid, Housing & Residential Life, Food Services, and Human Resources (if Student is also an Employee), determine if a refund is due or a balance is owed. If a balance is owed, the Bursar will determine (with the President) the method of recovering funds as appropriate.
- viii. *Human Resources.* The CHRO will determine whether the Student was also an Employee and will notify payroll or other departments as appropriate. Final payment may be disbursed, provided the Bursar verifies that no funds are owed by the deceased to the University.
- ix. *Counseling Services.* Should the Primary Contact believe that counseling or crisis intervention services are needed for Students and other campus personnel connected to the deceased, then the Director of Counseling Services will be asked to put together a CISD program appropriate to the situation.

## **B. Employee Death Procedures**

### **1. Employee On-Campus Death**

- a. The first individual on the scene should IMMEDIATELY call 911. University Police (337-482-6447) will respond and take charge of the scene until all appropriate actions are taken. The first individual on the scene should take utmost care not to disturb the area of the incident.
- b. At first opportunity, University Police will contact the President and Provost by the quickest means possible (e.g., telephone, text message, TEAMS message/call, or e-mail). Other notifications are outlined in Section V(B)(3).
- c. If the Employee death occurs in a campus building, the highest-ranking Employee of that building should be contacted by the quickest means possible (e.g., telephone, text message, TEAMS message/call, or e-mail). For an academic building, the highest-ranking Employee would be the dean(s) whose program(s) reside there; for an administrative building, it would be the President, Provost, or appropriate Vice President whose department(s) reside there.
- d. University Police or other law enforcement shall notify the Next of Kin.
- e. For Staff, the CHRO will serve as the Primary Contact for the Next of Kin and/or family after initial notification by law enforcement.
- f. For Faculty, the Provost will serve as the Primary Contact for the Next of Kin and/or family after initial notification by law enforcement.

- g. If the circumstances warrant and University Police believes there is an on-going safety threat associated with the death, then emergency notification of the campus community shall occur via the University's [Emergency Notification System](#).

## 2. Employee Off-Campus Death

- a. Anyone that becomes aware of the death of an Employee that occurred off-campus should contact the President and Provost by the quickest means possible (e.g., telephone, text message, TEAMS message/call, or e-mail).
- b. After verifying the information to be accurate, the President shall send other notifications as outlined in Section V(B)(3).
- c. The Provost (or Academic Dean if delegated by the Provost) will serve as the Primary Contact for the Next of Kin and/or family when the deceased is a Faculty member.
- d. The CHRO will serve as the Primary Contact for the Next of Kin and/or family when the deceased is a Staff member.
- e. If a death of an Employee occurs during University Sponsored Travel, another University Employee accompanying the group or a representative Student, if no other Employee is present, should immediately contact 911 or local emergency services. As soon as the situation is secured, the Employee or representative Student shall contact University Police (337-482-6447) as soon as possible. University Police would then contact the President and Provost by the quickest means possible (e.g., telephone, text message, TEAMS message/call, or e-mail).
- f. If a death of an Employee occurs while working for the University abroad, another accompanying University Employee present or representative Student shall contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate and notify the University President and Provost as soon as possible.

## 3. Notification of Employee Death to Campus Officials

- a. Upon receiving the verification of the death of an Employee, the President shall notify the University Council, the Employee's direct supervisor, the Deans, and the Associate Vice President of Communications and Marketing. This communication will occur as expeditiously as possible via email, text message, or other electronic methods.
- b. By the next business day, the CHRO will forward a formal notice to the following campus administrators who will perform the noted activities, among others:
  - i. *Payroll*. Payroll Office will determine what is owed to the Employee. Final payment may be disbursed, provided the Bursar verifies that no funds are owed to the University.
  - ii. *Bursar*. The Bursar will determine whether a balance is owed by an Employee. If a balance is owed, the Bursar will determine (with the President) the method of recovering funds as appropriate.
  - iii. *Information Technology*. The CIO will direct staff to deactivate the Employee's email, ULink, and other technology related items. The CIO will

assist the Employee's department in capturing and transferring appropriate computer and email files. The CIO will work with the CHRO to ensure that any equipment that was in the deceased Employee's possession is returned to the University.

- iv. *Cajun Card Office.* The Director of Cajun Card Services will deactivate the Employee's Cajun Card and proceed pursuant to the Cajun Cash Policy.
- v. *Counseling Services.* Should the Primary Contact believe that counseling or crisis intervention services are needed for campus personnel or students connected to the deceased, then the Director of Counseling Services will be asked to put together a CISD appropriate to the situation.

### **C. Intellectual Property**

Upon the death of a Student or Employee owning intellectual property, the University Intellectual Property Policy and the University of Louisiana System Intellectual Property and Shared Royalties shall be followed with respect to ownership and royalty distribution of the deceased intellectual property.

### **D. Media**

1. All requests for information surrounding the death of a Student or Employee shall be directed to the Office of Communications and Marketing. All other Employees are discouraged from making comments or giving interviews to the media under these circumstances. Accordingly, no one involved in the response to a Student or Employee death should speculate about cause of death or make statements assigning responsibility for the cause of death to any individual or group associated with the media.
2. Out of respect for the deceased and the deceased's family, media releases about deaths in the campus community are discouraged. Should it be deemed appropriate or necessary, then the Office of Communications and Marketing will prepare a written statement after working with University Police, the Dean of Students, the CHRO, and/or the University President.

### **E. Memorials/Expressions of Sympathy**

#### **1. Condolence Letters.**

- a. The Office of the President sends the University's official condolence letter(s) to the Next of Kin and/or family of the deceased Student or Employee. The letter includes a photo depicting the University flag flown at half-staff on the day of the funeral service. Also included in the letter is the date of the University's official memorial service, Night of Remembrance.
- b. Other condolence letters, while encouraged, should be sent in a timely fashion so as not to prolong the impact on the Next of Kin and/or family. The University's Primary Contact may determine, after consultation with the Next of Kin and/or family, that it is best for expressions of sympathy to be delivered at one time. In those cases, the Dean of Students may collect letters for delivery to a Student's family; the Provost (or Dean if so delegated) may do so for a deceased Faculty member; and the CHRO may do so for the family of Staff members.

2. **Public Notification.** The Office of Communications and Marketing will announce the passing of the Student or Employee before or on the day of the University flag being lowered



in their honor via the University's social media pages. The post should include the deceased's name, major (if Student), position/department (if Employee), hometown, and a link to their obituary, if available. The accompanying photo should be of the deceased or, if no photo is available, of the University flag, located in front of Martin Hall, at half-staff.

- 3. Flag Lowering.** The Office of the President will notify the Chief of University Police, Associate Vice President for Communications and Marketing, and Social Media Strategist when an obituary for the deceased is posted, providing the link to all parties. University Police is responsible for lowering and raising the University flag, as directed by the Office of the President. The Chief of University Police will schedule the lowering of the University flag on the day of the deceased's funeral or memorial service. In the event that a funeral or memorial service is not planned, the Office of the President and Office of Communications and Marketing will coordinate to choose an appropriate and timely day to lower the flag and make a public announcement.
- 4. Honor Escort.** Through the funeral director handling arrangements, University Police offers to the Next of Kin and/or family of a deceased Student or Employee the opportunity for an Honor Escort to the church and/or place of burial. This offer is primarily extended to families who live in the local geographic region. Escorts in distant areas of the state or in other states will be offered with discretion and only with the approval of the University President.
- 5. Flowers/Plants.**

  - a. The Office of the President is responsible for sending a sympathy arrangement or plant to the funeral home on behalf of the entire University.
  - b. Colleges and departments wishing to send an arrangement may do so provided Foundation funds or personal funds are used.
  - c. State funds may not be used for the purchase of sympathy arrangements.
- 6. Night of Remembrance.** The University sponsors one (1) official memorial event in the spring of each year. This special Night of Remembrance honors the memory of Students and Employees who died in the year since the previous memorial was held.
- 7. Other Vigils/Memorials.** The University does not encourage individual memorial ceremonies or vigils. This helps to achieve consistency in how all Students and Employees are recognized at the time of death. Spontaneous memorials are not recognized in any official University communications. If a college, department, or student organization learns of a spontaneous and/or permanent memorial on campus property or wishes to coordinate an individual event, then appropriate approvals will be required. Student organizations should request permission and work through the Dean of Students; colleges should work through the Provost (or Dean if so delegated); and the administrative departments should work through the CHRO. It is important to note that any spontaneous and/or permanent memorial on campus property must first be approved by the University and then by the Next of Kin and/or family of the deceased.
- F. Records Disclosure.** Even after the death of an individual, the University protects the privacy of its Students and Employees as legally required and following best practices. Any request for educational or non-educational information must be approved by the Primary Contact and the Director of Operational Review (for subpoenas and authorizations for release of records) or the Associate Vice President for Communications and Marketing (for public records requests).

## **G. Other**

- 1. Special Circumstances (Suicide).** Should a Student or Employee die by suicide, a CISD may be initiated. Confirmation of death by suicide should only be shared with the Next of Kin's approval. Specific details, such as method of suicide, should not be shared except when required by law. Communication about suicide should always keep the family's privacy ahead of the public's desire for information.
- 2. Posthumous Degrees.** The University of Louisiana System ("System") Board Rules, Policies and Procedures provide guidance on the awarding of posthumous degrees (C-I, Academics, Revised 1/5/01). As approved by the Board, a posthumous degree may be awarded by the University provided all coursework has been completed up to the last semester with the appropriate cumulative GPA. Such degrees will be reported to the System office as they occur. If a deceased Student meets these criteria, then the Student's Dean, after consultation with the Registrar, may request in writing through the Provost, that the President approve such action. The President will forward the posthumous degree request to the System.

## **VI. Enforcement**

Adherence to this Policy is important to respectfully honor the memory of a deceased Student or Employee and to complete necessary business processes in a timely fashion. The President is responsible for enforcement of this Policy.

## **VII. Policy Management**

Upon adoption, the President shall be the Responsible Executive for this Policy in charge of the management of this Policy. Assistant to the President is the Responsible Officer for this Policy. The Office of the President is the Responsible Office for this Policy.

## **VIII. Exclusions**

N/A.

## **IX. Effective Date**

This Policy shall be effective as of the date of adoption of this Policy.

## **X. Adoption**

This Policy is hereby adopted on this 5/18/2022.

DocuSigned by:  
*Joseph Savoie*  
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**Dr. E. Joseph Savoie**  
**President**

## **XI. Appendices, References and Related Materials**

- ✦ [University's Emergency Notification System](#)
- ✦ [University of Louisiana System Special Degrees Policy \(C-I, Academics\)](#)
- ✦ [University Intellectual Property Policy](#)
- ✦ [University of Louisiana System Intellectual Property and Shared Royalties](#)

## **XII. Revision History**

Original adoption date: 5/18/2022