

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**RESPONDING
TO A
STUDENT DEATH**



University of California Santa Cruz

(Revised)

January 2005

STUDENT AFFAIRS

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I. Introduction

A LOSS TO OUR COMMUNITY

The death of a student is a serious loss to our community and we should respond in a sensitive, caring and cohesive manner. Shock and upset feelings naturally accompany such tragic news.

This document provides a policy statement, procedures and guidelines to help ensure that proper notification and dissemination of information occurs. Resources to help both in an immediate response and routine administrative follow-up are included. Checklists have been included to keep the procedures brief and clear.

This document does not address the crisis management that is needed to prevent a death; it assumes that the death has occurred. Death can be the result of natural or accidental causes; it can be the result of a suicide or even a homicide.

Each case will be different. Professional judgment is needed in each and every case. The **Coordinator** may consult and/or meet with an **Administrative Management Team** to assist in the aftermath of a student death.

NOTIFICATION OF FAMILY

If a student dies from natural causes in the care of an attending physician and the cause of death is not suspicious, the attending physician is responsible for notifying the family. If it is a suspicious death, it becomes the Coroner's responsibility to notify the family.

Note: There is a separate campus policy dealing with the death of a staff member.

II. Policy

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL

The **Vice Chancellor Student Affairs** (or designee) is the campus official responsible for this policy.

INCIDENT COORDINATOR

The **Incident Coordinator** is responsible for coordinating the event response. The student's place of residence or college affiliation (including during breaks and summer quarter) determines who acts as **Incident Coordinator**, regardless of whether the death occurs on- or off- campus.

For undergraduates living or affiliated with the colleges.	College Administrative Officer(s) (CAOs)
For graduate students living in non-university housing.	Dean, Division of Graduate Studies
For students living in university residential facilities , during the academic year and/or in any university housing during summer quarter.	The manager(s) of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Student Housing • Graduate Student Housing & Camper Park • UCSC Inn • University Town Center • The Village • Conference Services

COSTS RELATED TO EVENT

The next-of-kin should NOT be charged for any administrative or facility work that occurs as the result of a death.

RESPECT AND PRIVACY FOR THE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Whenever possible, activities should be rescheduled, redirected or reduced if they might intrude upon the privacy of family and friends. Roommates may also need relocation

III. Procedures

ON-CAMPUS DEATH

1. Call University Police

University Police are in charge of the scene until they formally release it. The police will investigate and have authority to keep people away from the scene.

University Officials should help move people out of the area. Do not allow anyone to enter the area or touch the victim or any property. Do not conduct searches. If someone inadvertently enters or leaves the scene before police arrive, this should be reported to the police as soon as they arrive. University Officials should assist the police in determining student's identity, local (residence) address, next-of-kin and college affiliation.

University Police are responsible for contacting the following and keeping them informed of the situation:

- Chancellor (or designee),
- Vice Chancellors Student Affairs (for undergraduates),
- Dean of Graduate Studies (for graduate students),
- Vice Chancellor for Business and Administrative Services,
- Associate Vice Chancellor, Communications,
- Office of the Registrar (in order to fulfill their role as the new address for the student and official student records campus notification procedures.)

2. Call Incident Coordinator

The Incident Coordinator should:

- Contact and stay in touch with the Vice Chancellor Student Affairs (or designee) throughout the incident;
- Verify the student's identity, address and college affiliation;
- Monitor the incident and coordinating actions that help the community return to normalcy;
- Complete needed information, (**see Attachment A-1**, the *Coordinator's Worksheet*);
- Verify status of notification of next-of-kin;
- Determine who has a "need-to-know" and keeping those people informed, (**see Attachment A-2**);
- Ask Counseling & Psychological Services to provide "crisis" and "grief" support services for community members who need it;

- Secure the personal property of the deceased, for later disposition to the estate (**see Attachment E**).
- Consult with an Administrative Management Team, as appropriate.

OFF-CAMPUS DEATH

There is no way to predict who will learn first of off-campus deaths. University Police do not need emergency notification in these cases.

University Officials receiving information about the death of a student should immediately report it to the:

- Vice Chancellor Student Affairs (for undergraduate students),
- Dean of Graduate Studies (for graduate students),
- Office of the Registrar

The Incident Coordinator should:

- Contact and stay in touch with the Vice Chancellor Student Affairs (or designee) throughout the incident;
- Verify the student's identity, address and college affiliation;
- Monitor the incident and coordinate actions that help the community return to normalcy;
- Determine who has a "need-to-know" and keep those people informed, (**see Attachment A-2**);
- Ask Counseling & Psychological Services to provide "crisis" and "grief" support services for community members who need it;
- Consult with an Administrative Management Team, as appropriate;
- Notify the Community Rentals Office for students living off-campus, to make sure roommates get needed assistance for handling any needed changes in their rental agreement.

COORDINATOR'S WORKSHEET – DEATH OF A STUDENT

IMPORTANT: *Send this completed information to the Vice Chancellor Student Affairs (FAX 459-2760) and the Office of the Registrar (FAX 459-5051).*

STUDENT INFORMATION

Name _____ DOB _____ Age _____

College Affiliation _____ Major _____

Attended UCSC from ____ to ____ [] Currently Not Enrolled [] LOA [] Other _____

Date of Death _____ Cause of Death (if known) _____

NOTIFICATION

*Emergency Contact/Next-of-Kin/Nearest Available Relative**

Name(s) _____

Relationship _____

Address _____

Phone(s) _____ e-mail _____

Source of Information _____

HOUSING

Location/Address _____

- Notified housemates, residential staff
- Secured personal belongings, **see Attachment E**
- Changed locks, secured keys
- Ordered needed custodial/maintenance work
- Contacted EH&S if hazardous material (including blood) clean-up needed

Notes/Comments:

Attach copy of any written or printed information (media announcements, obituary, etc.), if available.

****“Nearest available relative” legal sequence is spouse, parent, child 18 year or older, sibling and then other relatives.***

“NEED TO KNOW” LISTING

IMMEDIATE/FIRST CONTACTS

- University Police/Dispatch, 9-2231
The University Police will notify the chancellor, the vice chancellors for Student Affairs and Business and Administrative Services and the associate vice chancellor, Public Information.
- College Administrative Officer of student’s college (if undergraduate student)
- Provost of student’s college (if undergraduate student)
- Dean, Graduate Division (if graduate student)
- Director, Counseling and Psychological Services
- Office of the Registrar

INSTRUCTIONS SPECIFIC TO ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM

- Initiate Change of Address Card/Notification to the Office of the Registrar for both undergraduate and graduate students.
- Establish communication plan (campus/media/family/friends/etc. Rumor control.
- Information to community about available resources
- Follow-up (memorial service, scholarship, custodial/maintenance needs)

Attachment B-1

**OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR
ADMINISTRATIVE NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES**

The Office of the Registrar provides the campus with the **official** written notice of a student death, **as soon as possible**. The "Notice of a Deceased Student" letter is sent to:

- Accounting Services
- Alumni Office
- Chancellor's Office
- Information Technology Services
- McHenry/Science Library Circulation Desks
- Office of International Education
- Public Information Office
- Student Affairs Unit Managers
- Student Business Services
- Transportation & Parking Services (TAPS)
- University Police

The following people should be copied on the notice:

- Chair, Academic Department (if student had declared a major)
- College Provost (undergraduate student's college)
- Dean of Graduate Studies (if graduate student)
- Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education (if undergraduate student)
- Instructors (instructors of record for currently enrolled courses)
- Vice Chancellor, University Relations

RECORDS DISCLOSURE PROCEDURE

Requests received by the Office of the Registrar for information about a deceased person who attended the Santa Cruz campus of the University of California, including but not limited to an official transcript, shall be considered on an individual basis. Primary consideration will be given to requests that are supported in writing by the deceased's immediate or surviving family. In all cases, proof-of-death in the form of a death certificate or newspaper obituary is required.

SAMPLE of a **NOTICE OF DECEASED STUDENT** letter
Sent/emailed by the Office of the Registrar:

<Date>

To: (see address list described in B-1)

Subject: Deceased Student: - <name of the deceased>

This office has been notified of the death of <name of deceased> - <id number> on <date of notification>.

Mr./Ms. <name> attended UCSC from <month, year> to <month, year> as an undergraduate/graduate <college/department name> student with a major/candidacy in <major>.

Please take all of the necessary steps to change/amend your office's official records. If a mailing address must be maintained, change it to c/o Office of the Registrar.

A memorial service is being planned for <name> on _____ by _____ . *(If this information is not available, provide name and contact information for someone who is responsible for planning any memorial activities.)*

Sincerely,

Registrar
University of California, Santa Cruz
Santa Cruz, California. 95064

Attachment C

**VICE CHANCELLOR – STUDENT AFFAIRS
RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Serve as the primary, senior campus *administrative* official liaison with family members.
- Serve as the primary liaison with other senior campus officials following the police release of the scene and coroner's notification of death.
- Serve as the primary senior administrative contact for the Coordinator.
- Ensure that a Chancellor's letter of condolence to family and letter to general campus community (administrative e-mail list) are completed.

**COLLEGE PROVOST or GRADUATE DEAN
RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Serve as the official academic liaison from the institution for family members.
- With the Coordinator and other appropriate college and campus staff and faculty, meet with members of the affected community in the aftermath of a student death;
- With the Coordinator (and in consultation with the Vice Chancellor and Public Information) is responsible for writing a letter to all members of the immediate affected student community;
- Is responsible for initiating the planning and overseeing the execution of a memorial service, and contacting the Chancellor regarding participation/role in the service;
- Is responsible for contacting the deceased student's instructors, and will also contact instructors of highly impacted students (i.e. room or apartment mates, close friends, relatives, etc.), if deemed necessary, in order to make any appropriate academic arrangements;
- Work with the Vice-Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education or the Dean, Graduate Studies to follow-up on requests for posthumous degree/awards.

Attachment D

EXPLANATION OF ROLES

Administrative Management Team	A team of 'experts' called together by the Incident Coordinator on an as needed basis in the aftermath of a death. Membership fluctuates depending on the specifics of the event.
Associate CAO/CREs	Collect keys, change locks if needed; cancel the housing/food service contract. If the student lived off-campus, contact roommates and offer to help with lease/rental agreement termination options, via the Community Rentals Program. If the student has a family on-campus, make decisions about their length of stay, rent, etc.; if the student has school-age children, notify their school.
Career Center	If the student was a university employee, ask the home department to separate the student employee. Forward unpaid earnings to the estate.
Community Rentals	Work with off-campus roommates to support them in needed rental contract, etc. changes.
Counseling and Psychological Services	Responsible for coordinating follow-up meetings and individual and group support needed in the college community or off-campus household; provide assistance to family, friends, roommates and staff. Liaison to community team that handles night and weekend crises.
Disability Resource Center	Notify the appropriate state agency if the student was a beneficiary of their program, such as the State Department of Rehabilitation.
Environmental Health and Safety	Provide consultation and services for biohazard clean-up and blood-borne pathogens.
Financial Aid	Cancel remaining financial aid loan/grants; notify banks in the case of guaranteed loans; work with Student Business Services to close student accounts.
Informational Technology Services	Cancel student computer account; remove student name from online directories. Cancel a student's local telephone bill; deactivates phone and PAC; review long distance bill, if any, and either cancel it or forward it to the Incident Coordinator.
Incident Coordinator	The Incident Coordinator is designated by the student's college affiliation or place of residence. Responsible for coordinating a return to normalcy, maintaining centralized information on the status of the incident, and delegating

	actions to appropriate people.
Library Circulation Desks (McHenry and Science Libraries)	Check for outstanding books and mail list of to the Incident Coordinator.
Payroll/Service Center(s) Accounting Services	For a student employee, pay any salary that is due to the estate.
Physical Plant	Provide needed custodial/maintenance and/or repair work.
Public Information Office (PIO)	Maintain liaison with the media; coordinate needed news releases; may authorize non-campus news media members on campus; verifies dates of attendance.
Registrar	Immediately becomes the "new address" for a student living off-campus. The college remains the address for a student living on campus. This helps avoid needlessly burdening the family with stray university bills, routine administrative announcements, solicitations, etc.; coordinate the release of information to other campus units via a formal letter, see Attachment B-2. Initiate all adjustments to student fees, refunds, etc. and notify student's instructors.
Student Business Services	Hold student billing following receipt of official <i>Notice of Deceased Student</i> from the Office of the Registrar; review debts and coordinate cancellation of debt/return of credits with appropriate departments (i.e. Financial Aid, Library, Housing, Health Services, etc.)
Student Health Services	Pull medical records and archive them. Check to see if the student was covered by the UHIP or GSHIP, and also check eligibility for an accidental death or repatriation benefit.
Transportation & Parking Services	Cancel parking permit and issue refund to the estate; may assist the Coordinator in the disposition of a student vehicle.
University General Counsel	Advise the Coordinator on legal issues which may arise; is available to the Administrative Management Team for specific questions.
University Official	The senior staff member who learns of a student death.
University Police	In charge of the scene. Investigate the death if caused by criminal action. Have primary responsibility for notifying the Chancellor, PIO and Office of the Registrar. Confirm that student has been declared dead, cause of death and assist in identifying the student; liaison with other law enforcement agencies; work with the Sheriff/Coroner; notify the Coordinator of any status change; assist the Coordinator in securing personal property and maintaining order.

Attachment E

INVENTORY OF PERSONAL BELONGINGS

STUDENT INFORMATION

Name _____ DOB _____

Date of Inventory _____ Name of Person Taking Inventory _____

Student Campus Address _____ Stored Where _____

NEXT-OF-KIN/DISPOSITION REQUEST

Names _____

Relationship _____

Address _____

Phone(s) _____

Date Contacted/Family's Request _____

Make a copy of this page if there are two sets of parents. Record both requests, if different.

INVENTORY

List all belongings which are being stored, include clothing, electronic or personal items, jewelry, furniture, books, tapes, CDs, instruments, picture/posters, etc. Use back of sheet if needed.

