



## POLICY STATEMENT 63 REGARDING DEATH OF A STUDENT OR EMPLOYEE

Title/Topic: Regarding Death of a Student or Employee

Number: 63

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### I. PURPOSE

To establish a procedure following the death of a student or an employee to complete necessary administrative processes, ensure appropriate communication regarding the death, memorialize the individual, and provide appropriate support to members of the LSU community.

### II. DEFINITIONS

Employee: Full-time or part-time faculty or staff employed by LSU's flagship institution.

Student: an enrolled student--full- or part-time -- who is currently attending or who would normally be attending (if the death occurs between semesters) the university at the time of death. This includes students who are taking courses for credit and/or auditing courses. Students attending LSU through a cooperative program with another university, who are in continuing education, who are in the English Language & Orientation Program (ELOP) or similar programs are excluded.

Dean of Students: University official designated as the holder of this title or any individual under the auspices of the Office of the Dean of Students delegated with authority to effect this policy.

Visiting Student: a person attending LSU through a cooperative program with another university, Continuing Education students, and other persons who are receiving regular academic instruction at the University but who are not principally students at LSU.

Next of Kin: the person(s) most likely to be responsible under Louisiana law for an individual's estate in the event of death. For unmarried students this will be the parent(s) at the same place of primary residence as recorded with the University. For married students, this will be the spouse. For unmarried employees, this will be children, if any, then parents or others as designated by the employee. For married employees, this will be the spouse.

### III. GENERAL POLICY

Recognizing the grief and emotional trauma that usually accompanies the death of a family member, the University wishes to minimize the administrative and procedural actions that must be completed by 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 Office of the Dean of Students is delegated the responsibility of coordinating the closing of a deceased student's records and accounts with the University and of contacting the Next of Kin when this is accomplished. *No other office* should contact the Next of Kin of deceased students for the purpose of resolving administrative issues. All such matters should be brought to the attention of the Office of the Dean of Students which shall then contact the responsible family member(s) to resolve any pending administrative issues.

In the event a student dies on campus and notification is not made by another source (i.e. LSU Police Department or hospital), the Dean of Students shall make or assist in making appropriate notification to the responsible Next of Kin.

The Office of Human Resource Management will coordinate the closing of all university business of a deceased employee with the employee's supervisor. In the event death occurs on the job, the emergency contact listed in Workday will be notified of the death of the employee. If death occurs off the job, HRM will coordinate efforts with the employee's supervisor and next of kin in returning any personal belongings to the employee's family, orchestrating the return of any items belonging to the university, and closing out all university accounts.

The Student Health Center will be notified if the loss or circumstances of the loss impact a person or number of people on campus. Post-interventions for affected students are organized and set up through the Office of Student Advocacy & Accountability via the Student Health Center's Director of Mental Health. The department leadership or affected employees can request assistance from the Office of Human Resource Management and the Employee Assistance Program to provide grief counseling and other resources as needed.

For LSU policy regarding honorary degrees and posthumous recognition, please see PS 86.

#### **IV. PROCEDURES FOR DEATH OF A STUDENT**

- A. Any person having knowledge of the death of a regularly enrolled student should notify the Office of the Dean of Students. It will be the responsibility of the Office of the Dean of Students to confirm this information through official sources (i.e. police, coroner's office, death certificate, newspaper obituary).
- B. Upon verification of a student's death, the Office of the Dean of Students shall officially notify the student's instructors as well as the offices listed below. Upon receipt of notification of the death of a student, these offices will follow the procedures specified for their office and will notify the Office of the Dean of Students when the student's records and accounts are closed. Offices are asked to respond within five working days so that timely contact may be made with responsible family members
  - 1. President: to be notified for informational purposes.
  - 2. Vice President for Student Affairs: to be notified for informational purposes.
  - 3. Vice President for Strategic Communications: to be notified for informational purposes.

4. Dean of the Student's College: upon notification will:
  - a. transfer the student's college file to the Office of the Dean of Students, which shall hold it for approximately one year before destroying it.
5. University Registrar: upon notification will take the following actions with effective dates that are commensurate with the date of death:
  - a. resign the student and/or authorize a "W" grade(s) for currently enrolled courses.
  - b. close all university records and cancel the student's future registration(s)
  - c. close the student's official records and take whatever actions are necessary to ensure the student's name is removed from the mailing and other lists maintained by the University.
  - d. record the date of death as provided by the Office of the Dean of Students.
6. Office of Bursar Operations: upon notification will:
  - a. prepare an accounting of the student's payments and debts to the University and prepare a list of other offices to be notified, which may include:
    - i. LSU Dining
    - ii. Residential Life
    - iii. Enrollment Management
    - iv. Student Health Center
    - v. Parking & Transportation Services
    - vi. International Programs
    - vii. LSU Libraries
    - viii. LSU Student Union
    - ix. LSU Recreation Center
  - b. close accounts with appropriate University offices and notify the Dean of Students when accomplished.
7. Office of Enrollment Management: for financial aid processing requirements
8. LSU Foundation, LSU Alumni Association, and Tiger Athletic Foundation: upon notification will:
  - a. remove the student's name from all mailing lists.
9. Dean of Libraries: upon notification will:
  - a. cancel all outstanding library fines.
  - b. provide the Dean of Students with a list of any books and materials currently charged to the student so that the Dean of Students may assist in their return.

- c. remove the student from the list of students contacted for fines, outstanding books, etc.
10. Other Offices: the Office of the Dean of Students may notify other University offices on a need to know basis to include the following:
- a. International Programs: when an international student dies, the Dean of Students will work with the Director of the International Student Office to assist with appropriate notification to the family and other such arrangements that may need to be made.
  - b. Greek Life: If the student was living in a fraternity or a sorority house, the Dean of Students will work with the appropriate advisor to suggest that the fraternity or sorority provides the responsible family members a fair refund and assists with the packing of the student's belongings, return of University property, and notification to members of the fraternity or sorority.
  - c. Residential Housing: The Director of Residential Life & Education and the Office of the Dean of Students will work together to ensure that the student's belongings are packed, the student's roommate and other members of the student's living group are informed, and that any University property (i.e. library books, departmental materials) is returned.
11. Registration and Refund Procedures:
- a. Visiting Student: In the event of the death of a visiting student, the Dean of Students will work with the responsible program director or academic dean to close the student's records and accounts with the University. When appropriate, the procedures for regularly enrolled students will be followed.
  - b. Refunds: wherever possible, the University will provide refunds to the Next of Kin if the student death occurs during a semester while the student is enrolled in courses.
    - i. Tuition and fees for that semester at hand will be refunded to the extent possible.
    - ii. Room and board charges will be refunded on a prorated per diem basis. For a student death occurring prior to starting classes, the Next of Kin will be refunded any rent paid in advance.
  - c. All outstanding fines from Parking & Transportation Services, LSU Libraries, and other offices authorized to assess charges as monetary penalties against students will be voided.
  - d. From any refund due the student, the University will deduct all other accounts receivable (i.e. loans, Student Health Center charges, nonsufficient funds checks)
    - i. In the event that a student is on the deferred payment plan or that the student has a negative balance, the University will assign the amount owed the University as an uncollectible bad debt.

- ii. When the student has outstanding loans or grants which cannot be liquidated by the University, the Director of Financial Aid, the Bursar, and the Dean of Students will work together to clear the student's account, notify the appropriate lending agents and inform the family members of whatever obligation may be imposed upon the estate of the student.
- iii. In the event that a student is due earnings from part-time employment or an assistantship, the amount will be applied to any outstanding balances or to the total refund due
- iv. To the extent a refund is warranted, any refund check will be issued to the Next of Kin and sent to the Dean of Students, who will forward the refund to the Next of Kin.

## **V. PROCEDURES FOR DEATH OF AN EMPLOYEE**

These provisions are intended to serve as a resource that outlines the actions to be taken upon the death of an employee with two primary considerations in mind.

First, the needs of the employee's family and co-workers are of principal concern. They must receive information and assistance in a respectful, timely manner with good judgment and sensitivity used at all times.

Second, confidential information must be safeguarded and caution must be taken not to reveal private information to anyone who is not legally entitled to it.

### **A. Administrative Process**

When the death of an employee is reported to the department, a representative from the department will immediately contact the Office of Human Resource Management to initiate the necessary processes. A representative from the department will also be selected to serve as the point of contact for the next of kin of the deceased employee leading to the funeral or memorial services. It will be the responsibility of the Office of Human Resource Management to confirm this information through official sources (i.e. police, coroner, death certificate, or public obituary).

Once an employee death has been confirmed, the Office of Human Resource Management will send an official death notification via email to the following:

1. University Leadership
  - a. President
  - b. Executive Vice President & Provost
  - c. Executive Vice President for Finance & Administration and CFO
  - d. Vice President for Legal Affairs & General Counsel
  - e. Vice President for Strategic Communications
2. Employee's department leadership
3. Office of Accounting Services (regarding outstanding tasks, turn off LaCarte Card, paycheck,

tax forms)

4. Specific staff in HRM in order to manage issues regarding the Employee Assistance Program, Workday access, benefits, leave, and any other relevant personnel items
5. Office of Information Technology Services regarding email and voicemail access as well as any other IT permissions
6. Office of Parking & Transportation Services regarding parking access and ensure solicitations are turned off
7. Tiger Card Office regarding card access
8. Financial Aid; Registrar (in case the employee is registered for classes or is an instructor of record)
9. LSU Alumni Association, LSU Foundation, Tiger Athletic Foundation to ensure solicitations are ceased
10. Dean of Students and Student Health Center to provide support for any students affected
11. Campus Affiliations (i.e. Staff Senate, Faculty Senate)
12. Office of Research & Economic Development, if the deceased was a faculty member, to ensure notification and processing is conducted for sponsored programs.
13. Office of Procurement (for any equipment under oversight of employee)
14. Building Coordinator (for return of any keys to university facilities; see PS 49)

The Office of Human Resource Management will become the sole point of contact for the family of the deceased after the funeral/memorial service.

#### B. Communications

The Vice President for Strategic Communications will direct appropriate staff to ensure that potential media inquiries are managed appropriately, any communication directly to the deceased employee is halted, and that the department is provided assistance with removing any information from web sites.

A representative, usually from the department, will notify the Office of Human Resource Management to initiate the necessary administrative process. Department leadership must inform department employees, indicating that additional details will be provided when available. (See Sec. C below)

A representative from the department will be selected to serve as the sole point of contact for the family, leading up to the funeral/memorial service. This sole point of contact will alleviate excessive

communications while the family grieves immediately after the employee's death. The representative must be sensitive to the needs and wishes of the family and ask for a contact person that can provide funeral/memorial service details when known.

The Office of the President will provide a letter to the Next of Kin to offer condolences on behalf of the University and to appropriately recognize the employee's contribution to the University.

In cases of employees with 10 or more years of service at LSU (including service at any LSU campus across the state), an LSU flag will be flown in honor of the deceased employee (See Policy Statement 66). The department representative coordinates timing with the family and University departments (i.e. LSUPD and LSU Facility Services). The flag will typically be flown for 24 hours. The flag will then be folded and placed in an engraved case with the name and date it was flown in the employee's honor. Costs for the flag and case will be paid for by the Office of the President.

The Office of Human Resource Management will reach-out to the next of kin regarding any remaining affairs related to the deceased individual's employment with the university.

C. Department leaders must consider:

1. It is important that the supervisor appropriately deliver the information regarding the co-worker's death to all department employees in a timely manner.
2. It is reasonable to expect that many, if not all, employees who worked with the deceased may be unable to complete their work the day of the announcement. Supervisors should be flexible with approving annual leave for these employees when possible.
3. It is important that those who desire to attend funeral/memorial services be allowed to take annual leave in order to do so. This may require a department-wide closedown for a period of time. The department leader will seek approval from their Vice President if approved and arrange for office coverage, if this is the case.
4. The supervisor should mention the Employee Assistance Program as an option for employees in the days following their co-worker's death. Supervisors must be sensitive to the fact that many co-workers may have known the deceased on a personal level, and that their grief may affect their behavior and performance for a temporary period.
5. In most cases, the employee will have personal belongings at work. It may be difficult for co-workers to see these items removed. Supervisors must make arrangements for a member of the employee's family to collect those items when a Next of Kin is available to do so. The supervisor must ensure the unit is arranged to have boxes and packing materials available at the time of the removal of an item.