

SUBJECT: PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING THE DEATH OF A CURRENT UNBC STUDENT**1. Purpose**

The purpose of the Procedures for handling the death of a current UNBC student is to ensure that, when a student dies, persons and units within the University that need to know are informed as quickly as possible, to coordinate the necessary administrative business and communication with the deceased student's family in a way that is as sensitive as possible, and to ensure that any necessary steps are taken to assist other students, faculty, and staff who knew the deceased.

2. Scope

These procedures apply to the death of any current UNBC student.

3.0 Procedures - General

Response to a death occurring off campus will be handled initially by the local police agency and/or the hospital involved. These agencies will be responsible for notifying the next-of-kin. Identifying the deceased by name as a UNBC student must only be done after the police have provided the approval to do so.

3.1 Procedures - Prince George Campus

- a. In the event any student or staff member learns of a student's death, he/she should contact Campus Security, who will immediately notify the Director of Student Success.
- b. If a death occurs during a field trip, the University staff member accompanying the trip should immediately contact local emergency services and the local law enforcement. As soon as this has occurred, the staff member will contact the Director of Student Success or Campus Security.
- c. Notification of Appropriate Officials
 - i. The Director of Student Success will notify the following campus officials:
 - Dean of Student Success and Enrolment Management
 - Provost, who will contact the President
 - Vice-President (Administration and Finance), who will contact the Risk, Safety and Security Manager
 - **Director of Regional Operations and Continuing Studies (when appropriate)**
 - Executive Director of Advancement
 - Registrar
 - Wellness Centre Manager
 - Dean of the student's program and Chair of the student's program
 - Housing and Residence Life Manager, if the student was in a student residence
 - President of the Northern Undergraduate Students Society or Graduate Students' Society, as appropriate
 - Awards and Financial Aid
 - Director of Media and Public Relations

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- Chaplaincy

- ii. The Director of Student Success will be responsible for coordinating follow-up activities. These activities include:
 - Initiating the "Lowering of Flags to Half Mast" policy.
 - Providing the President's Office with the contact information of the student's family to express condolences. The Registrar's Office will have a record of the student's mailing address and current phone number, permanent address and phone number.
 - The President will send a letter of condolence to the family which will include a note and photo of the University flags at half-mast to honour the student. Other University departments and personnel may send condolences if it is deemed appropriate and coordinated by the Director of Student Success.
 - The Director of Student Success will provide the appropriate family members--parents, in most instances--with the name and telephone number of a campus official with whom they can discuss the situation.
 - Contacting the Registrar to withdraw the student from classes and to stop any billing process (library fines, parking fines, Emergency Student Loans, etc) to the family.
 - Consulting with the Housing and Residence Life Manager (if the student lived in student residence) to outline a plan of action to:
 - (1) work with the family in removing the student's possessions from his/her room/apartment;
 - (2) contact roommates, Residence Life staff and other concerned parties;
 - (3) contact fellow students in classes and labs; and
 - (4) evaluate the need for supportive services for those affected by the death.
 - Working with the Wellness Centre Manager to deal with concerns the death may cause for other students as well as family and friends of the deceased.
- iii. Family members may want to talk with faculty, staff, or students concerning the death. At the discretion of the Director of Student Success, someone from Student Services who is familiar with the situation may be assigned as a contact person to assist them with their concerns. If the student lived in residence, a member of Residence Life staff may facilitate this process. It is important that the staff members assigned to assist the family be supportive of the family's needs while also being sensitive to the needs of students and staff.
- iv. Friends, classmates and faculty may need assistance in dealing with their reactions to the death. Human Resources through UNBC's Family and Employee Assistance Program may offer assistance to staff and faculty.
- v. The Vice-President (Administration and Finance) will send information about a refund of tuition fees. If the student dies during an academic session in which he or she is registered, the Vice-President (Administration And Finance) will refund any tuition fees paid during the academic session, after deducting any outstanding loans. Residence fees will be refunded on a pro-rated basis. Other debts to the University will normally be forgiven.

d. Media Involvement

The Director of Media and Public Relations will be responsible for disseminating information and responding to the media. The Director will seek advice or consult with appropriate law enforcement agencies, the Director of Student Success, and the student's family prior to releasing any information to the media. It is important that the law enforcement agencies, Campus Security, and Communications Office work closely with the Director of Student Success to ensure the accuracy of the information disseminated.

3.2 Procedures – Death of Student Attending UNBC at a Regional Campus

a. In the event any student or staff member learns of a student's death, he/she should contact the ***Regional Chair*** or Campus Security (if present on that campus), who will immediately notify the Regional Chair. ***The Regional Chair will notify the Director of Student Success so that appropriate procedures under section 3.1 above can be implemented on the Prince George campus.***

b. If a death occurs during a field trip, the University staff member accompanying the trip should immediately contact local emergency services and local law enforcement. As soon as this has occurred, the staff member will contact the ***Regional Chair who will notify the Director of Student Success.***

c. Regional Procedures

The Regional Chair will take the necessary and appropriate steps required on the regional campus to appropriately address the needs of their regional community. The Regional Chair will work closely with local service providers as well as the PG Campus Wellness Centre staff, the Chaplains' Office and ***the Director of Student Success to ensure an appropriate response.***

3.3 Student Death on Campus (outside of Residences)

If a student or staff member becomes aware of a death on campus, that individual must contact the RCMP immediately and then Campus Security who will immediately notify the Director of Student Success. The RCMP will contact the appropriate emergency medical service to pronounce the death and transport the body.

a. If the student lived off campus, appropriate notification and follow-up procedures contained in Section 3.1 (c) and 3.1 (d) will be followed.

b. Where a student death occurs on University premises or at events under University control, it is important that no official involved in the University speculate as to the cause of death or make any statements assigning responsibility for the cause of death to any individual or group. Requests for such information by the media or others will be referred to the Director of Media and Public Relations. All public statements will be made by the Director of Media and Public Relations, in consultation with appropriate law enforcement agencies.

3.4 Student Death in Residence

a. In the event of a student death in residence, the Residence staff member involved will call the RCMP immediately, then Campus Security, and finally the appropriate Residence Life Coordinator. Caution must be taken not to disturb the scene until the circumstances of the death have been determined. Access to the scene must be restricted. If the death is

discovered by Campus Security or if Campus Security are the first persons contacted, the officer involved will notify the RCMP, then appropriate Residence Life Coordinator and then the Director of Student Success.

- b. The RCMP will contact the appropriate emergency medical service and conduct the investigation.
- c. The notification procedures listed in Section 3.1 (c) will be followed.
- d. The Residence Life staff member will contact the Housing and Residence Life Manager, Director of Student Success, and Wellness Centre Manager to determine and provide necessary services. The Residence Life Coordinator will attempt to locate and notify the roommate(s), and make arrangements for alternate accommodation if necessary.
- e. Follow-up

Procedures in Section 3.4 (d) will be followed with special emphasis on the roles to be played by Residence Life staff, Wellness Centre Staff, and the Chaplains' Office working together to identify persons who need assistance in dealing with the death. Removal of the personal belongings of the deceased will be conducted in consultation with the Residence Life Coordinator, roommate(s), and family. If requested, the Manager of Housing and Residence Life will make arrangements for storing the student's belongings.

4.0. Posthumous degree

- 4.1 A posthumous degree may be requested by a family member, friend, or member of the university community to the Office of the Registrar. The Director of Student Success will notify the next of kin of the request to award posthumous degree.
- 4.2 Undergraduate Students:
 - a. Registrar will determine if the student has completed 90 credits and if currently registered in classes (i.e. begun final year of study), and,
 - b. Registrar will determine if the student has been in good academic standing and held a GPA that eventual graduation was expected.
- 4.3 Graduate Students
 - a. Registrar will determine if student had been in good academic standing and held a GPA that eventual graduation was expected.
 - b. Registrar will determine if student had current registration and had completed the majority of program.
 - c. Vice-President (Research) will determine if eventual graduation was expected.
- 4.4 Registrar will recommend to Senate Committee on Admissions and Degrees that a posthumous degree be awarded.
- 4.5 When presented to Senate, the degree will be noted as posthumous degree.
- 4.6 The degree will appear in graduation program with the notation that the degree is awarded posthumously.
- 4.7 The degree will be noted on transcript as awarded posthumous. The parchment will not have posthumous notation.
- 4.8 For convocation, a family member may carry hood across stage if they so choose.