Responding to a Death

(Policy BAS-0004)

I. Purpose of the Policy

The death of a campus affiliate (undergraduate and graduate students, senate faculty/emeriti, academic and staff employees, alumni, continuing education, visiting) represents a loss to the University community as well as to the family and friends of the deceased. The campus response should be sensitive, caring, and cohesive. This policy sets forth communication guidelines and procedures for administrative actions following the death of a UC Santa Cruz affiliate.

II. Designated Coordinators

University Police (UCPD): Chief of University Police or designated officer.

Student Incident Coordinator: Designated by the student’s college affiliation or place of residence. For all undergraduate students who reside off-campus, the student’s College Administrative Officer (CAO) will serve as the Incident Coordinator. For all undergraduate students who reside on-campus, the Incident Coordinator will be the Colleges, Housing and Educational Services (CHES) Sr. Manager who oversees that student’s residential area (CAO or Director of Housing Services). For Graduate students living on and off campus, the Dean of Graduate Studies will act as Incident Coordinator with support from the Director of Housing Services, the Dean of Students and the Divisional Dean (or designates).

Academic Incident Coordinator: The department chair (or designate) will work with the divisional human resources manager and the department manager to distribute/assign the administrative actions in response to the incident.

Staff Incident Coordinator: The unit head (or designate) will work with the Employee and Labor Relations Analyst, Staff Human Resources to distribute/assign the administrative actions in response to the incident.

Other Coordinators: The Associate Vice Chancellor of Colleges, Housing, and Educational Services (AVC CHES) will assist in identifying appropriate coordination contacts for all other responses to death including alumni, continuing education students, and visitors.

III. Detailed Policy Statement

The institutional response to a notice of death requires a series of administrative and communication actions. All activities related to the institutional response to the death of a campus affiliate should be conducted with the utmost respect and reverence for the family and the deceased’s relationship with the UC Santa Cruz community.

The scope of this policy is not intended to describe the emergency and law enforcement response to death investigations. It is also not intended to describe situations which may result in death or risk-based prevention measures.

A. Administration

The Student Incident Coordinator shall serve as the primary administrative contact for the family of the deceased and shall ensure the execution of the implementation procedures including the Death of an Undergraduate Student Incident Coordinator’s Worksheet or the Death of a Graduate Student Incident Coordinator’s Worksheet (see Appendix A: Responding to an Undergraduate Student Death Procedures and Appendix B: Responding to a Graduate Student Death Procedures).
The Academic Incident Coordinator shall serve as the primary contact for the family of the deceased, liaison to the Academic Personnel Office, and shall ensure the execution of implementation procedures including the Death of an Academic Employee Incident Coordinator’s Worksheet (see Appendix C: Responding to an Academic Appointee Death Procedures).

The Staff Incident Coordinator shall serve as the primary contact for the family of the deceased, liaison to the Employee and Labor Relations Office, and shall ensure the execution of implementation procedures including the Death of a Staff Incident Coordinator’s Worksheet (see Appendix D: Responding to a Staff Death Procedures).

B. Communication

After coordination with UCPD or other investigating law enforcement agency, notifications are distributed in two parts (1) Public Communications, and (2) Internal Communications. All communications should be considerate of the family’s privacy requests and adhere to related requirements of law enforcement and the coroner’s office, as permissible by law. Any official communications from the campus to the community are not to be disseminated until after the coroner has officially released the name of the deceased.

1. Public Communications

   The Incident Coordinator shall prepare and distribute a campus community announcement appropriate for the deceased’s affiliations to be reviewed by News and Media Relations. To the extent possible, the release of the announcement should be coordinated with the internal communication letter.

   News and Media Relations is responsible for: the placement of announcements to the broader campus community, as warranted; responding to inquiries from the media and other organizations; and, posting the announcement to the In Memoriam section of the campus news website.

2. Internal Communications

   For students, the Office of the Registrar provides campus business offices with the official Notice of Deceased Student Letter (see Sub-Appendix B within the Responding to an Undergraduate Student Death Procedures or Responding to a Graduate Student Death Procedures).

   For academic appointees the Academic Incident Coordinator provides campus business offices with the official Notice of Deceased Academic Appointee Letter (see Sub-Appendix B within Responding to an Academic Employee Death Procedures).

   For staff members, the Staff Incident Coordinator provides campus business offices with the official Notice of Deceased Staff Member Letter (see Sub-Appendix B within Responding to a Staff Member Death Procedures).

IV. Getting Help

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you need help with ...</th>
<th>Contact ...</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...if you have information related to an investigation to provide</td>
<td>UC Santa Cruz Police Department Investigations Unit, (831) 459-2231; <a href="http://police.ucsc.edu/services/investigations.html">http://police.ucsc.edu/services/investigations.html</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>...crisis counseling and support services for students</td>
<td>Counseling and Psychological Crisis Services, (831) 459-2628; <a href="http://caps.ucsc.edu">http://caps.ucsc.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>...crisis counseling and support services for academic and staff employees</td>
<td>Employee Assistance Program (EAP), 1-866-808-6205; <a href="http://shr.ucsc.edu/benefits/eap">http://shr.ucsc.edu/benefits/eap</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>...questions regarding student academic</td>
<td>the Registrar, Tchad Sanger, <a href="mailto:registrar@ucsc.edu">registrar@ucsc.edu</a>; (831) 459-4412;</td>
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V. Applicability and Authority

This policy applies to all campus affiliates (undergraduate and graduate students, senate faculty/emeriti, academic and staff employees, alumni, continuing education students, visitors) of UC Santa Cruz.

This policy supersedes Responding To A Student Death, dated January 2005, and Policy and Procedure For Responding to a Staff or Faculty Death, dated May 1998.

The Vice Chancellor, Business and Administrative Services is the campus authority for the Responding to a Death policy. This policy was reviewed and approved by the Campus Provost/Executive Vice Chancellor on January 04, 2018. The policy will be reviewed every five years.

VI. Related Policies/References for More Information

Related Policies and Procedures

- Standing Orders of the Regents 103.8: Death Benefit
- Accounting Manual P-196-25, Payroll: Death Benefit
- Accounting Manual U-167-78, UCRS Tax Withholding from Annuity Payments
- Personnel Policies for Staff Members, PPSM 83: Death Payments
- Outdoor Commemorative Installations (tba)
- U.S. Flag Code

Implementation Procedures

- Appendix A: Responding to an Undergraduate Student Death
- Appendix B: Responding to a Graduate Student Death
- Appendix C: Responding to an Academic Appointee Death
- Appendix D: Responding to a Staff Member Death

VII. Revision History

January 4, 2018: Major revision to address who may handle communications, guidance on international students, general confusion about the process, unnecessary and over burdensome procedures, notification to business offices, support for the return to normalcy, guidance on missing or presumed deceased students, the disclosure of student records, and the off-boarding process.