

# **IUPUI Student Death Notification Protocol**

Created in partnership by the IUPUI Division of Student Affairs and IU Communications

Approved by Chancellor Charles Bantz, February 2014

For more information or questions on this policy, please contact:

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# IUPUI Student Death Notification Protocol

In the event of the death of a currently enrolled student, it is the responsibility of the campus to respond in a sensitive and sympathetic manner and most importantly with a measure of dignity toward the student and his/her family and friends. The death of a student can impact the entire campus community. The purpose of this document is to establish the responsibilities for notifications in an orderly, effective, and caring manner.

Notification of a student death typically comes to the Dean of Students Office as the designee of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs in matters related to a student death. This notification comes from a variety of sources including the police, family, friends, or a campus faculty/staff member. Upon receiving notice of the death of a currently enrolled student, the Dean of Students is responsible for beginning the campus response.

## Responding to a Student Death

### Initial Contacts

1. Response to any death occurring off campus will be handled by the local police agency and/or hospital involved. It is the responsibility of these agencies to notify the next of kin. Due to strong local law enforcement relationships with the University Police it is likely that Indiana University Police will be notified if the local police agency or hospital is aware that the student was enrolled at IUPUI.
2. In the event that a campus administrator is made aware of the recent death of a student they should contact the University Police and also the Dean of Students.
3. In the event that a death occurs during a field trip or study abroad trip, the campus staff member accompanying the trip should immediately contact local emergency services and the local law enforcement agency. Once the situation is secured the following should be contacted:
  - a. Office of International Affairs (OIA) (in the event of a study abroad trip)
    - i. After hours Study Abroad Emergency Phone if after 5pm, holiday or weekend
    - ii. OIA has additional procedures to follow in the event of a death during a study abroad trip and would work directly with Student Affairs and IU Communications
  - b. Appropriate Academic Dean or Department Head
  - c. University Police
  - d. Dean of Students
4. In the event that a death of a student occurs on campus the University Police will handle the response and be responsible for contacting the following:
  - a. Dean of Students
  - b. Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration
  - c. Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (if unable to contact the Dean of Students)
5. Once the Dean of Students is contacted about the death of a currently enrolled student he/she will notify the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.
6. The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and the Dean of Students will confer and then begin to make the following contacts (telephonically and through electronic mail):
  - a. The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs will contact the Chancellor and other members of the Chancellor's cabinet when appropriate
  - b. Director of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
  - c. Assistant Director of Strategic Communications (IU Communications)

- d. Director of Housing and Residence Life (if the student lived on campus)
  - e. Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
  - f. The Dean(s) of the school in which the student was enrolled
  - g. Chief of Staff for the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration
  - h. Office of the Registrar
  - i. Office of Bursar
  - j. Office of Student Financial Services
7. All individuals notified will be made aware that this information cannot be shared publicly until the University Police, the local hospital, or the Coroner's office has confirmed next of kin notification.
  8. Upon confirmation of next of kin notification university colleagues listed above will be updated.

#### Media Involvement and Internal/External Communications

1. Student Affairs will work directly with IU Communications to draft and disseminate notification of a student death to the appropriate members of the IUPUI community.
2. Once it can be confirmed that the next of kin has been notified, notification to the campus community, and university colleagues as appropriate, will be facilitated through electronic mail. The recipients of the email will be determined on a case by case basis and will be influenced by the following:
  - a. The location of the death
  - b. If the student lived on or off campus
  - c. When the death occurred (i.e. length of time that has passed since being notified or if the campus is currently on break, or between academic semesters, etc.)
  - d. The wishes of the family
  - e. How involved the student was on campus
3. Student Affairs and IU Communications will work with the academic school of the deceased student to determine who will send the message and the timeline for distribution. In most cases the Academic Dean would send the message to faculty, staff, and students that are part of the school. The Chancellor or Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs would be responsible for sending a broader message to all students if dictated by the particular circumstances/situation.
4. IU Communications will be responsible for collecting the information and disseminating it to local/national media upon request. All requests for information should be forwarded to the Director of Communications. It is important that University Police and Student Affairs work closely with IU Communications to maintain the accuracy of the information disseminated.
  - a. IU Communications will be responsible for disseminating the media messaging to key members of IUPUI's leadership team – Chancellor, EVC, VC External Affairs, VC Finance and Administration, VC Student Affairs – to ensure awareness of, and consistency of, messaging.
  - b. IU Communications will be responsible for monitoring social media for any posts/tweets regarding the student death and responding only with factual and approved messaging.
5. If a student death occurs on campus property or at an event under campus control, it is important that no person involved in the campus response speculate as to the cause of death or make statements assigning responsibility for the cause of death to any individual or group.
6. The Director of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) or the Dean of Students, if the Director is unavailable, will reach out via email to the Dean of the school in which the student was enrolled to make them aware of the JagsCare team and the debriefing services provided by this team. A similar email will be sent to all the instructors of the classes in which the student was enrolled.

- a. JagsCARE is a team of individuals from across the campus community that have been trained to work with individuals impacted by a traumatic event. The team is available to provide immediate and short term support to meet the emotional and psychological needs of individuals in the IUPUI Community (faculty, staff, and students) impacted by a traumatic event. The goal is to assist individuals in coping with the stress and identifying the skills needed to move forward in a healthy way. The specific type of support is tailored to address the specific needs or concerns. This team is coordinated by staff in CAPS and Student Affairs.

### Family Contact

1. Within 24 – 48 hours the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or his/her designee will contact the family to express condolences once next of kin notification has been made. During this call the focus is on condolences and offering support. The family will be asked if there is any information they wish to share such as:
  - a. Funeral arrangements (location, date, and time)
  - b. Preference on contribution/donation information in memory of deceased student?
  - c. Does the family want their home address released for condolences?
2. Student Affairs will inform the family about the Student Affairs Day of Remembrance that occurs at the end of the fall and spring semesters honoring students that have passed away during the last year.

### Student Support and Follow-up Actions

1. Once the death is official and confirmed, the Office of the Registrar makes appropriate updates in the student information system to close the official record so that further business communications, bills, etc. are ceased. The Office of the Registrar then sends notification to the following offices asking them to close any other local records of the student:
  - a. Student's School/Division
  - b. Admissions
  - c. Alumni
  - d. Campus Card Services
  - e. Student Financial Services
  - f. Bursar
  - g. Office for Veterans & Military Personnel
  - h. Parking Services
  - i. Student Affairs
2. The JagsCare team is available to meet with student organizations, classes, faculty/staff, or other specific groups if the JagsCare services are requested.
3. If the student lived on campus, the Director of CAPS in collaboration with the Dean of Students will consult with Housing and Residence Life to outline a plan of action to:
  - a. Work with the family in removing the student's possessions from his/her own campus residence
  - b. Contact roommates, resident advisors, members of a themed learning community (if applicable), and other concerned parties
  - c. Evaluate the need for supportive services affect by the death
4. The services of CAPS will be highlighted for any students affected by the death.