



# Procedure 476.1A Deceased Student Procedure

## *Policy 476 - Deceased Student Notification*

### **1.0 Statement of Purpose**

The death of a student can be emotionally difficult and stressful for students, faculty, staff, and the community. Recognizing the shock and profound sadness following a student's death, this protocol is designed to ensure a professional and caring response by the College. The College can adapt this protocol as needed when considering the specific needs unique to the situation.

This recommended protocol attempts to:

- Assist those dealing with the crisis to respond appropriately in a timely manner.
- Provide coordination with external individuals and agencies.
- Provide communication within the college community.
- Assist with post-incident support and resolution.
- Provide an empathetic and caring voice from the College to those impacted.

When implementing this protocol, remember: FERPA applies until the death is verified.

Depending upon the student's academic status (e.g., matriculated, graduated, no longer enrolled, international) and the location where the death occurred (e.g., on campus, off campus), the procedures of this

protocol will be implemented as appropriate. It is also important to understand that each situation is unique and that employee response should reflect the specific nature of each death.

Given the diversity of our campus, it is important to be culturally sensitive and mindful when responding to the death of a student.

## **2.0 Death of a Matriculated Student**

### **2.1 When the student's death occurs on campus**

1. The person who discovers the death will immediately contact the Longview Police Department by calling 911. After making contact with the police, the individual or someone with that person will contact Campus Security at 360-442-2911. Campus Security will respond to the scene immediately and secure the area until police arrive and assume command of the scene. At the first opportunity, Campus Security guards will contact the Director of Security, who will, in turn, contact the Vice President of Instruction (VPI) and the Vice President of Administration (VPA) or their designee(s).
2. The VPI or designee will inform the President and the Executive Leadership Team, as well as other senior staff, of the student's death. The College's Public Information Officer will coordinate all contacts with the media.
3. It is the Cowlitz County Coroner's responsibility to notify the family of the deceased student. The VPI or designee will verify with the coroner's office that the family has been notified. The VPI or designee may then contact the student's family to express condolences and begin to coordinate all college matters with respect to the student's death.
  - For international students, the VPI or designee will assist the Cowlitz County Coroner's office in providing information about the student's emergency contact, including contact information, languages spoken, and On-Call insurance information. The Coroner's office will work with the consulate or embassy to notify the family of the deceased student. The embassy or consulate will locate the family and work with the coroner's office to locate the family and to make arrangements for repatriation of remains.

- For international students, once the Cowlitz County Coroner's office has contacted the family, the VPI or designee will contact the international insurance company, On-Call (866) 509-7715, in order to begin the coordination of repatriation of remains with the family, the student's consulate or embassy, the Insurance company, and the coroner's office. Working with On-Call is critical to ensure that the family does not incur costs for the repatriation and other expenses.
  - For international students on J-1 visas, the VPI or designee will contact the sponsoring agency as well as the US Department of State to report the death.
4. The VPI or designee will request a copy of the death certificate from the Cowlitz County Health Department. For international students, the VPI or designee will help coordinate communication between the family, the consulate or embassy, the coroner's office, and On-Call.
  5. The VPI or designee will notify the Registration, Financial Aid, Finance Departments, and IT.
    - Registration requires third-party documentation prior to taking any action, e.g., a copy of a newspaper obituary, death certificate, etc. The college campus security incident report can be used as temporary verification of death in lieu of the official death certificate until the College obtains the official death certificate.
    - The Registrar will then close the student's academic record.
    - Financial Aid will review the student's file and calculate Return to Title IV Funds. If the student has a loan, a death certificate is required to direct the loan servicer to eliminate the loan from the College's cohort default rate and discharge the loan on behalf of the student.
    - The Finance Office will stop billing the student or the student's estate for funds owed to the College and will close out the student's business with the College.
    - IT will close the student's accounts, including their LCC-assigned email.
  6. The VPI or designee will contact Human Resources and Payroll to find out if the student was an employee to ensure final pay is processed correctly. If the student was an employee, Human Resources coordinates with the family to obtain a completed W-9 Form and Claim

for Indebtedness of the State of Washington to Deceased Employee Declaration Form (RCW 49.48.120). HR will also follow the employee exit procedures.

7. The VPI or designee will contact International Programs if the deceased student was an International Student. International Programs will coordinate the response as outlined in section 4.0.
8. When appropriate, the VPI or designee will ensure that the families of any students with the same name as the deceased student will be notified that their student was not the student involved.
9. The VPI or designee will notify the deceased student's instructors and department chair(s). If the student was an employee, the VPI or designee will notify the department where the student worked.
10. The VPI or designee will contact the appropriate Counseling Services staff and HR. Counseling Services will coordinate counseling and emotional support for those affected by the death. The director of HR or designee will coordinate with the VPI to provide Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services and support.
11. The VPI or designee will serve as the primary campus contact for the family of the deceased student and will meet with family members should they decide to come to campus. When appropriate, the VPI or designee will assist the deceased student's family in making arrangements to come to campus and provide other assistance, as needed.
12. The VPI or designee will inform the Housing Director/staff of the death of any student who was living in a college-owned apartment. Access to the deceased student's living quarters and personal effects should be restricted immediately following notification of the student's death. Access to the deceased student's living quarters and personal effects must be cleared with the campus Director of Security, the VPI or designee, as well as the Housing Director/staff. The VPI or designee will facilitate the return of the deceased student's property to the designated point of contact for the student's family.
  - o College staff should be particularly sensitive to the deceased student's roommate(s). The VPI or designee and Housing Director/staff will arrange for new living arrangements for the deceased student's roommate(s) as needed.
13. The VPI or designee will inform the Director of Athletics of the death of any student-athlete. Access to the deceased student's athletic

property and personal effects should be restricted immediately following notification of the student's death. Access to the deceased student's property must be cleared with the Director of Security or designee, the VPI or designee, as well as the Director of Athletics. In coordination with the VPI or designee, the Director of Athletics will facilitate the return of the deceased student's athletic property to the designated point of contact for the student's family.

14. If the student was enrolled in or a participant in any specific programs, such as Disability Support Services, Veterans' Services, childcare center, and/or student leadership clubs or organizations, the VPI will notify the directors of each respective program.
15. The VPI or designee will inform the Director of Student Programs when appropriate. The Associated Students of Lower Columbia College may be included in the planning of any memorial or remembrance.
16. If appropriate, the VPI or designee, in coordination with the President's Office, will write a letter of condolence to the family of the deceased student. In the case of an international student who lived with a host family, a letter to the host family will also be written.
17. The VPI or designee, in consultation with other appropriate staff and students, will coordinate assistance to those wishing to hold a memorial service on-campus for the deceased student.
18. The VPI or designee will facilitate the return to the family of any property that the deceased student may have left in academic areas and/or receive items loaned to the student, such as library books, technology, or equipment.
19. Upon being notified by the VPI or designee, the Director of Student Programs will reach out to and address student group affiliations, as appropriate.
20. After the death of a student, a meeting may be called by the VPI or designee to ensure that all appropriate measures have been taken in response to the student's death, including sending appropriate campus notifications. This meeting may include representatives from the following areas:
  - Student Housing staff
  - Director of Student Programs
  - Director of Student Conduct and Security Services
  - Counseling Services
  - Public Information Officer

- Registrar or designee
- Director of Environmental Health and Safety or designee
- Director of International Programs
- Vice President of Administration
- Human Resources
- Payroll
- Other relevant employees

## 2.2 When the student's death is off-campus

1. The VPI is the first point of contact when an employee of Lower Columbia College becomes aware of the death of a current student.
2. If a death occurs during college-sponsored travel within the USA, the college faculty or staff member traveling with the group will immediately contact the local emergency services and local law enforcement agency. Once the situation is secured, the college staff or faculty member should contact LCC public safety and the VPI or designee.
3. If a student's death occurs while the student is studying abroad, the program provider of the study abroad program will contact local emergency services, local law enforcement, and the nearest US Consulate or Embassy, and will then contact the International Programs Office. The Director of International Programs will then contact the VPI or designee.
4. Items 2-19 of the preceding section will be enacted, as appropriate.

## 3.0 Notification of Death

### 3.1 Recent Graduate or Previously Enrolled

1. Anyone aware of the death of a recent graduate (i.e., within 2 years of graduation) or a recent, previous student (someone who was recently enrolled but is not currently attending) will notify the VPI or designee.
2. The VPI or designee will notify and work with the Registrar to verify the information.
3. The VPI or designee will notify the Public Information Officer.
4. The VPI will inform Financial Aid and the College's Finance Office to convene appropriate notifications regarding the deceased student's business with the College.

5. The VPI or designee will notify the Office of the President and coordinate an appropriate response.

## **4.0 Roles and Responsibilities**

NOTE: This plan makes reference to specific individuals (job titles) in setting forth the notification and response sequence in the event of a student's death. The need for immediate action – particularly early in the timeline – may require a fluid response and the participation of designees, if key individuals are unavailable. In the event that any college department is the first to be notified of a student's death, that department will immediately notify the VPI.

### **College Counselors**

- Assist the VPI or designee, as needed, to coordinate the campus response to the student's death.
- Contact other Counseling and Health Service Agencies, as appropriate, for additional campus support and resources.
- Seek out students and staff who may have been affected by the student's death, such as significant others, friends, roommates, teammates, others living in the deceased student's building, and offer appropriate services.
- In consultation with the VPI or designee and others, will coordinate assistance to those wishing to hold a memorial service on campus for the deceased student.

### **Director of Athletics**

- Inform the appropriate coaching staff of the death of any student-athlete.
- In coordination with the Director of Security and the VPI or designee, the Director of Athletics will facilitate the return of any of the deceased student's property that remains in college athletic facilities.

## Director of Finance

- Settle the student's financial accounts with the College, as appropriate, and process any allowable refund of tuition, fees, and prorated housing contract dollars. If applicable, any refund due is made payable to the student's beneficiary and provided separately from the College's condolence letter. The Finance Office may also refund other fees.
- Payroll will coordinate with the student's supervisor and Human Resources to finalize any remaining timesheets/wage payments and obtain appropriate forms to release payment to the beneficiary.
- In the case of international students, the Director of Finance will work with International Programs regarding payment details if the beneficiary is overseas.

## Director of Financial Aid

- Review the student's financial aid situation, and if the deceased student was currently receiving Title IV aid, calculate a Return to Title IV Funds.
- If the student has a loan, a death certificate is required to direct the loan servicer to eliminate the loan from the College's cohort default rate and discharge the loan on behalf of the student.

## Director of International Programs (in the case of an international student death)

- Contact the US Department of State and the embassy or consulate, and, if the deceased student is on a J-1 sponsored visa, contact the J-1 sponsoring agency.
  - The student's home country embassy will follow its own policy for notification of the family of the death abroad.
- Contact On-Call International (insurance and emergency response service) and serve as the primary contact for On-Call International for coordination of family transportation and repatriation. On-Call International: (866) 509-7715.

- Work with On-Call International to assist the family of the deceased student with obtaining visas and arranging travel (if they would like to come to the US), including:
  - Creating letters of invitation to be used at the US Embassy for family members.
  - Working with On-Call to assist the family with hotel and transportation while in Longview.
  - Arranging for airport pick-up and transportation of the family to Longview.
  - Arrange for translation services for the family while in Longview.
  - Assist the family with settling affairs in the USA, including the return of personal belongings.
- If the student was living with a host family, contact that host family to notify them of the student's death and work with the family to remove belongings from the home.
- Provide information about the deceased student's family to either the VPI or the President, so that a letter of condolence from the College can be appropriately drafted and addressed.
- Communication with the family may require a translation service. The Director of International Programs should identify the student's first language so that the letter is properly translated by a professional. Cultural sensitivity is particularly important.
- Update the deceased student's SEVIS record.

### Director of Security

- If the death is on campus, the Director of Security or designee will be in charge of the scene and will conduct an initial investigation. Campus security guards will immediately call 911 to request police assistance.
- Contact the VPI or designee at the first opportunity on the details of the situation. The College President and the VP of Administration will be immediately notified as well.

- Coordinate with other campus staff, as appropriate.
- Ensure that all areas where the deceased student's personal effects may be present on the campus, including college-owned apartments, athletic facilities, library, academic departments, and labs, are secured, and all access is denied until deemed appropriate by law enforcement. If the deceased student lived in a college apartment, particular sensitivity and concern are needed for the deceased student's roommate(s). As such, the Director of Security will closely coordinate with the Assistant Director of Residence Life and Student Programs and Counseling Services around safeguarding the deceased student's effects.

### Housing Director/Staff

- If the student lived in a college-owned apartment, the Housing Director/staff will:
  - Coordinate Residence Life's response to the student's death.
  - Assist other residents who may be affected by the student's death. Roommates may need particular sensitivity and support.
  - In coordination with the Director of Security, the VPI or designee helps facilitate the return of the deceased student's property, which may remain in student housing.
  - In the event that a roommate or roommates need to be moved, follow the housing COOP plan.

### Human Resources

- The director of HR or designee will coordinate with the VPI or designee to provide Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services and support.
- If the student was an employee, Human Resources will coordinate with the family to obtain a completed W-9 Form and Claim for Indebtedness of the State of Washington to Deceased Employee Declaration Form (RCW 49.48.120). HR will also follow the employee exit procedures.

## Registrar

- Review registration activity, adjusting the record as appropriate, including determining if the student is eligible for a posthumous degree.
- Close the student's official record, and mark deceased on the record. This codes the student information system so that no ordinary communication is sent to the student, parents, or significant other.
- Notify the National Student Clearinghouse so that lending agencies are notified of the student's death.

## Vice President of Administration: Office of Risk Management

- Review the situation and provide input and guidance as indicated, which may include consultation with the College's AAG.

## Vice President of Effectiveness and College Relations: Public Information Officer

- Coordinate media inquiries and assist with campus communications, as needed.

## Vice President of Instruction

- Immediately contact and inform the President of the situation and consult with the Public Information Officer. In the case of an international student, the Director of International Programs will also be contacted in order to coordinate with insurance and foreign embassies/consulates.
- It is the coroner's responsibility to notify the family. Once the coroner has contacted the family, the VPI or designee may then contact the student's family to express condolences and begin to coordinate all college matters with respect to the student's death.
- Contact appropriate staff members and coordinate their efforts. If the student resided in a college-owned apartment, inform the Housing Director/staff of the student's death. Particular concern and sensitivity will be needed in notifying and assisting or counseling any roommates.

- When appropriate, contact College Program Directors and Academic Chairs who maintain direct oversight of the student. The Program Director or Chair will notify additional staff members and may assist in response efforts.
- Notify the faculty who currently have the student enrolled in their classes.
- Contact and inform the Counseling Services staff of the situation to begin response coordination, as needed.
- Inform the Director of Student Programs of the death of any student, as appropriate.
- Request a copy of the Death Certificate from the Cowlitz County Health Department. Copies of the death certificate will be distributed to the Registrar and to the Financial Aid Department if the student is receiving Title IV aid. When a death occurs on campus, the college campus security incident report can be used as temporary verification of death for Registration in lieu of the official death certificate, until the official death certificate has been obtained
- Inform the Finance Office and Director of Financial Aid, who will review and make appropriate adjustments to the student's financial records.
- Put in a request with IT to close the student's accounts.
- Coordinate, in collaboration with the Director of Student Conduct and Security Services, the release of the deceased student's personal effects to the student's family. In the case of an international student, International Programs will assist with coordination with the embassy or consulate for sensitive documents such as passports and government documents.
- Convene a meeting of appropriate staff members to ensure that all appropriate measures have been taken in response to the student's death. A checklist of notifications and any documentation will be kept on file in the Office of the Vice President of Instruction.
- If the student is near graduation, consult with the Registrar regarding a posthumous degree or certificate.

- Within two weeks of the student's death, provide information to the President's Office, which will then coordinate the writing of a letter of condolence from the President and the college community to the family of the deceased student, if appropriate. The letter may accompany a posthumous diploma if one has been ordered. The letter may also accompany academic documents, which may be returned to the family.

## **History**

- Approved by ELT: May 27, 2026
- Reviewed by Governance Council: May 26, 2026