



## STUDENT DEATH AND MAJOR MEDICAL CRISIS NOTIFICATION & SUPPORT PROCESS

No: SAAP 14-1

**Authority:** UWM Administration

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**Initiator:** Chief Student Affairs Officer

June 1988 (revised)

December 1985 (original)

**Responsible Party:** Dean of Students

### I. Introduction

This policy describes UWM's response to a student death or major medical crisis that occurs on or off campus. Because each situation involving the loss or serious distress of a UWM community member is different, the process, procedure, and timeline for response may be modified based on the individual situation.

The critical pieces needed for effective management of a notification process are organization, communication, partnering of available resources, care and support of the individuals involved, and recognition that all members of the campus community may have some affiliation with the deceased or seriously distressed student.

From the circumstances of the incident, to the wishes and needs of families and friends, each situation is unique and must be handled with that mindset. The process below may not be as linear or include all the steps below. The process upon first notification requires a structured approach and an effective timeline as well as flexibility to adapt to the circumstance.

The policy is organized to reflect the sequence of response. It is separated into three sections: On-Campus Emergencies, Primary Notification and Support, and Subsequent Notification and Support.

### II. Contact Information

Dean of Students  
345 Student Union  
Voice: 414 229-4632  
Facsimile: 414 229-6793  
Electronic: dos@uwm.edu

### III. Definitions

Distress: Great pain, suffering, anxiety, or sorrow.

Emergency: A situation that poses an immediate risk to health or life.

Major medical crisis: A situation involving substantial physical, emotional, or psychological distress or a serious illness where a student's condition is life threatening and requires hospitalization.

Student Support Team: A team of professionals from campus which supports a healthy campus community by identifying students in distress and coordinating an appropriate response. It provides consultation to members of the campus regarding student concerns and makes referrals to appropriate departments depending on the circumstances. Representatives include the Dean of Students Office, University Housing, Norris Health Center, Accessibility Resource Center, Student Success Center, and Student Affairs Coordinators for the College of General Studies.

### IV. On Campus Emergencies

For emergencies, UWM Police should always be contacted prior to the notification steps outlined below.

### V. Primary Notification & Support

- A. Any faculty or staff member who learns of the death or major medical crisis involving a UWM student should immediately contact the Dean of Students Office at 414-229-4632 or dos@uwm.edu begin the notification and support process.
- B. The Dean of Students Office is the central point for managing the notification and support process for student deaths and major medical crises to ensure that all steps are coordinated consistently and to make adjustments to the process based on experience and organizational history.
  1. The Dean of Students Office will maintain the role of liaison with the student's family/next of kin.
  2. The Dean of Students Office will work in tandem with University Police to ensure that the family/next of kin of the distressed or deceased student is notified prior to any public dissemination of information.
    - a. Notification of a death will typically be handled by University Police.
    - b. Notification of a major medical crisis may be handled by University Police, the Dean of Students Office, or University Housing.
    - c. In situations involving an international student or a student studying abroad, the Center for International Education (CIE) should be

contacted for its input on contacting the family/next of kin. It will reach out to the appropriate consulate.

- C. For the death or major medical crisis of a student that occurs on campus, the Dean of Students Office will:
1. Immediately pull together a response team to gather as much pertinent information as possible and delegate any necessary actions that do not already fall under another office's responsibility. The team may consist of the following positions:
    - a. The Dean of Students (or designee)
    - b. Director of Norris Health Center (or designee)
    - c. Chief of Police (or designee)
    - d. Director of University Housing or Director of Neighborhood Housing (or designee and as appropriate)
    - e. Office of Legal Affairs representative
    - f. Vice Chancellor for University Relations (or designee)
    - g. Director of University Safety and Assurances (or designee) if death occurred on campus, serious injury was related to UWM's facilities, or communicable diseases were involved
    - h. Other staff as appropriate (Director of Student Success Center, Director of Athletics, Director of Student Involvement, etc.)
  2. Ensure that information is being provided to the Office of the Chancellor, Office of the Provost, Office of the Chief Student Affairs Officer, Office of the Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration, and University Relations, and that they are also given regular status updates.
  3. Conduct complete web search relating to the student to identify any affiliated students or student groups.
- D. If the campus community is aware of the student death or major medical emergency prior to the family/next of kin notification, the Dean of Students Office, University Housing and/or Neighborhood Housing with the assistance of the Student Support Team and Norris Health Center, may immediately begin care for the community with the limited release of information until family/next of kin notification has been made and consistent with FERPA.

## **VI. Subsequent Notification & Support**

- A. *After the family/next of kin is notified*, notification and consideration of impacted campus community members will begin consistent with FERPA.
1. The immediate areas to be managed through the Dean of Students Office with assistance of the Student Support Team include but not limited to:
    - i. Partner/spouse, significant other, siblings, other family members, and next of kin

- ii. University Housing and Neighborhood Housing for roommates and neighbors
  - iii. Clubs and organizations with which the student is affiliated
  - iv. Academic Affiliations: Dean, Associate Dean, Department Chair and Academic Advisor
  - v. Current semester instructors and teaching assistants
  - vi. On-campus employing unit
  - vii. Field placement, practicum, internship, and volunteer supervisors
2. In the event of a student death, the Dean of Students Office will send an email as soon as reasonably feasible to campus leaders so the campus community can collectively work to address logistical items and identify students needing support. All units that receive the notification should check their databases for students who might be connected to the deceased student, share any relevant information with the Dean of Students Office, and offer support to students who may be impacted by the death (see Appendix A). Notification will be sent to:
- i. Campus leaders who are connected to student groups via the studentpassing@uwm.edu listserv (see Appendix B).
  - ii. Dean, Department Chair, and advisor of the school or college to which the student belongs.
  - iii. The student's current course instructors
  - iv. Academic units and other offices identified as being connected to any student who is related to or in a relationship with the deceased student.
3. The Dean of Students Office may prepare and circulate a notice to the campus community within a reasonable time frame. Dissemination of this notice will depend on the circumstances, family/next of kin's wishes, etc.
- B. University Relations will manage all contact with media, including providing them with information about the student, as allowed by FERPA.
- C. In the event of a student death, the Dean of Students Office, as the liaison to the family/next of kin, will consult with the Police or Coroner to determine an appropriate timeframe for a follow up call to the family/next of kin in order to offer condolences and/or support in navigating the process to include but not limited to:
- 1. Contacting local hospitals/chaplains/religious organizations.
  - 2. Arranging a visit to campus, including meetings with individual staff or faculty.
  - 3. Assisting with arrangements for lodging and transportation services as needed.
  - 4. Work with Neighborhood Housing to contact off-campus landlords regarding disposition of a lease.
  - 5. Arranging for personal belongings to be returned from University Housing, lockers at Klotsche Center, etc.

6. Arranging for the disposition of unwanted items.
  7. Assisting in the arrangements for on-campus memorial functions.
  8. Assisting in the announcement of a memorial fund if requested.
  9. Requesting permission to share passing remarks with larger campus community (e.g. campus email, today@UWM)
  10. Requesting copy of death certificate, as needed, to provide to Financial Aid and Accounts Receivable.
  11. Coordinate with the Registrar's Office to obtain student's transcript for the family if requested.
- D. In the event of a student death, the Dean of Students Office will notify the Registrar with pertinent information as well as documentation (e.g. obituary, police report, or death certificate) to update the student's record on PAWS. The Registrar's Office will send notification to reg-[deceased@uwm.edu](mailto:deceased@uwm.edu) listserv (see Appendix C) to coordinate closure of all campus records and accounts.
- E. In the event of a student death, the Chief Student Affairs Officer and/or Chancellor will send letters of condolence to the family/next of kin on behalf of the University community.
- F. The Dean of Students Office, with assistance of the Student Support Team and Norris Health Center, will work with affected units on campus to monitor the need for the following items:
1. Counseling support for impacted students, including students that may have been at the scene.
  2. Employee Assistant Program support for impacted employees.
  3. Continued individual or group counseling in the weeks immediately after the notification.
  4. Continued awareness and support for ongoing grieving processes for students.
  5. Letters of absence for siblings, close friends, and roommates as necessary.
- G. For information on Awarding Degrees (Undergraduate) Posthumously, see <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/faculty/ocr/2278.pdf>.

## **Appendix A: Summary of Duties by Unit**

All units that receive the notification of a student death from the Dean of Students Office should complete duties listed below and work with the Dean of Students Office, as requested, to coordinate any other necessary action response. The Dean of Students Office manages the list of units notified of a student's death.

### **Units not included on the list below**

Additional units may be informed of a student death or major medical crisis if they are known to be connected to the student.

1. Check databases to identify students who may be connected to the student and who may need support. Assist in the care and support of those students.
2. Work with the Dean of Students Office to monitor the need for ongoing care, support, and/or counseling for students, faculty, and staff.
3. Make arrangements for bringing any of the student's personal items in the unit's possession to the Dean of Students Office.

### **Alphabetical listing**

#### **Academic Area (Dean, Department Chair, Advisor, and Instructors)**

1. In the event of a death, ensure that all correspondence to the student is suspended.
2. Help identify students who may need support. Assist in the care and support of those students.
3. Work with the Dean of Students Office to monitor the need for ongoing care, support, and/or counseling for students, faculty, and staff.
4. Work with the Dean of Students Office regarding any memorial activities that the unit would like to conduct.
5. Identify any field placement, practicum, internship, volunteer work, service, or research in which the deceased may have been involved. Reach out to supervisor of area and notify Dean of Student's Office of the deceased student's involvement.

#### **Accessibility Resource Center**

1. Check databases to determine if the student accessed the Accessibility Resource Center.
2. In the event of a death, ensure that all correspondence to the student is suspended.
3. In the event of a major medical crisis, include a note in the student's file to offer care and support as needed.

#### **Accounts Receivable**

1. In the event of a death, close all accounts with the goal of making decisions in the best interest of the surviving family/next of kin.
2. Encourage removal of fees and fines if possible.
3. Investigate any other accounts applicable to the student. Contact Units with outstanding accounts to encourage them to remove fees.
4. Inform the Dean of Students Office if the student was a recipient of military benefits, scholarships, private funding, or an assistantship.

**Advocacy Centers (African American Student Academic Services, American Indian Student Services, Black Cultural Center, Inclusive Excellence Center, LGBT Resource Center, Roberto Hernandez Center, Southeast Asian Student Academic Services, Women's Resource Center)**

1. Check databases to identify students who may be connected to the student and who may need support. Assist in the care and support of those students.
2. Work with the Dean of Students Office to monitor the need for on-going care, support, and/or counseling for students, faculty, and staff.
3. Make arrangements for bringing any of the student's personal items in the center's possession to the Dean of Students Office.
4. Work with the Dean of Students Office regarding any memorial activities that the unit would like to conduct.

**Alumni Association**

1. Research family members who are alumni and send a card offering condolences.

**Athletics**

1. Check rosters and databases to identify students/teams who may be connected to the student and who may need support. Assist in the care and support of those students.
2. Work with the Dean of Students Office to monitor the need for ongoing care, support, and/or counseling for students, faculty, and staff.
3. Make arrangements for bringing any of the student's personal items in the department's possession to the Dean of Students Office.
4. Work with the Dean of Students Office regarding any memorial activities that the unit would like to conduct.

**Bookstore**

1. In the event of a death, check databases to determine if the student rented materials. Close accounts for rented materials.
2. Work with the Dean of Students Office and family/next of kin to buy back textbooks if possible.

**Center for International Education**

1. Check databases to identify students who may be connected to student and who may need support. Assist in the care and support of those students.
2. Work with the Dean of Students Office to monitor the need for ongoing care, support, and/or counseling for students, faculty, and staff.
3. For international students and study abroad students, assist the Dean of Students Office with protocol for the notification and assistance to family/next of kin including working with consulates.
4. Work with the family/next of kin, consulate, and embassy for repatriation of remains.
5. Assist the Dean of Students Office with cultural traditions and customs related to deceased student's country of origin.

### **Center for Community-Based Education, Learning, and Research**

1. Check databases to determine if the student participated in any events. Call affiliated organizations and inform them of the incident. Assist in the care and support of the external organizations.
2. Identify students who may be connected to the student and who may need support. Assist in the care and support of those students.
3. Work with the Dean of Students Office to monitor the need for ongoing care, support, and/or counseling for students, faculty, and staff.
4. Make arrangements for bringing any of the student's personal items in the Center's possession to the Dean of Students Office.

### **Dean of Students Office**

1. Assist UWM Police on scene at their discretion (e.g. crowd management, information sharing)
2. Coordinate the response team, ensure communication to pertinent offices, and delegate responsibilities as appropriate.

### **Once it has been confirmed that the family/next of kin has been notified of the student's death or major medical crisis:**

3. Distribute notification to identified offices.
4. If appropriate, work with University Relations to craft a campus-wide email for distribution to the campus community (once obituary has posted or family/next of kin has given permission).
5. If appropriate, write a memorial paragraph for the Dean of Students and Division of Student Affairs websites.
6. Post death announcement on the Fallen Panthers website.
7. Assist the family/next of kin with local arrangements as needed.
8. Attend funeral services for services located within one hour of campus.
9. If appropriate, coordinate with the Chief Student Affairs Officer to send flowers to funeral services.
10. Implement response from the Student Support Team as needed to identify and support impacted community members and/or student.
11. Support departments and student groups that desire to have a remembrance or memorial.
12. Review the process and make changes as necessary.
13. Collect all notes and cards of condolence for family/next of kin from various areas on campus to mail at one time (Student Association, University Housing, School/College, etc.).
14. Retain file to include all communications, checklist, and additional info (obituary, death certificate, online postings, blogs, media stories, etc.) on student death.

### **Employee Assistance Program**

1. Assist with care and support for faculty and staff community immediately after incident as well as ongoing as needed.

### **Employing Unit (if the student was employed)**

1. Notify Dean of Students Office that the student was an employee.

2. Identify students who may be connected to the student and who may need support. Assist in the care and support of those students.
3. Work with the Dean of Students Office to monitor the need for ongoing care, support, and/or counseling for coworkers.
4. In the event of death, update employment records, ensure final paycheck is processed correctly, collect personal belongings and deliver them to the Dean of Students Office.
5. In the event of serious illness or severe injury, work with the Dean of Students Office to coordinate leave, benefits, paychecks, etc. as necessary.

### **Financial Aid**

1. Review financial aid packages and respond accordingly.
2. Determine outstanding loan balances and report to the Federal Loan Clearinghouse if student is deceased.
3. Work with the Dean of Students Office to get an official death certificate.

### **Panther Card Office**

1. Deactivate card and communicate with Accounts Receivable regarding student balance or refund.

### **Graduate School**

1. In the event of a death, work with the Dean of Students to coordinate gathering of additional student records, including sending transcripts to the family/next of kin.

### **Library**

1. Review student record and share information on borrowed materials with the Dean of Students Office.
2. In the event of a death, waive any fees from the library records system.
3. In the event of a major medical crisis, adjust checkout limits as appropriate.
4. Work with the Dean of Students Office to respectfully get materials back if possible.

### **Military Education Benefits Office**

1. In the event of a death, review military benefits and respond accordingly to close accounts.

### **Military and Veterans Resource Center**

1. Check databases to identify students who may be connected to the student and who may need support. Assist in the care and support of those students.
2. Assist in the care and support of student veterans or students who have been identified as being closely connected to veterans.
3. Work with the Dean of Students Office to monitor the need for ongoing care, support, and/or counseling for students, faculty, and staff.
4. Make arrangements for bringing any of the student's personal items in the Center's possession to the Dean of Students Office.
5. Work with the Dean of Students Office regarding any memorial activities that the unit would like to conduct.

### **Neighborhood Housing**

1. In the event of a death, determine location of residence and assist the family/next of kin with managing possessions, working with landlords, leases, etc.
2. Work with the Dean of Students Office to monitor the need for ongoing care, support, and/or counseling for roommates, neighbors, and staff.
3. Work as a part of the Students Support Team to support community members.

### **Norris Health Center**

1. Assist with care and support for student community immediately after notification of death or major injury as well as on-going as needed.
2. Provide consultation to faculty and staff to help impacted student groups grieve.
3. Provide services, including counseling, to students who seek it.
4. Participate on the Student Support Team.

### **Office of the Chief Student Affairs Officer**

1. Send condolence letter on behalf of the University community.
2. As appropriate, send flowers (purchased through Foundation Account) to all families/services.

### **Parking Services**

1. Remove fines/fees.
2. Prorate parking pass.

### **Payroll**

1. Inform Dean of Students Office where the student was employed on campus.
2. In the event of a death, close out payroll records and issue final W2.

### **Recreational Sports**

1. Check databases to identify students who may be connected to the student and who may need support. Assist in the care and support of those students.
2. Determine if a locker is rented, and make arrangements for returning items to the Dean of Students Office.
3. Investigate any refunds or fines on the student record and adjust accordingly.

### **Registrar (for deceased students only)**

1. In the event of a death, work with the Dean of Students to coordinate gathering of additional student records, including sending transcripts to the family/next of kin.
2. Officially mark “deceased” on the student account.
3. Un-enroll student from all current classes and upcoming courses.
4. Send out email to deceased listserv regarding closing of other campus accounts.
5. Send an email to UITs at [iam-support@uwm.edu](mailto:iam-support@uwm.edu) to notify them to deactivate accounts.

### **Student Association Professional Staff**

1. Check databases to identify students who may be connected to the student and who may need support. Assist in the care and support of those students.

2. Work with the Dean of Students Office to monitor the need for ongoing care, support, and/or counseling for students and staff.
3. Inform Student Association representatives to determine if they'd like to:
  - a. Help plan a remembrance event for the deceased student if appropriate.
  - b. Send a card to the family/next of kin of the deceased or distressed student.
  - c. Designate a representative to attend any other campus memorial/vigil.

### **Student Involvement**

1. Check databases to identify students who may be connected to the student and who may need support. Assist in the care and support of those students.
2. Work with the Dean of Students Office to monitor the need for ongoing care, support, and/or counseling for students and staff.
3. Make arrangements for bringing any of the student's personal items in the office's possession to the Dean of Students Office.
4. Send an email to spiritual centers directors so that they can be sensitive to students who may be grieving or in need of support.

### **Student Success Center**

1. Check databases to identify students who may be connected to the student and who may need support. Assist in the care and support of those students.
2. Provide support to University Housing for impacted members of living learning and themed communities.
3. Work with the Dean of Students Office to monitor the need for ongoing care, support, and/or counseling for students, faculty, and staff.
4. Participate on the Student Support Team to support campus.

### **Student Union**

1. Work with Student Association and Dean of Students Office to arrange space and programming logistics (candles, tables, chairs, marketing, technology) for memorial/vigil.

### **UITS**

1. In the event of a student death, deactivate email, learning management program, or other services associated with the student.
2. Assist family/next of kin if they request access to email and other University online accounts.

### **University Housing**

1. For incidents in residence halls, assist UWM Police on scene at its discretion (e.g. crowd management, information sharing). For other on-campus incidents, coordinate staff to assist with responding to large scale events as needed.
2. For students who live on campus, determine location of residence and lead support of roommates, suitemates, and community members.
3. Identify staff members who are impacted and offer support.
4. Monitor the need for ongoing care, support, and/or counseling for students, faculty, and staff. Utilize Dean of Students Office and Student Support Team as needed.

5. In the event of a student death in a residence hall room, coordinate relocating roommates and suitemates and taking the room offline for the remainder of the academic year.
6. In coordination with the Dean of Students Office, work with the family/next of kin to coordinate removal of belongings.
7. Work with University Safety and Assurances to coordinate cleaning of room.
8. Participate on the Student Support Team to support campus.
9. Coordinate memorial/vigil for the deceased student if appropriate.
10. Review housing and meal plan fees and prorate to the maximum allowable amount for a refund.
11. Close all accounts with the goal of making decisions in the best interest of family/next of kin.
12. Work with the Dean of Students Office and the Registrar to forward mail to the appropriate address.

### **University Relations**

1. Respond to media inquiries regarding student death or major medical crisis.
2. Work with Dean of Students Office to determine appropriateness of campus-wide email when death occurs on campus or for high-profile incidents.
3. Acquire information from DOS regarding funeral, vigil, and/or memorial fund to field questions.

### **UWM Police Department**

1. For on campus deaths, lead on-scene response.
2. Communicate with the Dean of Students Office any pertinent information as soon as possible.
3. Notify the Dean of Students Office when family/next of kin notification has been made and provide details helpful in planning next steps.
4. Work with Coroner to determine cause and circumstances surrounding death of a student.

**Attachment B: Student Death Notification listserv ([studentpassing-list@uwm.edu](mailto:studentpassing-list@uwm.edu))**

**This listserv is managed by the Dean of Students Office**

Accessibility Resource Center
African American Student Academic Services
Alumni Association
American Indian Student Services
Athletics
Black Cultural Center
Center for Community Based Learning, Leadership, and Research
Center for International Education
Student Involvement
Dean of Students Office
Employee Assistance Program/HR
Finance & Administrative Affairs
Inclusive Excellence Center
LGBT Resource Center
Military & Veteran's Resource Center
Neighborhood Housing Office
Norris Health Center
Office of Legal Affairs
Office of the Chancellor
Office of the Provost
Office of the Chief Student Affairs Officer
Recreation Sports
Roberto Hernandez Center
Southeast Asian Student Academic Services
Student Association
Student Involvement
Student Success Center
Student Union
University Housing
University Relations
University Safety and Assurances
UWM Police Department
Women's Resource Center

**Attachment C: Listserv for records and accounts ([deceased@uwm.edu](mailto:deceased@uwm.edu)).**

Notification is sent by the Registrar after PAWS records have been updated.

<b>Offices</b>
Accounts Receivable
Bookstore
Dean of Students Office
Financial Aid
PantherCard Office
Graduate School
Library
Military Education Benefits Office
Norris Health Center
Office of the Chancellor
Office of the Chief Student Affairs Officer
Transportation Services
Payroll
Registrar
UITS
University Housing
University Relations