
PROTOCOL ON RESPONDING TO THE DEATH OF A STUDENT

Policy Id:

BIT.002 – Protocol on Responding to the Death of a Student

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John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Protocol on Responding to the Death of a Student

The protocols attempt to:

- a) Assist those dealing with the crisis to respond appropriately in a timely manner;
- b) Provide coordination with external individuals and agencies;
- c) Provide communication within the College community;
- d) Assist with post-crisis support and resolution;
- e) Provide an empathetic and caring voice from the College to friends and family of deceased.

When implementing the protocols remember: FERPA applies until the death is verified.

Depending upon student status upon death notification, the procedures of this protocol will be implemented as appropriate. It is also important to understand that each situation is unique and that staff response should reflect the specific nature of each death.

SECTION 1:

Death of a Matriculated Student [steps not necessarily sequential]

When the student's death is on campus:

1. The first responder will immediately contact Public Safety. Public Safety officers will respond and be in charge of the scene of the incident until all appropriate actions have been taken. A ranking College Officer will be available, as appropriate. At the first opportunity, Public Safety officers will contact the Dean of Students.
2. The Dean of Students will immediately inform the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs (EMSA), Office of Communications, and if appropriate, members of the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT), and other staff members to coordinate their efforts.
3. The student's next of kin will be contacted by the New York Police Department (NYPD), the Director of Public Safety, or the Dean of Students, depending on the situation.
4. The Vice President of EMSA or designee will inform the Provost, and the President or designee and other senior staff of the student's death. The Office of Communication will coordinate all contacts with the media.
5. The Dean of Students will also notify the Registrar, who will then notify Financial Aid, Bursar and Alumni Affairs. The Dean of Students will request a copy of the Death Certificate from the family or some verification of the student's death. A copy of the death verification will be distributed to the Registrar. The Registrar will close the student's academic record and inform Financial Aid, Bursar and Enrollment Management. Only a Death Certificate can be used to close an academic record.
6. The Dean of Students will coordinate with the student's academic department and any pertinent offices on campus (Veterans Affairs, Center for Student Involvement and Leadership, Urban Male Initiative) regarding the student's involvement in campus activities and campus life. This information may be included in the campus-wide announcement (see 7).

7. The Dean of Students will contact the next of kin/family and request permission to send a campus-wide notification of the student's death. The next of kin/family has sole discretion with regard to the decision to notify the campus and the content of the notification, including funeral arrangements and cause of death.
8. When appropriate, the Dean of Students will insure that the families of any students with the same full name as the deceased student will be notified that their student was not the student involved.
9. The Dean of Students will notify, via email, the deceased student's instructors and department chair. If permission is received as per step 7, the Dean of Students will send out a campus-wide announcement about the death as well.
10. The Director of Counseling Services, contacted by the Dean of Students, will contact appropriate Counseling and Health Services staff and will respond to the scene, if appropriate. The Director of Counseling Services and Human Resources will coordinate psychological counseling and emotional support for those affected by the death.
11. The Dean of Students, 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 Dean of Students will assist the deceased student's family in making arrangements to come to campus and other assistance as needed.
12. The Dean of Students will inform the Student Government Association (SGA) leadership.
13. If appropriate, the Vice President of EMSA, in coordination with the President's Office, will write a letter of condolence to the family of the deceased student.
14. The Senior Director for Student Affairs, 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.
15. If the deceased student was an athlete, upon being notified by the Dean of Students, the Director of Athletics will coordinate the return to the family of any property that the deceased student may have left in the Athletics Department.
16. Upon being notified by the Dean of Students, the chair of the deceased student's academic department will facilitate the return to the family of any property that the deceased student may have left in the academic department's area.
17. At a time after the death of a student, a meeting may be called by the Dean of Students to insure that all appropriate measures have been taken in response to the student's death. **This meeting might include the following:**

Director of Student Relations
Director of Public Safety
Director of Counseling Services
Office of Legal Counsel
Director of Marketing and Communications
Director of Health Services
Registrar or designee

When the student's death is off-campus:

1. Anyone becoming aware of the death of a student will contact the Dean of Students to inform the Dean of the death.
2. Items 2 – 15 will be enacted, if appropriate.
3. Once the Death Certificate has been received, the Registrar will determine eligibility for a posthumous degree. If the student is eligible and the next of kin agrees, Student Transitions Programs (STP) will be notified to ensure student's name is included in the commencement ceremony.

Notification of the death of a John Jay College graduate/alum or previously enrolled student

1. Anyone becoming aware of the death of a graduate/alum will notify the Office of Alumni Relations, who will enact steps 2 – 5 below. Anyone becoming aware of the death of a previous enrolled but not graduated student (separated from the College within one semester) will notify the Dean of Students, who will enact steps 2 – 5 below.
2. Alumni Relations/Dean of Students will notify and work with the Registrar to verify the information.
3. Alumni Relations/Dean of Students will notify the Vice President of Institutional Advancement or the Vice President of EMSA (respectively), and the Office of Communication.
4. Registrar will inform Financial Aid and Bursar to convene appropriate notifications regarding deceased student's business with the college.
5. Vice President of Institutional Advancement or the Vice President of EMSA will notify the Office of the President and coordinate an appropriate response.

SECTION 2: STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES IN CASE OF STUDENT DEATH

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 or deputies, if key individuals are unavailable.

Director of Public Safety

- ◆ If the death is on campus, the Director of Public Safety will be in charge of the scene and will conduct an initial investigation.
- ◆ If the death is on campus, the Director of Public Safety will make the decision to request additional police assistance.
- ◆ The Director of Public Safety will contact the Dean of Students, at the first opportunity, on the details of the situation.
- ◆ The Director of Public Safety will coordinate with other campus staff, as appropriate, and maintain communication with College Communication staff to facilitate media response.
- ◆ The Director of Public Safety will work with the Dean of Students (and other parties such as the NYPD, if appropriate) to determine who will contact the student's next of kin.

Dean of Students

- ◆ The Dean of Students will immediately contact and inform the Vice President of EMSA and Registrar of the situation and consult with the Director of Marketing and Communications.
- ◆ The Dean of Students will contact appropriate staff members and coordinate their efforts.
- ◆ When appropriate, the Dean of Students will 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 coordinate any efforts with the Dean of Students.
- ◆ The Dean of Students will notify via email the faculty who currently has the student enrolled in one of their classes.
- ◆ The Dean of Students will contact and inform the Director of Counseling Services of the situation.
- ◆ The Dean of Students will work with the Director of Public Safety, and other parties such as the NYPD or the coroner, if appropriate, to determine who will contact the student's next of kin.
- ◆ The Dean of Students will inform the Student Government Association (SGA) leadership of the death of any student.
- ◆ The Dean of Students, in consultation with the Senior Director of Student Affairs, SGA leaders, Vice President of EMSA and others will coordinate assistance to those wishing to hold a memorial service on campus for the deceased student, if appropriate.
- ◆ The Dean of Students will request a copy of the Death Certificate from the family or some verification of the student's death. Copies of the death verification will be distributed to the Registrar.

- ◆ The Registrar will inform the Bursar and Director of Financial Aid. These individuals will insure that appropriate steps are taken in response to the student's death.
- ◆ The Dean of Students, if appropriate, will inform the family of any library materials or other College property that the deceased student may have been in possession of.
- ◆ At some time after the death of a student, a meeting may be called by the Dean of Students of involved staff members to insure 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 Dean of Students Office.

Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs (EMSA)

- ◆ The Vice President will keep the President advised of the situation.
- ◆ Within two weeks of the student's death, the Vice President of EMSA will provide information to the President's Office, who 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 (such as a thesis) which may be returned to the family.
- ◆ If the student is near graduation, the Vice President will consult with the Registrar regarding a Posthumous Degree. See Posthumous Degree Policy.

Director of Marketing and Communications

- ◆ When appropriate and after consultation with the Dean of Students, Vice President of EMSA and Director of Public Safety, the Director of Marketing and Communications will coordinate media inquiries.
- ◆ All media inquiries concerning the student's death will be referred to designated staff in the Marketing and Communications Department.

Registrar

- ◆ Upon notification of a student's death, the Registrar will close the student's official record, and mark deceased on record. This codes the student information system so that no communication is sent to the student, parents or spouse. Registrar will review registration activity, adjusting the record as appropriate.
- ◆ Registrar will review registration activity, adjusting the record as appropriate. The Registrar will notify financial aid and bursar to adjust their financial records. The registrar will notify the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) so that lending agencies are notified of student's death. The registrar will review academic record to see if student is eligible for a posthumous degree.

Bursar

- ◆ Upon being notified of a student's death, the Bursar will settle the student's financial accounts with the College, as appropriate, and will process any allowable refund of tuition, fees and pro-rated housing contract dollars. The refund check is made payable to the student's estate and mailed separate from the College's condolence letter by the Bursar's Office. The Bursar may also refund other fees.

Director of Financial Aid

- ◆ Upon being notified of a student's death, the Director of Financial Aid (and Human Resources, if appropriate) will finalize any remaining wage payments and close any employment records which the deceased student may have.

◆ The Director of Financial Aid will review the student's financial aid situation and, if the deceased student has any federal loans, will take the proper steps so that these loans may be forgiven.

Director of Counseling Services

◆ The Director of Counseling Services will assist the Vice President of EMSA and Dean of Students, as needed, to coordinate the campus response to the student death.

◆ The Director of Counseling will contact other Counseling and Health Center staff, as appropriate.

◆ If the death occurred on campus, the Director of Counseling Services will respond to the scene, if appropriate, and will coordinate psychological counseling and emotional support for those affected by the death.

◆ The Director of Counseling Services will seek out students and staff who might have been affected by the student death, such as significant others, friends, roommates, teammates, others living in the deceased student's building, and will offer appropriate services.

Director of Athletics

◆ Upon being informed of the student's death, the Athletics Director will inform appropriate coaching staff of the death of any student athlete.

◆ The Director of Athletics will coordinate the return to the family of any property that the deceased student may have left.

Academic Chairs/ Program Directors

◆ Upon being notified of a student's death by the Dean of Students, the Academic Chair/Program Director of the deceased student's academic department will inform appropriate department faculty and staff of the death.

◆ The chair/program director of the deceased student's academic department will coordinate the return to the family of any property that the deceased student may have left in areas controlled by the department.