Response to Death of Student or Staff Member

ROWAN UNIVERSITY POLICY

Title: Response to Death of Student or Staff Member
Subject: Office of Emergency Management
Policy No: DPS 2019:01
Applies: University-Wide
Issuing Authority: President
Responsible Officers: Assistant Vice President for the Department of Public Safety and the Office of Emergency Management
Adopted: 9/11/19
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Last Reviewed: 12/6/19

I. PURPOSE

These guidelines are intended to assist University employees as they respond to a student death. While some campus officials play more active roles in responding to student crises, it is important for all University faculty and professionals to understand response processes. Although the University strives to respond in a consistent manner, the specific facts and circumstances of any crisis may lead the University to adjust the actions suggested in these guidelines.

II. ACCOUNTABILITY

Under direction of the President, the University Executive Management Team, shall implement and ensure compliance with this policy.

III. APPLICABILITY

This policy should be used to support a response to the sudden death of any student, faculty or staff that will likely impact the University Community. Responding to the death of a student, faculty, or staff member is a challenging undertaking. Those affected by the death of the student are encouraged to seek help as needed.

IV. DEFINITIONS

1. Emergency Operations Team (EOT), as outlined in the University's emergency plan is activated based on the type and nature of the incident. It is used to manage the operational aspects of the University's response to an emergency event, in this case a crisis resulting from student or staff member death. While select EOT members could include any of the following, leadership from The Wellness Center, the Department of Public Safety, University Relations, Student Affairs and Dean of Students will represent the initial EOT in response to a student or staff member death.
2. Executive Management Team (EMT), as outlined in the University's emergency plan will evaluate information from various sources during the progress of the event and advise the University President on appropriate actions requiring his/her decision. Select members of the EMT could include any of the following leadership members from the President's Office, General Counsel's Office, the Department of Public Safety, and University Relations, could represent the initial EMT response to a student or staff member death.
3. SMART: The Stress Management and Response Team (SMART) was established to provide a form of crisis intervention specifically designed to help the Rowan community cope with highly stressful or

traumatic events. SMART is made up of administrators, professional staff, faculty and support staff from across the Rowan University campus. These team members are trained in crisis response. The team is available for both death notifications and trauma support meetings. The team can arrange a meeting site and time or be available at a normally scheduled time/place for your class/group.

VI. REFERENCES

1. Emergency Preparedness policy: https://confluence.rowan.edu/display/POLICY/Emergency+Preparedness
2. Emergency Operations Plan

V. POLICY

1. All deaths on campus will be investigated by the appropriate law enforcement agency which may include the Gloucester or Camden County Prosecutor's Office in coordination with the University's Department of Public Safety. In the case of any death, the area surrounding the deceased is considered a crime scene. With the exception of first aid or conducting life saving measures, no one is to disturb the scene, including media personnel.
2. In respect for the deceased and due to confidentiality requirements, no University staff or member of the campus community shall comment, post, or communicate statements regarding the cause of death or scene of the death to any entity or organization except in accordance with this policy.
3. Upon notification of a death, the Department of Public Safety shall review the facts and circumstances of the death to determine whether a Timely Warning is warranted.
4. All requests for information, including media inquiries, shall be directed to the Office of University Relations 856-256-4240. Following the death, University Relations shall coordinate with the legal representative of the individual, with the Department of Public Safety and with the Executive Management Team to determine whether information relating to the cause of death may be released.
5. The Emergency Operations Team (EOT) shall review Section VII of the University Emergency Operations Plan to determine the impact to the University community and implement department specific response protocols accordingly. An initial briefing of the EOT and Executive Management Team (EMT) will be planned immediately if a Level 2 Emergency Incident is identified. If the EOT identifies a Level 1 response, internal response protocols may be followed as warranted.
6. EOT and designated support staff shall follow the procedures below in response to the death of a current student or staff.

VII. PROCEDURES

1. If you become aware of, or suspect a student or staff has died call 9-1-1 or 856-256-4911.
2. The Department of Public Safety, local law enforcement or County Medical Examiner will contact next of kin, as outlined in the New Jersey Attorney Generals Guidelines for Homicide and Sudden Death Survivor Guidelines, issued July 1985.
3. If a death occurs during University Sponsored Travel, the University staff member accompanying the trip should immediately contact local emergency services and the local law enforcement agency. As soon as possible once the situation is secured, the University staff member shall contact the Dean of Students Office (856) 256-4283.
4. The Department of Public Safety will notify the Senior Vice President for the Department of Public Safety and Office of Emergency Management to trigger notification to the EMT. The Department of Public Safety will notify the following members of the EOT to begin internal response protocols.
    a. Director for the Wellness Center
    b. Vice President for University Relations
    c. Dean of Students
    d. Senior Vice President for Student Affairs

VIII. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Office of the President
    a. Ensure the EMT members have been notified.
    b. After official notification of a student's death has been given to the family by the Department of Public Safety or local law enforcement, the Office of the President, in coordination with the Dean of Students, will contact the family of the deceased student and shall determine if the family has any immediate needs from the University (e.g. gathering items from the residence hall room, notifying other students, etc.) and if available, gather information about funeral, visitation, and memorial arrangements
    c. Coordinate communication to other constituents of the University as appropriate, including the Board of Trustees
2. The Dean of Students Office
    a. Represent the University by communicating with the family of deceased
    b. After initial contact with the family has been made as provided in this policy, the Dean of Students shall generally be the primary point of contact with the family to avoid duplication of communications
    c. Coordinate with other EOT members to identify initial briefing
    d. Make available any known arrangements for memorial services
    e. Review student account
    f. If the student was a financial aid recipient, remaining funds will be repaid to the sources (federal, state or private lender) in accordance with federal and state law
    g. Housing, meal plan and flex dollars charges are refunded on a prorated basis
    h. Remove outstanding library or other similar fines or holds on student accounts
3. The Division of Academic Affairs
    a. Support Wellness Center in collection of contacts for the deceased
    b. Ensure grief counseling is available to the Rowan community
    c. Review internal policies and communicate response protocols to faculty
4. University Department of Public Safety
    a. Initiate investigation protocols
    b. Coordinate investigation with local law enforcement and County Prosecutor Office if death occurs on campus (Glassboro, Stratford, Camden, Mantua)
    c. Notify Senior Vice President for the Department of Public Safety and Office of Emergency Management to trigger the notification protocol to EMT
    d. Notify EOT members specified above to assess Emergency designation and trigger internal response protocols
    e. Coordinate with University Relations to determine initial notice to Rowan Community
    f. Address or remove outstanding parking violations, if applicable
5. University Relations
    a. Coordinate with other EOT members to identify initial briefing
    b. Coordinate and disseminate campus wide communication of student's death
    c. Identify spokesperson to serve as media contact
    d. Brief and prepare spokesperson
    e. Coordinate scheduling for post incident briefings and messaging to the University community
6. The Wellness Center
    a. Coordinate with other EOT members to identify initial briefing
    b. Initiate SMART response protocols
    c. Collaborate with Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to gather contact information
    d. Brief SMART members and perform death notification to contacts of deceased
    e. Identify surge capacity and promote grief counselling services to Rowan community
    f. Update Director of the Wellness Center so that EOT and EMT members can receive updates daily until the EOT scales down operations
7. The Associate Vice President for Student Life
    a. Assist in identifying members for initial briefing
    b. Verifies enrollment status of the deceased
    c. Coordinate with Student Affairs offices to deactivate ID card and address academic registrations
    d. Support Wellness Center by coordinating the identification of contacts for any clubs, organizations or other activates in which the deceased participated
8. The Office of General Counsel

a. Review details of death and coordinate any legal response with the Office of the President
b. Coordinate any issues relating to the release and return of personal property. In the case of death, property shall be released in accordance with state law. Generally, property of students shall be released to the parents of the students unless there is a surviving spouse or child of the student.
c. Coordinate requests for records received by other offices. Requests for records relating to the deceased shall be made to the appropriate office. Upon receipt of same, that office shall consult with the Office of General Counsel to determine whether records may be released. Primary consideration shall be given to records requests supported in writing by a deceased student's parents unless that student is survived by a spouse or child.

9. The Office of Residential Learning and University Housing (if residential student)
    a. Notify RLC, RD and RA staff associated with student
    b. Remind staff not to release about the deceased to any non-staff person
    c. Coordinate with the Dean of Students to arrange for family to collect personal belongings. Please note that appropriate regard shall be given to the family's wishes while ensuring compliance with laws governing property release. As such, in certain cases, property may be boxed and stored for safeguarding while property distribution is considered.
    d. Promote Wellness Center services for students affected
10. Human Resources Department (if deceased is a staff member)
    a. Verifies employment status of the deceased
    b. Support Wellness Center in collection of contacts for the deceased
    c. Ensure grief counseling is available to staff identified as a contact to the deceased
    d. Review internal policies and communicate response protocols to staff
11. The Athletic Department (if deceased is a student athlete or on staff)
    a. Support Wellness Center in collection of contacts for the deceased
    b. Ensure grief counseling is available to staff identified as a contact to the deceased
12. International Center (if deceased is an international student or on staff)
    a. The Director of the International Center or designee will contact a representative at the appropriate embassy to notify next of kin of the student's death.
    b. The Director of the International Center or designee will serve as the campus contact to assist family members throughout the repatriation process.
    c. The Director of the International Center will follow all aforementioned procedures outlined in the event of a study abroad student's death.
13. Information Resources and Technology
    a. Work in collaboration with the identified offices above to deactivate the network account and preserve a copy of same.