POLICY FOR AN INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE DEATH OF A STUDENT

Effective Date: March 28, 2013
Originating Office: Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic

Supersedes /Amends: November 2, 2009
Policy Number: PRVPA-13

SCOPE

This policy shall apply to the University’s response in the event of a student death.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the University’s conduct following the death of a student shall be compassionate and respectful and that necessary administrative procedures are carried out as efficiently and unobtrusively as possible.

POLICY

General

1. It is the policy of the University to respond in a coordinated, timely, caring and professional manner in the event of the death of a student member of the University community.

2. The Dean of Students shall be responsible for the administration of this policy.

3. The Dean of Students shall appoint a suitable person to serve as Coordinator as well as an alternate person for occasions when the Coordinator is unavailable. The Coordinator shall be the primary contact person responsible for coordinating the University response in the event of a student death pursuant to the procedures outlined below.

4. The Coordinator and alternate shall be selected on the basis of their interest in, and familiarity with, the area. They shall be aware of, and sensitive to, cultural differences, as well as religious traditions and backgrounds. The Coordinator shall be reachable at all times, and his or her name and telephone number shall be published internally.
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General Responsibilities of the Coordinator

5. The Coordinator shall:

   a. ensure that the procedures outlined below are followed;

   b. notify appropriate departments of a student death;

   c. call together an Action Team drawn from the list of departmental contact persons, if necessary;

   d. with the members of the Action Team, mobilize such University resources as may be necessary to deal with the death and related circumstances;

   e. obtain and keep current the list of departmental contact persons and the internal departmental procedures with respect to student deaths;

   f. contact the departmental contact persons at least once a year;

   g. maintain a record of student deaths;

   h. ensure that faculty and staff members are aware that this policy and procedures exist and that he or she is contacted when they learn of the death of a student;

   i. organize such training as may be necessary;

   j. in consultation with the Director of Environmental Health and Safety, ensure that information is regularly disseminated to students concerning accident prevention and safe behaviour;

   k. review and monitor information concerning the availability of supportive resources for students coping with the death of a fellow student;

   l. ensure that the alternate is available in his or her absence;

   m. keep the Dean of Students informed as appropriate;
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n. submit an annual report to the Dean of Students;
o. make recommendations for changes to this policy and procedures.

PROCEDURES

General

6. The response to the death of a student shall take into account:
   a. whether or not the student was registered;
   b. whether the student lived on or off campus;
   c. whether the death occurred on or off campus;
   d. whether the death was a result of illness, accident, criminal activity or suicide.

7. The Departments named in the administrative procedures below shall:
   a. develop such internal procedures as may be necessary in the case of a student death;
   b. name a contact person and an alternate;
   c. provide the Coordinator with a copy of the internal procedures and the names of the
      contact person and alternate.

Administrative Procedures

8. In the event of a student death, the Office of the Registrar:
   a. shall advise the Coordinator of the death except in cases where the Coordinator has
      informed the Office of the Registrar;
   b. shall provide the Coordinator with any information required to profile the student
      (including name of Faculty, department, courses, whether student is international);
c. shall obtain appropriate documentation to authenticate death and date (with the assistance of Coordinator, if required);

d. if documentary proof of death is received, shall record the date of death on the student’s academic record and transcript and shall change the record status to “Deceased”. Should no documentary proof of death be available, the address is changed to the “Concordia ‘D’ File address” but the registration is not cancelled. A note to this effect is placed in the student’s file;

e. shall withdraw the student from registered courses with a “DISC” or “DNE” notation unless a non-failing grade has been obtained;

f. shall review the student’s academic record for the awarding of a posthumous degree, as well as contact the family in order to make special arrangements for presentation of an earned degree or other certification. A Committee made up of the Registrar (or delegate), the Dean of Students, a representative of the Office of the Provost and of the relevant Faculty will review situations where the degree requirements have not been met. Although each case will be reviewed on its own merit, general guidelines for the awarding of a “degree of achievement” are that the student has completed at least 75% of the credits required for the degree and is in acceptable standing. In the case of graduate programs requiring a thesis, the recommendation of the thesis advisor that a major portion of the work has been completed will be requested;

g. shall advise other administrative units as set out below.

9. Upon notification by the Office of the Registrar, the Student Accounts Office:

a. shall arrange for any applicable refund to be issued and made payable to the Estate of the student and sent to the Coordinator for transmission to the student’s estate, based on documentation received;

b. shall “write off” any outstanding balance owing by the student including the Graduation Fee should the deceased student be granted a degree posthumously.

10. Upon notification by the Office of the Registrar, the Financial Aid and Awards Office:
a. shall make an appropriate notation in any pertinent financial aid or awards files;

b. shall advise any appropriate government loans or bursaries office.

11. Upon notification by the Office of the Registrar, the University Libraries shall, through the Coordinator, make arrangements concerning any outstanding items.

12. Upon notification by the Office of the Registrar, Locker Services shall, if appropriate, and through the Coordinator, make arrangements for the removal and delivery of locker contents.

13. Upon notification by the Office of the Registrar, Instructional and Information Technology Services shall cancel any open computer account.

14. Upon notification by the Office of the Registrar, the Security Department shall record the student’s death and close any existing file.

15. Upon notification by the Office of the Registrar, the Department of Human Resources and Employee Relations shall take any required action with respect to a student who was also an employee. Any earnings payable, as well as a Record of Employment, shall be sent to the Coordinator for transmission to the student’s estate based on the documentation received.

16. Upon notification by the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Alumni Affairs shall, if the student was holder of a Concordia degree, update its alumni database and publish a notice in the Concordia University Magazine.

**Specific Duties of the Coordinator in the Case of a Student Death**

17. In the case of a death which did not result from a University-related activity, the Coordinator:

   a. shall be the contact person between the University and the student’s family or significant other;

   b. shall draft a formal letter of condolence which will be signed by an appropriate
member of the senior administration, normally the President;

c. shall advise Multi-faith Chaplaincy regarding the possibility of funeral or memorial services, depending upon the circumstances;

d. shall, for information purposes, advise the Dean of the Faculty or School in which the student was registered, the Chair of the student’s department or graduate programme director, the current course instructors (including lab assistants) and all relevant Student Services;

e. shall advise other administrative units as follows:

- if appropriate, the International Student Office which shall take action to notify the relevant embassy or consulate, if necessary, and shall take any appropriate action with respect to health insurance;

- the Dean of Students’ Office which shall notify Student Residences, if appropriate, as well as any relevant committees or associations (e.g., student government, fraternity);

- the Office of the Secretary-General which shall implement the Flag Lowering Policy (SG-12), as appropriate;

- Counselling & Development, which shall, in addition to any action required based upon the circumstances and the closing of any existing files, offer supportive counselling for family, students and staff who were close to the student, if appropriate;

- Health Services, which shall, in addition to any action required based upon circumstances and the closing of any existing files, provide health information and counselling as requested;

- University Communication Services, which shall, in addition to any other action based upon the circumstances, include a notice in the Journal, if appropriate;
University-Related Death

18. In the event of a death that occurred on-campus or in the course of a University-related activity, the Coordinator or the Office of the Registrar, as the case may be, shall immediately notify the Office of the President, the Dean of Students, the Director of Security, the Chief Communications Officer and the University General Counsel before taking any action.