

3344-82-01 Deceased student policy.

(A) Policy statement

Cleveland state university (CSU) strives to provide a safe and positive environment for all students. When a tragedy occurs, it is incumbent upon the university to respond in a sensitive and caring manner, recognizing that individuals respond in different ways to different circumstances that may surround a student death.

(B) Purpose of policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines that will support an orderly, effective and caring response in the event of a student death.

(C) Scope

This policy applies to all students of the university, as defined in paragraph (D) of this policy. All members of the university community must comply with this policy.

(D) Definitions

Student: a student is defined as outlined in paragraph (G) of rule 3344-83-03 of the Administrative Code (student code of conduct).

(E) Procedure

The death of a student affects the entire university community, as well as the family and friends of the deceased. Considering the very sensitive and unpredictable nature of a death, no policy or protocol can describe in complete detail all the steps that must be taken. This policy sets forth guidelines to support communications in the event of a student death. Those responsible for implementing this policy should be guided by the essential communication needs required in these situations, as well as by empathy, sensitivity and support for the bereaved and the need to preserve important evidence.

(1) Notification of appropriate campus officials

The chief student affairs officer or designee should notify the following offices by email and/or phone, or otherwise ensure that these offices have been notified of a student death once student death has been confirmed by receipt of obituary or death certificate.

Primary – contact as soon as possible:

- (a) CSU PD
- (b) President's office
- (c) Provost's office
- (d) Dean of students
- (e) Counseling center
- (f) University communications
- (g) IS&T
- (h) Registrar's office.

(2) Gathering information for university connections

- (a) Academic college
- (b) Center for student involvement (if student is involved in student organizations on campus)
- (c) Center for international services & programs (if student is international)
- (d) CSU global (if student is CSU global)
- (e) Housing & residence life (if student resides on campus)
- (f) Athletics (if student is an athlete)

- (g) Student employment (if student works on campus)
- (h) Veterans success (if student is a veteran or military connected student)
- (i) LGBTQ+ center (if student is known to be LGBTQ+)
- (3) Secondary notifications to ensure streamlined communication to student through campus engagement
 - (a) Academic dean(s)
 - (b) Student's current faculty
 - (c) CARE team
 - (d) Financial aid
 - (e) Academic advising
 - (f) Treasury services
- (4) Once university connections are identified, the counseling center will reach out by email to all professors and close connections. They will inform of support options and also make a handout of grief coping recommendations available.
- (5) Students who are identified as having been closely connected to the deceased student will be referred to CARE management for follow-up.

The chief student affairs officer or designee may convene a meeting with designees from the offices listed above to discuss the matter.
- (6) Student death on campus
 - (a) If a student death occurs on campus, CSU PD (216.687.2020) shall be notified immediately. CSU PD will contact the

appropriate emergency medical provider to attend to the body. The CSU PD will investigate all deaths on campus to rule out the possibility of any foul play.

- (b) If a student death occurs in a residence hall, the housing and residence life staff member or designee will immediately involved shall place the call to CSU PD.
- (c) Through above mentioned notifications, counseling services staff will be made aware so they can provide appropriate support. This may include additional walk-in appointment availability, in-class supports, or holding space in residential communities or other areas to attend to community members grieving if deemed appropriate.

(7) Student death off campus

- (a) Response to any death occurring off campus will be handled initially by the local law enforcement agency, medical examiner and/or hospital involved. It is the responsibility of these agencies to notify the next of kin.
- (b) 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, the university staff member shall contact the chief student affairs officer or designee.
- (c) If a death occurs while a student is studying abroad:
 - (i) The program leader or representative will contact the center for institutional services and programs and the US embassy or consulate.
 - (ii) The director of the center for international services and programs and/or chief student affairs officer or designee

will coordinate plans for addressing the situation.

(iii) The program leader or representative will follow all aforementioned procedures outlined in the event of a study abroad student's death.

(F) Family communication

(1) The chief student affairs officer or designee who is familiar with the situation may be assigned as the primary contact. The primary contact shall serve as the single point of contact for family members who wish to speak with faculty, staff, or students concerning the death of their student. The family's wishes will be taken into account as to what information is shared about how their family member died.

(2) If the deceased student has a family member currently enrolled at CSU, family member's name will be shared with CARE team to offer support and outreach to faculty.

(3) Under the chief student affairs officer or designee's office, CSU may send flowers as appropriate and attend the viewing, wake, funeral, or other commemorative event for the student and their family.

(4) Requests for posthumous or honorary degrees will be relayed to the registrar's office and appropriate academic department for consideration by the provost and senior vice president for academic affairs. Upon approval by the student's home academic college, the provost and senior vice president for academic affairs will pose the recommendation before board of trustees for consideration and approval.

(G) Campus community notification

- (1) The chief student affairs officer or designee will determine when a department-wide or campus-wide notification should be sent out. When possible, the counseling center director should be asked to review the communication before distribution. Any notifications sent after the death of a student by suicide or overdose should follow the best-practice recommendations available [here: https://reportingonsuicide.org/Recommendations/](https://reportingonsuicide.org/Recommendations/). If the family wishes for the cause of death to be shared (or it is included in the obituary), the appropriate phrasing to use is “died by suicide” (avoid the phrases “committed suicide” or “killed themselves”). Additionally, only general information about the student should be shared. Details of the suicide (e.g., method or specific location) should never be shared. Any notifications should include information on support options available through the counseling center.
- (2) CSU PD will send out a campus safety alert if it is determined there is an on-going threat to the campus community.

(H) Media involvement

University communications will be responsible for collecting and disseminating information to the media. All media requests for information should be directed to this office. University communications will work with CSU PD, the office of the chief student affairs officer or designee, and the office of general counsel to maintain the accuracy and ensure the legality of the information disseminated.

(I) Disclosure of records/release of records

Requests for information about a deceased student may be received by many individuals and offices, including but not limited to individual faculty members, the registrar, the bursar, counseling center, and others. All requests for information should be referred to the family’s primary contact. Such requests shall be considered on

an individual basis, in consultation with the office of general counsel as appropriate. Primary consideration will be given to requests that are supported in writing by the deceased's immediate or surviving family. In all cases, proof-of-death in the form of a death certificate is required.

(J) Post-mortem meetings

The chief student affairs officer or designee will determine when to hold a post-mortem meeting to discuss the student's death and process the university's response.