

TITLE: DEATH OF A STUDENT – COLLEGE RESPONSE

POLICY STATEMENT:

Red Deer College responds in a sensitive, caring, and professional manner when a student dies. The Director of Student Services is responsible for developing procedures for coordinating the College response to the death of a student, and for disseminating information to the College community.

PURPOSE:

This policy establishes guidelines to provide an orderly, effective and caring response to a student death.

SCOPE:

This policy covers the College response to the death of a student, former student or applicant.

PRINCIPLES:

A sensitive and compassionate approach recognizes the distress for next of kin, friends and roommates, and the distress or potential distress for staff and students close to the deceased student.

Clear lines of responsibility coordinate a coherent response that pulls together resources and contributions from across the College.

Legal processes are followed.

PROCEDURE:

1. Death of a Registered Student

a. *Reporting – Death On Campus*

A death that occurs on campus falls within the jurisdiction and responsibility of the RCMP Red Deer City Detachment. If a member of the College community becomes aware of a student death on campus, the individual immediately contacts 911, followed by the Security Centre using the dedicated 24 hour emergency phone line: Dial 343-4000 or 4000 from any campus phone. Campus Security coordinates communication with RCMP and then contacts the appropriate internal contacts within the College which includes, but is not limited to the RDC Manager, Security & Emergency Response, the Director of Student Services or designate, the President, the Vice President Academic and, when applicable, the Residence Manager. The RCMP is responsible for notifying the next of kin.

b. *Reporting – Death Off Campus*

The initial response to a death occurring off campus is handled by the local police agency and/or hospital involved. These agencies are responsible for notifying the next of kin.

If a member of the College community learns of a student's death, he/she reports the death to the Office of the Director of Student Services. The Office of the Director of Student Services reports the death to the President, and the Vice President Academic.

If a student death occurs during a field trip, the College staff member accompanying the trip immediately contacts local emergency services and the local law enforcement agency. As soon as the appropriate agency has taken control, the staff member immediately reports the death to the Director of Student Services or designate.

c. *Campus Notification*

Following verification of the student's identity, the Director of Student Services or designate notifies College staff, departments and the Associate Dean(s) of the School of the death, as outlined in Appendix A to take appropriate action.

The Director of Student Services evaluates the need for supportive services for those affected by the death.

The Director of Student Services serves as the College contact for next of kin and College staff. The Director contacts the family to express condolences. Next of kin are not permitted to enter classes to discuss their loved one. Rather, the next of kin may request that their contact information be provided to class members.

The Associate Dean of the School notifies faculty and staff of the student death. Schools take no other action to inform offices or individuals without specific instructions from Student Services.

In consultation with faculty, the Associate Dean determines who will notify classmates of the death. If a class instructor wishes to make the announcement, guidelines for doing so are found in Appendix B. When deemed appropriate, the Chair, Counselling or a designee may make the announcement to affected classes.

d. *Personal Effects*

The Director of Student Services arranges for intellectual property to be collected and lockers to be cleared out by a designate, preferably after regular class hours and in a discreet manner and makes arrangements for a family member to pick up all of the student's belongings.

If the student lived in Residence, the Director of Student Services consults with the family, roommates and the Residence Manager in removing the student's belongings.

e. *Inquiries, Publicity and Media*

Media inquiries regarding a student death are under the direction of Marketing and Communications in consultation with the Director of Student Services.

Information regarding the cause of death may be released only under the direction of the Director of Student Services. Notification may include use of the following categories: accident, medical condition, crime, undetermined. No official involved in the College response should speculate as to the cause of death or make any statements assigning

responsibility for the cause of death to any individual or group. Requests for such information by the media or others are referred to the Director of Student Services. Publications wishing to include information regarding a student death consult with Marketing and Communications prior to publication (e.g. Bricklayer, School newsletters, website).

Third party inquiries are referred to the Director of Student Services.

Anyone not having the family's address and wishing to send letters of condolence may send those letters to the Director of Student Services who will forward them to the family.

2. Death of a Former Student

Reporting – A former student's death is reported to the Office of the Registrar.

Campus Notification – Following verification of the former student's identity, the Registrar closes the former student's academic record and notifies the Office of the Director of Student Services. The Director of Student Services or designate notifies the College staff, departments, and the Associate Dean (s) of the School of the death, as outlined in Appendix A to take appropriate action.

3. Death of an Applicant

Reporting – The death of an applicant is reported to the Office of the Registrar.

The Registrar flags the file and informs the Revenue Accountant in Finance of appropriate refunds for fees already paid.

Following verification of the applicant's identity, the Registrar notifies the Office of the Director of Student Services.

Campus Notification – The Director of Student Services or designate notifies College staff, departments and the Associate Dean(s) of the School of the death, as outlined in Appendix A to take appropriate action.

4. Timelines for Response

Due to the sensitive and urgent nature involved in responding to the death of a student, departments and the Associate Dean(s) of the School will reply to inquiries within two (2) working days. All departments and the Associate Dean(s) of the School will respond either way, even if there is no involvement, refund, etc. in this particular situation.

Letter to the next of kin is sent out within five (5) working days of notification of the death of a student or applicant.

5. Other Information

In all cases the Registrar's Office marks the student's record as inactive.

The Associate Dean of the student's School may request the Registrar to award a posthumous degree, diploma or certificate of academic accomplishment for a student who had advanced to candidacy.

OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: Vice-President, Academic

RECOMMENDING AUTHORITY: Service Council, upon recommendation from Deans' Council

CONSULTATION FOR REVIEW: President's Office, Associate Deans, Students' Association, Fees Office, Student Services staff, Campus Management/Manager, Security & Emergency Response, Marketing, Communications & Student Recruitment, Health, Safety & Wellness Centre

POLICY REVIEW DATE: June 1, 2015

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2010

REVISION HISTORY: July 1, 2002 (College Response to Death of a Student Standard Practice)
October 1, 2010 revised and renamed Death of a Student – College Response Policy

RELATED POLICIES:

- Emergency Response and Business Resumption Plan

CONNECTION TO BOARD POLICIES: All RDC policies support relevant Board of Governors operational policies.

Appendix A - College Response to Death of a Student, Roles & Responsibilities of Individual Offices

Director of Student Services

- As per Procedures section 1 c., 2, and 3 of the policy, notify the following offices of the death of a student:

	Notes
Student Services Divisional Administrative Coordinator (Administrative Team Coordinator)	The DAC coordinates all Administrative Team Duties (see below).
Office of the President	notify
Office of the Vice President Academic	notify
Registrar	notify
Dean of student's program	notify (may also need to contact verbally)
Associate Dean of student's School	notify (may also need to contact verbally)
Bookstore Manager	notify
Alumni Association	notify
Campus Recreation Coordinator	notify
Community Relations (Development Services)	notify
Community Relations, Vice President	notify
Counselling, Chair (Support Team Coord)	notify
Dean, Learning Resources	notify
Director of Facilities (Campus Management)	notify
Director of Security & Emergency Response	notify
Disability Services Coordinator	notify
Finance - Revenue Accountant, Fees Office	notify and request the Revenue Accountant, Fees Office/Parking; i-card balance to facilitate applicable refunds and forward the refund to the DAC to include in the letter to the family/next of kin
Future Students Office	notify
Health, Safety and Wellness Centre	notify
Human Resources	notify
Information Technology Services	notify and request ITS to cancel the student computer accounts
Learning Support Coordinator	notify
Marketing and Communications	notify
Payroll	notify
Research Services	notify
Residence	notify
Student Funding and Awards	notify
Students' Association, President	notify
Students' Association (General Manager)	notify and request the SA General Manager to arrange for any lockers to be cleared out and forward belongings to the DAC
Students' Association Student Benefits Coordinator	notify – next of kin will be directed to contact the SA Benefits Plan Office
Sport Facilities Manager	notify and request the Sport Facilities Manager to arrange for any lockers to be cleared out and forward belongings to the DAC
Vice President College Services	notify
Other college staff and departments as applicable	notify

- The Director makes an effort to ensure that in-person contact is made with those most affected by the circumstances (i.e. roommates, instructors, etc.).
- Ensure coordination of all response activities and communication with family.
- Contact the student's family to express condolences.
- Forward letters of condolence received by the College community to the family.
- Ascertain the date and time of the funeral or memorial service. Depending on the circumstances, the Director may coordinate a College presence at the funeral or memorial service.
- Send letter to family/next of kin, which includes:
 - A breakdown of all refunds and notice of method of refund (i.e. reversal of Credit Card; cheque included; etc.).
 - Reference to funding information or details regarding Student Funding and Awards.
 - Details of final Payroll information if the student was employed with the College.
 - Information regarding process for claiming the student's belongings, if applicable.
 - Reference to Students' Association Student Benefits Coordinator for information regarding Students' Benefit Plan, if applicable.
 - Reference to the Bookstore Manager for information involving returning new/used textbooks.
 - Information as to how they can access the student's T2202A and T4 forms for the next year's Income Tax, if applicable.
- Coordinate media inquiries in consultation with Marketing and Communications.

SUPPORT / ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM DUTIES

Student Services Divisional Administrative Coordinator – Administrative Team Coordinator

- Ensure notification is provided to appropriate College staff, departments and Schools as in Procedures 1c, 2 and 3 above.
- Lead the Administrative Team by coordinating the following activities: updating student records, checking on fee refunds, books, student funding details and insurance details.
- Provide details related to above matters to Director of Student Services.
- Collect all necessary documentation and forward to the Director of Student Services, who sends a letter to family, which includes: all refunds (with the breakdown); any funding or details regarding Student Funding and Awards; referral to Student's Association Student Benefits Coordinator, if applicable; process for returning new/used books; information regarding process for claiming the student's belongings; information for accessing T2202A and T4 forms; and final Payroll information, if applicable.
- In case of student loan funding, in the letter to the next of kin, advise family/next of kin to notify **appropriate agencies** (see Student Funding and Awards Duties below). The family is not held responsible for outstanding debts to RDC.
- Arrange for intellectual property to be collected and student and sports facilities lockers to be cleared out by a designate, preferably after regular class hours and in a discreet manner and make arrangements for family member to pick up the belongings (see Procedure section 1 d. above).
- Arrange for intellectual property to be collected and make arrangements for family member to pick up.
- If the student lived in Residence, consult with the family, roommates and the Residence Manager in removing the student's belongings and make arrangements for a family member to pick up the belongings (see Procedures section 1 d. above).
- Coordinate with Campus Security and make arrangements for family member to pick up all of student's belongings listed above.

Office of the President

- **Notify the College community as appropriate.**
- Send official letter of condolence to student's next of kin.

Associate Dean of Deceased Student's School

- Notify appropriate faculty and staff regarding the death.
- In consultation with faculty, determine who will notify classmates of the death (see Procedures section 1 c. above).
- Notify Registrar if they wish to grant posthumous certificate, diploma, or degree (see Procedure 4 above).
- Notify Information Technology Services regarding any possible computer files, e.g. IDs for databases, security clearances, Blackboard passwords, Health Knowledge network.
- Notify internal areas within the School, e.g. Performing Arts Library.
- Notify external agencies re: practicum placements, e.g. Alberta Health Services – Central Zone.
- Notify and deliver intellectual property belonging to the student to the Divisional Administrative Coordinator (see Procedure 1 d above).

Instructors of Deceased Student

- In consultation with the Associate Dean of the deceased student's School, an instructor may wish to announce the student's death in class. If the instructor wishes, he or she may contact the Chair, Counselling for assistance and support before making the announcement. When making the announcement, the instructor notifies the students that counselling services are available (see Procedures section 1 c. above and Appendix B *Suggested Protocol for Announcing a Student's Death*).
- In conjunction with the Associate Dean of the deceased student's School, notify and deliver intellectual property belonging to the student to the Divisional Administrative Coordinator (see Procedure 1 d above).

Alumni

- Note "deceased" in any electronic student records within the Alumni office.
- Consider and establish an appropriate memorial.

Bookstore Manager

- Facilitate refunds related to textbooks as requested by the next of kin or Director of Student Services.

Campus Recreation Coordinator

- Inform Revenue Accountant in Finance of pro-rated refund of any activity fees, such as pre-paid day-trips, tournaments, etc.
- Remove student's name from activity participation lists.

Counselling, Chair (or designate) – Support Team Coordinator

- Lead the Support Team by supporting the following activities: personal notification to Associate Deans and instructors, debriefing with classmates, instructors, roommates, return of student's belongings to the family, and any other follow-up with the family, as appropriate.
- Assist with personal notification to Associate Deans and instructors.
- Provide debriefing, counselling, and support services to College community.

Chaplain

- The Campus Ministries may assist in response efforts, contacts with affected individuals, and appropriate campus memorial services as requested by the Chair, Counselling.

Community Relations

- Notification is provided to Community Relations for awareness from Alumni and Development perspective (if by chance the person was a past donor or volunteer); and also as an alert, should the family choose to approach the College to establish a memorial fund.

Health, Safety & Wellness Centre

- Offer support as necessary.

Dean, Learning Resources

- In the case of death of any member of the campus community, fines are waived and any books outstanding are cleared.

Finance – Revenue Accountant, Fees Office/Parking

- Coordinate refunds from the various departments and forward the combined refund information with breakdown (if applicable) to the Divisional Administrative Coordinator to include with the letter to the family/next of kin.
 - Consult with Student Funding and Awards regarding tuition/fee refunds.
 - Arrange for any refund of rental fees in consultation with Residence Arrange for any refund of parking fees Contact the Sport Facilities Manager, arrange for a pro-rated refund of any membership fees.
 - Contact Campus Recreation Coordinator, arrange for any refund for pre-paid activities, such as day-trips, activities, tournaments.
 - Contact the Students' Association Benefits Administrator to determine if the student has paid for the Health and Benefit Plan, and if the Plan is active. Notify Divisional Administrative Coordinator, Student Services in either case. Arrange for refund of pre-paid Health and Benefits Plan *only* if the Plan is not yet active.
 - Contact Payroll to determine if student was employed by the College; arrange for final pay to be deposited in the student's bank account and inform Divisional Administrative Coordinator of details to be included in the letter to next of kin.
 - Ensure T2202A is provided to the family/next of kin for next year's Income Tax purposes.

Information Technology Services

- Cancel any existing general and specialized computer accounts. The Director of Student Services notifies ITS to cancel the general student computer accounts, and the Associate Dean of the School notifies ITS regarding any specialized computer accounts such as IDs for databases, security clearances, Blackboard passwords, Health Knowledge network (see role of the Associate Dean of Deceased Student's School above).

Marketing & Communications Department

- This department is the primary contact with the media and the community at large. In any crisis situation, the senior Communications staff member will set up a media centre, but cannot release the names of victim(s) under any circumstances. Only the RCMP can do this.
- Coordinate media inquiries in consultation with the Director of Student Services.

Payroll

- Inform Revenue Accountant in Finance and Divisional Administrative Coordinator, Student Services, as to whether or not the student was employed by the College. Include details of any final wages to be deposited in student's bank account.
- Ensure T4 information if provided to the family/next of kin for next year's Income Tax purposes, if applicable.

Registrar

- Upon initial notification by next of kin, request correct spelling and complete address of next of kin / emergency contact that is to receive correspondence from the College (i.e. refunds; letter of condolence).
- Remove the student's address and/or phone numbers and note "deceased" in the electronic student record.

- Provide student's name and ID#, with the next of kin's name and full address to the President's Office and the Divisional Administrative Coordinator, Student Services, immediately upon notification of the death of a student; include next of kin's relationship to the deceased student.
- Flag the student file and inform the Revenue Accountant in Finance of appropriate refunds for fees already paid.
- Place notification from the Director of Student Services in the paper file.
- Cancel registration and admission to any future programs.
- Provide the Manager, Security & Emergency Response with Confirmation of Enrolment and full- or part-time status for insurance purposes.
- Grant posthumous certificate/diploma/degree, if requested by Associate Dean of the School.

Research Services

- Note "deceased" in any electronic student records within the Research Services office.

Residence

- If the student lived in Residence, the Residence Manager works with the Director of Student Services to make arrangements for the removal of the student's belongings (see Procedures section 1 d).
- Work with the Chair, Counselling to coordinate support for roommates.
- Inform Revenue Accountant in Finance of refund of any rental fees, parking, damage deposit, etc.
- Update database appropriately. In case of applicants for upcoming terms, ensure that no future communication occurs with the family.

Security & Emergency Response Manager

- Prepare insurance forms on behalf of the College.
- Notify the Divisional Administrative Coordinator of any insurance information or details that should be included in the Director's letter to the family.
- Inform Revenue Accountant in Finance of any refund for Parking Fees.
- Coordinate with Divisional Administrative Coordinator, Student Services to make arrangements for family member to pick up all of student's belongings listed above.

Sports Facilities Manager (Athletics/Equipment Room/Train Station)

- Inform Revenue Accountant in Finance of pro-rated refund of any membership fees.
- As requested by the Director of Student Services, obtain the student's belongings from his/her locker and deliver them to the Divisional Administrative Coordinator (see Procedure 1 d above).
- Notify Divisional Administrative Coordinator of any outstanding College equipment or uniforms.

Student Funding and Awards

- In case of student loan or grant funding, notify the funding agency, e.g. Students Finance Board.
- Provide direction to the Revenue Accountant, Fees Office regarding tuition/fee refunds as needed.
- Notify the Divisional Administrative Coordinator of any funding information or details that should be included in the Director's letter to the family/next of kin, including information about the formal process for them to undertake with each of the student's lenders.

Students' Association General Manager

- Inform Revenue Accountant in Finance of student's status with the Health and Benefits Program at RDC.
- Inform Revenue Accountant in Finance of any refunds related to lock/locker.
- As requested by the Director of Student Services, obtain student's belongings from his/her locker and deliver them to the Divisional Administrative Coordinator (see Procedure 1 d above).

Appendix B

Suggested Protocol for Announcing a Student Death

Adapted from: The Critical Incident Stress Management Course: Basic group crisis intervention.
Mitchell, JT and Everly, BS. (2001) International Critical Incident Stress Management Foundation.

Purpose: To provide a consistent and appropriate process to inform students and staff of a student death.

Objectives: Provide accurate information.
Provide coping resources.
Inform people about self care.
Assess further needs of those in group.

Process:

1. Assemble class members.
2. Provide factual information about the situation, maintaining appropriate confidentiality boundaries.
3. Provide information about common behavioral/psychological responses one might experience.
4. Discuss individual/ class/ college stress management strategies.
5. Provide information on RDC and community resources.

For further information, please contact the Chair, Counselling.