



Policy Number: I.24  
Policy Level: Operating Policy  
Originally Issued: March 19, 2018  
Reviewed: June 2, 2020  
Reviewed: November 3, 2022  
Policy Owner: President  
Policy Implementation: Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Chief Human Resources Officer

## DEATH NOTIFICATION PROTOCOL

### I. Policy Statement and Purpose

The death of a member of the Athens State University community (student or employee) is a severe loss for the family and friends of the deceased and the University as a whole. This policy establishes protocol to allow the University to respond in an appropriate manner by a) assisting those areas of the University affected by the loss to respond in a timely manner, b) providing communication within the University community, c) assisting with bereavement support, and d) providing an empathetic and caring voice from the University to friends and family of the deceased.

### II. Protocol for the Death of a Student

Report of a student death should be communicated to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. Once the death is confirmed, the Provost/VPAA will notify the President, Registrar and the Director of Public Relations.

The Registrar will be responsible for:

- Placing a deceased code on the student's academic record. This code prevents unauthorized access to the deceased's records and alerts University departments that no additional communication should be sent to the deceased student, the student's parents, legal guardian or spouse.
- Obtaining external verification (i.e., news articles, obituary) of the student's death for inclusion with the academic record.
- Processing an official withdrawal form, utilizing the date of death as the date of withdrawal.
- Providing notification of the processed withdrawal to the Provost/VPAA, Director of Financial Aid Office and the Vice President for Financial Affairs.
- Determining whether the deceased student is eligible to be awarded a posthumous degree and report that finding to the Provost/VPAA.

The Provost/VPAA will be responsible for:

- Notifying the appropriate College Dean and faculty members.
- Assisting anyone who may be significantly affected by the death by making referrals to appropriate services.



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- Notifying the family when the deceased is eligible to be awarded a posthumous degree and coordinate how the family would like to accept the degree.

The President will be responsible for corresponding with the family to offer condolences on behalf of the University. The Provost/VPAA will provide email notification to the University announcing the death and, if known, information about funeral, visitation, and/or memorial arrangements.

### **III. Protocol for the Death of an Employee**

Report of an employee death should be communicated to the Human Resources Office. Once the death is confirmed, the Chief Human Resources Officer will ensure that the employee's direct supervisor and the President of the University are notified.

The Chief Human Resources Officer will be responsible for:

- Assisting beneficiaries or family of a deceased employee with survivor benefit information.
- Obtaining a copy of the death certificate, where applicable.
- Placing a deceased code on the employee's personnel record.

The President will be responsible for corresponding with the family to offer condolences on behalf of the University.

The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs will provide email notification to the University announcing the death of a faculty member and, if known, information about funeral, visitation, and/or memorial arrangements.

The Chief Human Resources Officer will provide email notification to the University announcing the death of a staff member and, if known, information about funeral, visitation, and/or memorial arrangements.



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#### **IV. Responsibility for this Operating Policy**

##### **Policy Owner**

As part of the initial approval of this policy by the President and subsequent to the original dissemination of the policy, the President remains the policy owner for the ongoing evaluation, review, and approval of this policy. Subsequent reviews and revisions to this policy must be in accordance with approved operating policy procedures and processes.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or more frequently as needed by the Policy Owner. Revisions will be reviewed/affirmed by the Cabinet and approved by the University President. This policy will be updated/published in the University's Policy Library.

##### **Responsibility for Policy Implementation**

The President has assigned the responsibility of implementing this policy to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Chief Human Resources Officer.