

Fort Valley State University  
Death Among Members of the University Community Protocol

General Procedures – Whenever a death occurs among faculty, staff, students or retirees of the University, the following general procedures should be followed. The President may, at his/her discretion, also engage this protocol in the event of a death of an alum or former employee of notable distinction. Notable distinction may include, but is not necessarily inclusive of or limited to the deceased individual's level of contribution and/or time of service dedicated to the University, or career and/or scholarly accomplishments. In addition, special procedures must be followed whenever a student death occurs.

1. The Office of the President should be notified as soon as possible whenever a death occurs, providing the following information: name of deceased, title, department if a member of the faculty or staff, name and address of immediate relatives, and any appropriate description of the circumstances of death, e.g. auto accident, medical, etc.
2. The Office of the President will notify the appropriate vice president, who in turn will notify the appropriate dean, director, or unit supervisor.
3. The Office of the President will also notify the Special Assistant to the President for Strategic Communications, who will coordinate any release of public information or any questions from the media.
4. The Special Assistant to the President for Strategic Communications will notify the campus. If the situation involves sensitive information or the circumstances surrounding the death might implicate Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) or some other law or regulation, the Director of Compliance should be consulted before information is disseminated.
5. The Office of the President will notify Campus Police and Safety to fly the University flag at half-staff when the death of a current member of the faculty, staff, or student body occurs. The flag shall normally be at half-staff for 24-hours commencing the day of the funeral.
6. Upon timely notice the President or designee may, at his/her discretion, send a correspondence or, in select situations, an official proclamation of condolence.
7. The University will not, as a general rule, plan official memorial services or the sending of memorial flowers/gifts. However, departments, offices, or student organizations may elect to plan such services or engage in such activities. Should the President decide to engage the University in any such activity, funding will be handled by the Vice President for University Advancement.
8. Memorial gifts may be made to the Fort Valley State Foundation in memory of the deceased. In order to establish a named scholarship, at least \$500 must be contributed. An endowment requires a minimum contribution of \$10,000. Other smaller gifts may be given to the Fort Valley State Foundation GAP Fund. Contributions should be sent to the Fort Valley State University Foundation. If someone wishes to donate to something other than the Fort Valley State Foundation GAP Fund, please direct the person to contact the Vice President for University Advancement.
9. In the event of the death of a community member affiliated with the University, the President or the Vice President for University Advancement will determine the protocol to follow.

**Procedures for Action/Consideration in the Event of a Death**

The death of a student or employee can be very emotional and stressful for students, faculty, staff and all other members of the university community. The purpose of this Protocol is to provide a framework by which the university may address the myriad of issues associated with the death in order to mitigate the pain of the loss.

1. Any employee who believes or receives information that a student or employee may be deceased shall immediately report such belief or information to the office of the President. S/he should

also direct any party requesting recognition to officially submit the request via the online death notification form, or alternatively submit the request on the party's behalf.

2. The Office of the President, with the assistance of the Chief of Campus Safety and either the Vice Provost for Student Success for any alleged death involving a student, or the Director of HR for any alleged death involving an employee, will verify the information provided. If the information is valid, the other Vice Presidents will be notified of the death. The Special Assistant to the President for Strategic Communications will handle any release of public information concerning the student death, and will consult with the Director of Compliance when there is the potential that FERPA, HIPAA and/or other potential laws and regulations are implicated.
3. The University President will notify the Chancellor as deemed prudent. The President may consult with administrators to determine a course of action based on the facts and circumstances of the death. Consideration of a course of action shall include the following: The date of death; the location where the death occurred; the nature of the death; the status of any criminal investigation; and whether the individual was a resident of campus housing.
4. If the individual is a current student, the Vice Provost for Student Success shall, in consultation with the Special Assistant to the President for Strategic Communications, coordinate contact between the student's family and the appropriate university leader(s).
5. The Special Assistant to the President for Strategic Communications shall, subject to approval by the President, draft a statement to release to the press and/or to the university community. All media inquiries or requests for information shall be referred to the Special Assistant to the President for Strategic Communications.
6. In the event of a death that has occurred on the campus, the Vice Provost for Student Success and Enrollment Management and/or the Dean of Students will ensure those parents, spouses, other immediate family, including roommates are compassionately informed of the incident. When the death involves an employee, the Director of HR will ensure that compassionate communication and any available employee grief assistance is provided.
7. The Director of the Counseling Center shall cause to be made available and shall coordinate psychological counseling and emotional support services for students of the university community.
8. The Vice Provost for Student Success, with the assistance of the Special Assistant to the President for Strategic Communications and the Director of Events, shall provide and assist the Student Government Association and other recognized student organizations with planning, scheduling and providing such other services or memorials deemed appropriate.
9. The Vice Provost for Student Success shall ensure that a review of the student's financial aid account is done and that proper actions are taken to return financial aid funds if such is required. When the death involves an employee, the Director of HR will ensure that a review of the employee's benefits and outstanding compensation obligations are done and that proper actions are taken for providing available benefits and compensation to the designated beneficiaries.
10. For currently enrolled students, the Vice Provost for Student Success and Enrollment Management will notify the academic deans, instructors, and academic advisor. For any death that may negatively impact the morale and academic progress of currently enrolled students, the Vice Provost for Student Success shall also engage the Dean's Council and the Provost to determine the appropriateness of either cancelling classes or requesting that professors grant class attendance leniency to allow students to grieve and/or attend any planned memorial service(s).
11. The Registrar will be informed of a student death and instructed to change the official records for withdrawal and billing purposes. The Registrar will also work with the Cashier's Office to determine eligibility for refunds. If it was the student's last term of enrollment before graduation, the Registrar will work with the appropriate academic department and faculty committee in the possible posthumous awarding of the degree. The Vice Provost for Student Success and Enrollment Management will determine the most appropriate means to present posthumous degrees to the family.

12. In the event of the death of a resident student, the Vice Provost for Student Success and Enrollment Management will inform the Director of Residence Life. In the event of the death of a resident employee, the Director of HR will inform The Vice President of Business and Finance. In conjunction with Campus Safety, personal property will be inventoried and secured. Arrangements with the family will be made by the Director of Residence Life (students) or the Director of HR (employees) for picking up the personal belongings of the deceased. The appropriate Director should be on hand when the family comes to campus to pick up the personal effects of the deceased student or employee.
13. The Vice Provost for Student Success and Enrollment Management should write a letter of condolence to the family of the student. The Director of HR should write a letter of condolence to the family of the employee.



The Death Among Members of the University Community Protocol is not a complete list of all things that should or will be done to address the death of a student or employee. Actions shall be dictated by the facts and circumstances of the death with the main consideration being the safety, emotional comfort and psychological support for the Fort Valley State community.

Note that employees participating in any non-University sanctioned bereavement activity are required to request sick leave in accordance with BoR policy 8.2.7.2.