

**ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Policy on Protocols to be Followed in the Event of a Student Death**

**Preamble**

Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) recognizes that the untimely death of any currently enrolled student would result in a tremendous loss to the university community. In the event such a loss occurs, ECSU is committed to offering certain grief support services to students, faculty and staff. ECSU also acknowledges various matters will have to be handled in order to finalize the deceased student's matriculation at the university. This policy establishes the protocols to be followed in the event of a student death.

**1. Emergency Response to a Student Death**

**A. On-Campus**

In the unlikely event that a student or employee discovers the body of a student on campus, the first response is to immediately call 911 or notify Campus Police.

**B. Off-Campus**

In the unlikely event that a student or employee discovers the body of a student at any off campus location, the first response is to immediately call 911 or notify the local law enforcement agency.

**2. Notification After a Student Death is Confirmed**

**A. Notifying the Family of the Deceased**

In the event that a student death is officially confirmed through Campus Police or otherwise, the Chancellor or Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or designee shall take steps to immediately notify the family and administrators.

**B. Next of Kin**

- a) If a student death occurs on campus, the Chancellor or Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs shall notify the deceased student's next-of-kin as soon as possible by telephone.
- b) If a deceased student's next-of-kin is notified by a local law enforcement agency in accordance with SECTION 2.D.vi. below, the Chancellor or Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs shall contact the next-of-kin as soon as reasonably possible to extend expressions of sympathy.

**C. Procedure On What to Say when Speaking With a Family Member**

- a) As a first choice, speak with both parents or guardian, if possible and appropriate.
- b) Identify yourself; ask if they have been in contact with the police; that you have already been in contact with the police; that you have to communicate a difficult message; and if they are at home alone.

- c) Explain as much of the circumstances as you know. i.e. child/family member was “fatally injured” or died from...”
- d) If available, give family member the necessary information to contact medical personnel. Indicate if and when a representative of ECSU will be on hand at the hospital. Police involved may identify the person to be contacted for any vital details.

D. Administrative Staff

- i. Chancellor
- ii. Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement
- iii. Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs
- iv. Administrative Council
- v. Behavior Management Team
  - a) Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
  - b) Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (Dean of Students)
  - c) Director of Counseling
  - d) Director of Health Services
  - e) Director of Residence Life
  - f) Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

vi. External Agencies

If a student death occurs off campus, the deceased student’s next-of-kin will be notified by an external agency (i.e. local hospital, local law enforcement agency, etc.).

E. Residence Hall Roommate/Suitemates

If the deceased student resided in a residence hall, a university Counselor and the Residence Hall Director will make reasonable efforts to notify the roommate and/or suitemates.

F. Faculty Advisor

The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs shall be responsible for notifying the deceased student’s faculty advisor.

G. Campus-wide

The Division of Student Affairs will distribute an official campus-wide e-mail notice through the Office of University Relations and Marketing as soon as reasonably practical should a student death be confirmed to university officials.

**3. External Media Inquires**

All calls or inquires from the media regarding a student death must be directed to the Office of University Relations and Marketing for response.

#### **4. Support Services**

##### **A. Residential Students**

In the event the deceased student resided on campus, floor/suite and small group meetings led by the Counseling Center will be offered to support student grief of other students of the Residence Hall.

##### **B. Non-residential Students**

In the event the deceased student was a commuter, small group meetings will be offered by the Counseling Center to support student grief.

##### **C. Campus Community**

Counseling services will be offered for students, faculty or staff who were closely affiliated with the deceased student.

#### **5. Condolences**

##### **A. Services**

###### **i. University Representative**

The Division of Student Affairs will endeavor to obtain information regarding services for a deceased student and make that information available to the university community. A university representative may attend a service held in honor of a deceased student if reasonably possible. If attendance is not reasonably possible, some form of university acknowledgment will be sent in lieu of attendance.

###### **ii. Students**

Students who elect to attend a service held in honor of a deceased student shall do so at their own expense.

##### **B. Campus Vigils/Observances**

The Student Government Association or another club or organization may hold a vigil or observance in honor of the deceased student after consultation and approval by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and the family of the deceased student.

##### **C. Annual Founder's Day Observance**

A deceased student will be memorialized, in consultation with his/her family, at the annual Founder's Day Convocation following the student's death. The family of a deceased student is traditionally presented with a memorial plaque during the Founder's Day Service.

#### **6. Personal Effects**

A. If the deceased student resided on campus at the time of his/her death, personal effects will be immediately inventoried by the Residence Hall Director and collected by the next-of-kin with the assistance of the Residence Hall Director.

- B. If the next of kin is unable to collect the deceased student's personal effects from the residence hall within five (5) days, all inventoried items will be packed and transferred to Campus Police for pick-up.

**7. University Records**

A. Registrar

Upon presentment of an official death certificate by the deceased student's next-of-kin, the Registrar shall code the student's record and permanent file as "deceased."

B. University Accounts

Upon presentment of an official death certificate by the deceased student's next-of-kin, the Bursar shall cancel any outstanding university charges incurred by the deceased student. For purposes of this policy outstanding university charges means tuition and fees and does not include any outstanding government or private loans.

**8. Posthumous Degree**

The deceased student's family may submit a request for conferral of a posthumous degree to the Office of Academic Affairs. ECSU shall make decisions on awarding posthumous degrees on a case by case basis.