



## The University of Alabama at Birmingham

**NAME OF PROTOCOL:** Student Death Protocol  
**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2019  
**RESPONSIBLE UNIT(S):** Division of Student Affairs  
**RESPONSIBLE PARTY:** Vice President for Student Affairs  
**ADDITIONAL CONTACTS:** Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs (designee of Vice President)

### Student Death Protocol

In the event of a student death, communication is important and should be handled carefully, accurately and sensitively.

These protocols streamline the response of University staff/administrator in the event of a student death. In official UAB communications, top priorities are to respect the dignity and privacy of the student and the family, while safeguarding the security and wellbeing of the campus community.

If the family of the student has not been notified, UAB will not confirm details publicly unless extenuating circumstances make such disclosures absolutely necessary. If the family asks that the University not disclose details (e.g., name or cause of death) the University will honor the family's wishes.

University staff/administrators are asked to demonstrate sensitivity with the information shared about a death by:

- Following the institution's lead in the extent of information shared in social media
- Minimizing speculation or the spread of inaccurate information
- Encouraging classmates and colleagues to take advantage of Student Counseling Services and other support services on campus.

### If a Student Death Occurs on Campus:

In the event of a student death, the professional staff will notify emergency personnel (911).

- a. If the death occurs during normal office hours, responding personnel will contact the VPSA.
- b. If the death occurs after normal office hours, responding personnel will contact the On-Call Crisis Response Team Member, who will notify the VPSA.
- c. First responding SA staff should secure the area, pending arrival of emergency personnel and keep others from observing scene. Potential witnesses, including contact information, should be identified to responding law enforcement and university officials.
- d. The On-Call Crisis Response Team Member will notify the VPSA who will evaluate the circumstances and determine if circumstances warrant notifying/assembling the CRT.
- e. The Assistant Vice President for Student Experience or designee will determine if the family has been notified. If necessary, the Assistant Vice President for Student Experience or designee will notify family members and coordinate the notification of roommates with Residence Life staff in consultation with Student Counseling Services.

- f. The VPSA will inform the President and other senior administrators as appropriate.
- g. The VPSA or designee will refer media inquiries with University Relations and senior campus leadership.
- h. Once the initial emergency of an on-campus death is coordinated, the Assistant Vice President for Student Experience convenes the Student Death Postvention Response Team.

**If a Student Death Occurs off Campus:**

In the event of a student death off campus, the student death is initially handled by local law enforcement in jurisdiction where the student death occurred, the medical examiner, and/or the hospital where the student was taken. It is the responsibility of one or more of these agencies to notify the next of kin.

- a. If a student death occurs off campus, UAB Police may be notified. In the event another campus official is informed of the student's death, that official must contact the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee.
- b. The Assistant Vice President for Student Experience will convene a Student Death Postvention Response Team.

**Student Death Postvention Response Team:**

The Assistant Vice President for Student Experience will identify appropriate UAB administrators to serve on the Student Death Postvention Response Team. The team's responsibilities include, but are not limited by the following:

- a. Convene upon receiving news of a student death; and
- b. Provide assistance in making communications to relevant members of the University community, family or otherwise providing support in the event of a student death.
  - a. The Assistant Vice President for Student Experience will contact family member(s)/emergency contact(s) listed in BlazerNet.
  - b. The Assistant Vice President for Student Experience will contact University Relations in reference to media inquiries. University Relations serves as the resource for all media inquiries.
  - c. The Assistant Vice President for Student Experience will contact the appropriate Dean(s), Associate Dean(s), Academic Advisors, and Faculty once the student death is confirmed.
  - d. The team will determine appropriate communication to roommates, friends, faculty, staff, and others. The team will create and execute a communication plan to roommates, friends, faculty, staff, and others.
  - e. The team creates and executes a coordinated strategy to support students, faculty, and staff. Students will receive information regarding counseling and support services. Names of potentially affected individuals will be provided to Student Counseling Services and Student Conduct & Outreach to facilitate access to services.
  - f. The Assistant Vice President for Student Experience communicates with the appropriate Dean(s) and the Vice President for Student Affairs regarding the postvention efforts.
  - g. If a University statement is needed, the Assistant Vice President for Student Experience coordinates with University Relations and the Student Affairs

Marketing and Communications Team to draft, disseminate and answer inquiries.

- h. The Assistant Vice President for Student Experience coordinates with the Office of the Registrar, Student Accounting, Financial Aid and Scholarships, and other University offices as part of postvention efforts.