Arkansas Tech University Death Notification and Response Policy—12/15/15
This policy is to be followed in the event of the death of any current faculty, staff, or student.

Notification of next of kin when a death occurs on campus

- The responsibility of assuring the next of kin is notified will rest with the Department of Public Safety (DPS) unless another law enforcement agency has assumed jurisdiction of the matter.
- If the deceased current faculty, staff or student is married, the next of kin will be the spouse. If the deceased is an unmarried current faculty, staff or student, the next of kin will be considered to be the emergency contact listed in Human Resources or Student Records.
- The name of the deceased will not be released to the media until all efforts to notify the next of kin have been exhausted. University Relations will coordinate all information releases to the media.
- The DPS representative first informed of the death will gather as much information as possible including: time of death, cause of death, name, location and contact number of next of kin.
- Immediately notify the DPS Chief or designee. If the location of the next of kin is within a reasonable driving distance from the University, the DPS Chief or designee will coordinate the death notification.
- If the location of the next of kin is of such a distance that makes personal contact impractical or impossible, DPS will attempt to contact another local, state or federal law enforcement agency with jurisdiction to make the notification.

Notification of next of kin when a death occurs off campus

- Response to any death occurring off campus will be handled initially by the local emergency services and/or the hospital involved. It is the responsibility of these agencies to notify the next of kin.
- The Department of Public Safety will assist with notification of next of kin if requested by the responsible parties.
Notification for University Administration

- A member of the university community who learns of the death of a faculty member, staff member, or current student should immediately notify the University Relations office by email at urelations@atu.edu. University Relations will contact the appropriate office according to the connection between the university and the deceased:
  - Current or former faculty member: Vice President for Academic Affairs
  - Current student: Vice President for Student Services and University Relations
  - Current staff member: Appropriate Vice President, Chief of Staff or the Assistant to the President
- The Vice President, their designee, or Assistant to the President will verify the information, as appropriate. Notification will be forwarded to the President's office, University Relations, and the other Vice Presidents or their designee. Each Vice President shall be responsible for notifying areas within their department that need to have this information to maintain the accuracy of the university's internal records:
  - Current Students: Registrar; Dean of Students; Academic Affairs, Academic Adviser, and Current Professors
  - Current Faculty or Staff: Human Resources; Office of Development, and College Dean, if appropriate
  - Parent, donor, alumnus/a or other external affiliation: Office of Development
  - Former students (non-graduate): Dean of Students, Office of Development
- To facilitate the university's response to the death, the respective Vice President will coordinate with the President's Office to:
  - Correspond with the family
  - Designate at least one university official to attend the visitation and/or funeral if held locally.
  - Order flowers as appropriate
    - President’s Office for student, staff or board of trustee member
    - Office of Academic Affairs or Respective Dean for academic employee or faculty member
    - Office of Development for others as deemed necessary

President’s Office Protocol

- For current students the President will make contact with the parents/legal guardians to express condolence and inform them of the waiver of any outstanding account balance.
- In coordination with the Department of University Relations, will notify the campus community of a drop box for notes of condolence.
  - The drop box will be available near the Circulation Desk of the Ross Pendergraft Library and remain in place for up to two weeks.
  - Condolence notes will be forwarded on to the family, along with a note of sympathy from the President.
Responsibilities

- The Student Accounts office will ensure that no bills are sent to the family by including a “deceased” code in the billing box on Banner.
- If the deceased student owed a balance, the Student Accounts office will write the balance off at the end of the year. No collection efforts will be made.
- The Registrar’s Office will officially withdraw the deceased student from classes.
- In conjunction with DPS or other local, state or federal law enforcement agency, the Office of Residence Life will secure the on-campus belongings of the deceased student. In the event the site is designated as a crime scene, it should not be disturbed until released by the authorities. Inventory of belongings will be witnessed by two employees.
- The University Counseling Center is available to respond to a specific location during normal business hours (8-5) and can be reached to provide services after hours if needed. The responding counselor will coordinate with the appropriate Vice President or designee to identify a location for this type of service.

Media Involvement

- The Office of University Relations will be responsible for collecting and disseminating information to the media. All requests for information should be directed to this office.
- Where a student death occurs on University property or at University sponsored events, it is important that no person involved in the University response speculate as to the cause of death or make statements assigning responsibility for the cause of death to any individual or group. Requests for such information by the media or others should note that the University (and/or other agencies) would promptly conduct a thorough investigation to determine the cause and circumstances of the death.