

TITLE: Student Death and Missing Student
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Overview

Whatcom Community College (WCC) will make every effort to respond appropriately and sensitively in the event of a death or missing student report of a currently enrolled student.

Description

The Student Death and Missing Student Procedures will ensure a caring, professional, coordinated, and consistent response by the College. This document shall be maintained and updated by the Vice President for Student Services as needed.

Procedures

General

Information regarding a student death or missing student should be reported immediately to the Campus Safety and Security Office (CSSO), by calling (360) 383-3394. CSSO is responsible for confirming the student's death/missing status through official and appropriate channels and communicating information about a student's death and missing status to appropriate college personnel, and notifying the Office of the Vice President for Student Services. CSSO will keep the Office of the Vice President for Student Services apprised of the investigation who will then be responsible to notify and consulting with the following offices: President, Instruction, Administrative Services (Risk Management), Advancement, Human Resources, and International Programs (in the case of an International student). The Office of the Vice President for Student Services may consult with the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) for assistance, resources, etc., as needed. When following these procedures staff must comply with FERPA and other applicable WCC policies.

A student is considered missing if they have not been seen or heard from in a reasonable amount of time. In general, a reasonable amount of time is 24 hours or more, but may vary depending on circumstances such as time of day, and information regarding daily schedule, habits, and reliability. Students may also be considered missing immediately if there are circumstances that are suspicious or cause concern for their safety. Determination will be made by the Campus Safety and Security Office or designee.

The following information is helpful to properly identify the student and to ensure the correct information is disseminated:

- Student full name and address
- Student identification number
- Date of birth
- Date of death (and cause if appropriate) or date last seen/missing

The student's contact information will be registered confidentially and this information will be accessible only to authorized campus officials and law enforcement. It may not be disclosed outside of an investigation.

If a student confirmed missing/deceased is under 18 years of age and not emancipated, the college will attempt to notify a custodial parent or guardian within 24 hours of the determination that the student is missing, in addition to notifying any additional contact person designated by the student.

The college will notify the local law enforcement agency within 24 hours of the determination that the student is missing, unless the local law enforcement agency was the entity that made the determination that the student is missing. All efforts will be made to make immediate notifications when possible.

Communication & Press

The Director for Communications and Marketing is responsible for coordinating communication and information about a student's death or missing status to the campus community and to media if deemed appropriate. Communications & Marketing will consult with the College President on messaging and communications strategies.

The College President or designee will communicate to appropriate family as needed on behalf of the college community. Communications may include such information as official procedures taken by the college, referrals to family members to other services and support offered by the College.

Residence Life

Missing Student

When staff become aware that a registered residence life student is potentially missing, staff should consult with Community Standards and Residence Life or Director for Campus Safety and Security Office staff as soon as possible. Staff shall take prudent action to determine if this is a valid missing person(s) case. Actions may include:

1. Call the contact number of the missing person on file (other than the home phone number.)
2. Perform welfare check on the resident (must be conducted by professional staff).
3. Speak with roommate(s), hall mate(s) or other known associates about the whereabouts of the potentially missing resident.

After performing the above, staff must report the actions taken and the outcomes of those actions to the Director for Community Standards and Residence Life. Once a missing student status is determined, the Director for Community Standards and Residence Life will notify the Director for Safety and Security and the Office of the Vice President for Student Services. Reports of an International missing person(s) will also immediately be reported to International Programs Office.

- Director for Safety and Security will notify Bellingham Police Department immediately when the initial report comes in, even if the individual has been missing less than 24 hours.
- Bellingham Police, following their missing person(s) protocol, will make the determination that the student is missing and initiate any needed investigation.
- When determined that the college has been unaware of a resident's whereabouts for 24 hours or more, Bellingham Police must be updated, as well as other college officials. The student's emergency contact, or custodial parent/guardian will be notified if information is available.

Student Death

Residence Life Student Death that does not occur in the Residence Life Apartments

When staff become aware that a residence life student is deceased, staff should immediately contact the Director for Community Standards and Residence Life or Director for Campus Safety and Security as soon as possible. The Director for Community Standards and Residence Life will perform the following:

- Inform the Office of the Vice President for Student Services and Director for Campus Safety and Security of the death. Reports of an International student death will also immediately be reported to the International Programs Office.
- Contact appropriate housing and residence life personnel and coordinate response to the student's death.
- Contact Counseling Services to assist other residents who may be affected by the student's death.
- Contact Human Resources to assist employees to get connected to resources and support who may be affected by the student's death.

- Coordinate with the Office of the Vice President for Student Services and Campus Safety and Security Office for the return of the deceased student's property to family, etc.
- In cases where the student is in International Homestay program, the Homestay Manager and Director for International Programs will perform the above tasks.

Residence Life Student Death that does occur in the Residence Life Apartments

- The staff member immediately involved will call Bellingham Police, Director for Campus Safety and Security, and the Director for Community Standards and Residence Life, who will come to the scene of the emergency.
- The Director for Community Standards and Residence Life will notify the office of the Vice President for Student Services, and the Director for International Programs (if the student is International).
- Caution must be taken not to disturb the scene until the circumstances of the death have been determined. Access to the scene should be limited to emergency response personnel only.
- Residence Life personnel should try to locate the roommates/apartment mates and inform them of the death. The Director for Community Standards and Residence Life will identify and implement alternate accommodations as needed for roommates and/or other affected residents.
- Bellingham Police will contact the appropriate emergency medical service to pronounce the death and transport the body and will seal the room and investigate the circumstances of the death.
- Director for Community Standards and Residence Life, the Vice President for Student Services (and other appropriate staff) along with police will decide how to contact next of kin to collect the deceased student's personal belongings once the next of kin has been officially notified by the appropriate agency. (When the property of the deceased student is removed from their room or apartment, the Resident Assistant, and roommate(s) should be present during this process to assist the family and to help identify the deceased student's property.)
- Director for Community Standards and Residence Life will notify the Counseling Services, who will come to campus if there are distressed students who need immediate attention. Friends, roommates, or observers of the incident may experience extreme emotional reactions and need to talk with someone. If a Faculty Counselor is not available, Residence Life personnel will contact the Care Crisis Line. Follow-Up: Residence Life personnel and the Counseling Center staff will work together to identify persons who need assistance in dealing with the death.

Registered Students

Death that occurs on campus

When staff become aware that there has been a death on campus, staff should immediately contact the police and the Campus Safety and Security Office. The Director for Campus Safety and Security will perform the following:

- Inform the Office of the Vice President for Student Services and the Community Standards and Residence Life Office of the death. Reports of an International student death will also immediately be reported to the International Programs Office.
- Coordinate response to the student's death in collaboration with the Director for Communication, the Office of the Vice President for Student Services and the Director for Community Standards and Residence Life.
- Contact Counseling Services to assist other students who may be affected by the death.
- Contact Human Resources to assist employees to get connected to resources and support who may be affected by the student's death.
- Coordinate with the Office of the Vice President for Student Services for the return of the deceased student's property to family, etc.
- Determine campus connections and contact appropriate staff.
- In cases where the student is in International Homestay program, the Homestay Manager and Director for International Programs will perform the above tasks.

Death that does not occur on campus

When staff become aware that there has been a death of a registered student off campus, staff should immediately contact the Campus Safety and Security Office. The Director for Campus Safety and Security will perform the following:

- Inform the Office of the Vice President for Student Services and the Community Standards and Residence Life Office of the death. Reports of an International student death will also immediately be reported to the International Programs Office.
- Coordinate response to the student's death in collaboration with, the Director for Communications, the Office of the Vice President for Student Services and the Director for Community Standards and Residence Life.
- Contact Counseling Services to assist other students who may be affected by the death.
- Contact Human Resources to assist employees to get connected to resources and support who may be affected by the student's death.
- Coordinate with the Office of the Vice President for Student Services for the return of the deceased student's property to family, etc.
- Determine campus connections and contact appropriate staff.
- In cases where the student is in International Homestay program, the Homestay Manager and Director for International Programs will perform the above tasks.

Campus Safety and Security Office

As the official liaison with police and federal and state law enforcement agencies, the Campus Safety and Security Office is a first point of contact from law enforcement for missing students or student death reporting.

Athletes

When informed of a missing student athlete or student athlete death that occurs during off campus sports games or during travel status, the WCC coach must contact Associate Director for Athletics and applicable local police in the event of an emergency. The Associate Director for Athletics will contact the Director for Student Life and Development and the Vice President for Student Services. The Director for Campus Safety and Security may be contacted as needed by the Vice President for Student Services

WCC Sponsored Off Campus Activities

When informed of a missing student or student death that occurs off campus during a WCC sponsored activity the WCC staff member in charge must contact applicable local police in the event of an emergency. The staff member should contact their immediate supervisor who will relay information to the appropriate administrators. Potential contacts are: the Vice President for Student Services, the Director for Campus Safety and Security, Human Resources, Vice President for Instruction.

International Programs

Missing Student

Immediately upon being informed that an international student is potentially missing, the staff member receiving that information will contact the Director for International Programs, Vice President for Instruction, the Vice President for Student Services, and the Director for Campus Safety and Security. Director for International Programs will determine if the student was living in residence life, homestay, or off-campus housing and coordinate next steps.

Next steps may include:

1. Call the contact number of the missing person on file (other than the home phone number.)
2. Perform welfare check on the student (must be conducted by professional staff).
3. Speak with roommate(s), homestay host, or other known associates about the whereabouts of the potentially missing student.

Once a missing student status is determined, the Director for International Programs will notify the Director for Campus Safety and Security, and the Office of the Vice President for Student Services.

- Director for Campus Safety and Security will notify Bellingham Police Department immediately when the initial report comes in, even if the individual has been potentially missing less than 24 hours.
 - Bellingham Police, following their missing person(s) protocol, will make the determination that the student is likely missing and initiate any needed investigation.
- Director for International Programs will assess the need to notify the Director for Communications.
- If the student is not located within 24 hours, next steps may include:
 - Notification to emergency contact, homestay host, and/or appropriate family
 - Notification to appropriate college officials
- Director for International Programs will assess the need for, and direct/coordinate, all contact and processes with home country embassy and parents/guardians who may need to travel to US

Student Death

In the event of the death of an international student, Director for International Programs and President's Cabinet shall be notified. International Programs staff and Director for Campus Safety and Security Office will collaborate on communication with family, embassy, and Director of Communication. If necessary, a translator will be hired to assist with communication to the student's family/next of kin.

International Programs will contact the student health insurance company to engage any repatriation of remains services. International Programs will also be responsible for assisting with the coordination of family member visits to the US to handle remains and any requested memorial services.

The Office of the Vice President for Student Services will coordinate efforts with the Counseling Services to provide support and resources for students of the campus community, as needed. Appropriate Vice President(s) and International Programs staff will work with the Executive Director for Human Resources to provide information on support services for staff and faculty.

Study Abroad and Student Exchange Programs

A study abroad student is any registered WCC student who enrolls in the college's study abroad options. These include short-term abroad programs, student exchanges, volunteer/service learning abroad, and quarter-long programs.

In the event of a missing student or student death abroad, the Director for International Programs will be notified, as well as the Vice President for Instruction, and the Director for Campus Safety and Security. In the event that the call is first received by the Director for Campus Safety and Security, they will immediately contact the Director for International Programs, and the Vice President for Instruction, as well as the Vice President for Student Services, on their cell/home phone listed on the emergency campus contact list.

If a missing student or student death is reported, the following steps shall be taken by International Programs staff:

- Gather information and create a log. Collect details pertaining to the reported missing/death such as the student's full name and address, date of birth and SID (if available), phone number of the caller, date of death (and cause if appropriate) or date last seen/missing, and a brief description of the incident.
- Contact the program provider's (host institution, or third-party provider) emergency liaison (if this is not the person who reported the incident) as appropriate to gather additional information.
- Call the US consulate or embassy in the country of the study abroad program. Contact numbers for overseas consulates/embassies can be found at <http://www.usembassy.gov/> As a backup, OSAC (Bureau of Diplomatic Security in the US State Department) can also be contacted at 571-345-2000 or after hours at 212-309-5056.

- The missing student's family may be contacted on a case-by-case basis after consultation with WCC administrators.

In all cases involving a missing or deceased student, the Director for Campus Safety and Security will make a decision regarding activation of an Emergency Operations Center or limited Incident Response Team to coordinate the larger campus response and recovery. This decision will be made in consultation with the Vice President for Student Services and/or Vice President for Instruction, the College President, and Public Information Officer (PIO).

Post Incident Administrative Protocol

Once notified of a student death, campus personnel in their respective areas will take the actions described below. All offices should remove the student's name from any mailing lists (paper or electronic) that it maintains and withhold any future correspondence addressed to the student. The following tasks will often happen simultaneously and are not listed in order of operations or importance.

Office of the President

The President shall be consulted on all major decisions and response strategy for missing students and student deaths. The Vice President for Student Services and the Vice President of Administrative Services will report to the President regarding process and status. Public records requests must go through the Office of the President.

Office of Administrative Services

The Office of Administrative Services shall be responsible for assessing and addressing any expenses, insurance, and risk management decisions.

Entry Services | Admissions and Registration

- Obtain official documentation (death notice, obituary, death certificate, etc.)
- Verify student status (i.e. international, running start, athlete, etc.)
- Notify the Office of the Vice President for Student Services.
- Withdraw the student from class(es) for the current quarter and any subsequent quarters.
- In the Unusual Action screen SM5003 enter "DC" in left column, staff name in the second highlighted column, and the current YRQ in the last column.
- Print Student Record screen SM5001.
- Notify the Business Office and provide them a copy of the SM5001 screen to process a refund and mail a check.
- Create a student file with copy of Student Record SM5001 and Student Email SM5016 screen.
- Delete address information from SM5001 and email address from SM5016.
- Enter two asterisk symbols in front of student name.

Business Office

- Immediately refund all tuition for current quarter and any future quarters.
- Remove all financial holds (library, housing, financial aid, child care, etc.)

Financial Aid

- Notify appropriate federal and state agencies of the student's death
- Cancel any aid awarded to the student for future terms
- Notify the Cashier's Office of any refunds due to the student's estate
- Coordinate with the Office of the Vice President for Student Services and Administrative Services on any outstanding tuition or debts to be written off.

Office of the Vice President for Student Services:

- Confirm the death by reviewing official documentation in Entry Services/Admissions and Registration (death notice, obituary, death certificate, etc.).
- Notify the Office of Instruction and/or the Vice President for Instruction.
- Check for graduation application and collaborate with the Vice President for Instruction and Registrar to determine if the awarding of a posthumous degree is warranted; if not, the application will be canceled.
- Notify college personnel as appropriate, if the student was affiliated with a particular program, activity, or office on campus.

Counseling Center

- Coordinate efforts with the Office of the Vice President for Student Services to provide support and resources for students of the campus community, as appropriate (e.g., outreach to friends and for family enrolled at the college and students taking courses in which the student was enrolled).

Running Start

- Coordinate efforts and communication with high school and district officials as appropriate.

Office of Instruction

- Notify instructors and division coordinators. Notification shall include information about counseling response/resources if appropriate. The division coordinator/or department chair may notify additional faculty as appropriate under the guidance of the Vice President for Instruction

Information Technology and eLearning

- Director for Information Technology shall disable the student's accounts, including email, online course tools, and computer labs.

Residence Life and Homestay

- Respond and document appropriately using Maxient.
- Reports of missing persons (including runaways) must be handled without delay, and be given priority over other RL duties

Human Resources

- Respond to any student employee related considerations.

Work directly with employees impacted and provide support and resources as needed.