

ALGONQUIN COLLEGE DIRECTIVE	NO. OF PAGES 4	DIRECTIVE NO. E36
	ORIGINATOR Director, Student Services	
	APPROVED BY Vice President Student Life & Human Resources	
TITLE COLLEGE RESPONSE TO THE DEATH OF A STUDENT	EFFECTIVE DATE 2001.10.24	REPLACES 1994.09.01

POLICY

Algonquin College recognizes the need to prescribe a set of administrative procedures to assist staff in dealing with the death of a student in a sensitive and expeditious manner which minimizes distress to the bereaved. It further recognizes that students and staff members may need assistance in dealing with their grieving.

Further, any death which occurs on College premises demands additional procedural responses including reference to police and legal authorities depending upon circumstance. The circumstances surrounding the student's death will determine the responses initiated by the College.

PROCEDURE

1. Reporting and Verification of Facts

Any member of the College Community who learns of the death of an Algonquin student is requested to report immediately all known information concerning the individual and the circumstances of the death to the Office of the Director, Student Services (Ottawa Campuses), or to the Office of the Dean on the Perth or Pembroke Campuses.

This office will immediately endeavour to verify all necessary details. Funeral arrangements, if known, are to be included on the form entitled "Notice Concerning the Death of a Student."

2. Communication of Information to Administrative and Academic Sectors

The Office of the Director, Student Services, or the Dean (on the Perth and Pembroke Campuses) will inform the following parties by providing them with the "Notice Concerning the Death of a Student" form which will contain all the details which can be immediately ascertained:

- President
- Vice President, Student Life & Human Resources
- Vice President, Academic
- Dean of Student's School or Institute
- Chair of Student's School or Institute
- Campus Team Leader of Tragic Event Response Team (T.E.R.T.)
- Registrar
- Public Relations
- Info Algonquin
- Students' Association or Student Council
- Health Services, Counselling, Centre for Student with Disabilities, Employment Services and Financial Aid on the students' campus
- Campus Student Newspaper
- Finance
- Peer Support Centre (Woodroffe and Pembroke)
- Protection Services
- Resource Centre
- AV/ Circulation
- Athletics Department
- Residence
- Food and Beverage

The Team Leader of the Tragic Event Response Team (T.E.R.T.) will determine, in cooperation with the Chair of the student's academic department, the best method of communicating the information to affected faculty members and students along with the offer of T.E.R.T. assistance. Students and academic staff will make any necessary determination regarding possible memorial gestures.

3. Response by the President's Office

The President's Office will prepare and send a letter of condolence to the bereaved family. Upon the death of a full-time student, they will also have the flag lowered.

4. Assistance to Grieving Classmates and Staff Members

The Campus Team Leader of the Tragic Event Response Team will determine the level of assistance and the nature of response which may be required. Efforts will be made to determine the effect of the student's death on the campus social network. Depending upon the circumstances of the student's death, the Team Leader may offer to arrange specialized sessions for students and/or staff to assist with the grieving process.

It is important to try to determine if the student had any siblings, a spouse, or significant others studying at any campus of the College. These individuals should be offered condolences, assistance, and a campus support system.

Where it is deemed appropriate that a College representative visit the family, this representative may be a member of the academic department who knew the student, or the Chair may wish to call upon the Director, Student Services, or a member of the T.E.R.T.

5. Closure of Academic Records and Refund Assessments

The Registrar will make a determination, in consultation with the academic department, as to whether it would be appropriate to award posthumously any academic credit or recognition. A determination will be made as to possible tuition refund and the academic file will be closed in the appropriate manner upon receipt of a death notice.

6. Administrative File Closures and Return of Property to College and to Family

These will be developed in a spirit of minimizing bureaucratic procedures and modifying rules and practices to suit the occasion. Files will be closed and the student's name will be removed from potential mailing lists to prevent any unnecessary future distress to family members.

Only those staff who have the skills, sensitivity, and authority to make the necessary decisions in such cases will be assigned to interact with bereaved family members or their representatives when this is essential. These staff will avail themselves of periodic professional development sessions to refine their skills in working with the bereaved.

The College will endeavour to make special efforts to assist in the tidying up of affairs. For example, offers could be made to go and pick up college books, equipment, or athletics uniforms; Resource Centre fines should be waived; etc. Offers should be made to return locker contents, art portfolios and other such items

to the family. If such arrangements are desired, and there is a need for advice or assistance, service departments may call upon the Office of the Director, Student Services, or the Dean on the Perth or Pembroke Campuses. Efforts should be made by all departments to keep to a minimum the number of interactions with the bereaved family and to try to make arrangements to have a College official do the "running around" on their behalf to obtain closure with a minimum of distress within the shortest possible length of time.

7. Deaths Reported Some Time After their Occurrence

Upon occasion, a family member arrives unexpectedly on campus to close up a deceased relative's records or to return books or borrowed equipment some time after the death has occurred. In these cases, this could be the first time that anyone at the College learns of the death. These persons should be referred to the Office of the Director, Student Services, or the Dean on the Perth or Pembroke Campuses.

8. Deaths Occurring on Campus

If a death should occur on campus, initial responsibility is to be taken by services such as Health Services or Protection Services, depending upon circumstances, nature and location of the death.

(original signed by)

Vice President
Student Life & Human Resources