

MEMORANDUM

TO Fort Wayne Senate

FROM: Matthew Perkins Coppola, Chair
Student Affairs Committee

DATE: 01/23/2026

SUBJ: Revision to the Protocol for University Response to the Death of an Enrolled Student

WHEREAS, SD 21-35, “Public Sharing Information about Deaths of Faculty and Staff at PFW,” passed by the Fort Wayne Senate on April 11, 2022, directed the Student Affairs Committee (SAC) to develop a set of recommendations for the campus regarding how to best handle the process for student deaths, and

WHEREAS, the SAC reviewed the “Protocol for Response to the Death of a Student” and in SD 22-10 recommended that the university continue to follow the “Protocol for Response to the Death of a Student” unchanged unless otherwise directed by the Purdue University President, Purdue Board, PFW Chancellor, or the PFW Policy Committee; and

WHEREAS, also in SD 22-10 the SAC resolved where the policy document refers to the “Dean of Students,” the Committee suggests this refers to the Director of the Office of Student Conduct and Care and where the document refers to the “Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs,” this refers to the “Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management and the Student Experience,” and

WHEREAS, in Spring 2025 and January 2026, the SAC felt the need to review and revise the “Protocol for Response to the Death of a Student” to include additional units on campus and clarify dissemination of information.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Senate adopt the following revised version of the “Protocol for Response to the Death of a Student.”

Approved

A. Blackmon

B. Bienz

J. Girardot

A. Nasr

A. Perkins

M. Perkins Coppola

K. Stultz-Dessent

K. Surface

M. Weemes

Opposed

None

Abstention

None

Absent

S. Rivzi

Non-Voting

None

**Purdue University Fort Wayne
Protocol for Response to the Death of a Student**

Responsible Executive: Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management & the Student Experience

Responsible Office: Office of Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management & the Student Experience

Date Issued: January 2026

Date last Revised: 1/2020

CONTACTS

Title/Office	Telephone	Email/Webpage
Office of Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management & the Student Experience	260-481-6190	vsca@pfw.edu https://www.pfw.edu/enrollment-management-and-student-experience/about
Executive Director of Student Conduct & CARE	260-481-6604	scc@pfw.edu

STATEMENT OF CAMPUS POLICY

While this Procedure and Protocol provide a guide for the response to the death of a student, it recognizes that each situation is unique and may require slight variations in order to ensure sensitive, supportive, and thorough institutional action.

PURPOSE STATEMENT OF CAMPUS POLICY

The Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management & the Student Experience will make initial contact with the student's family on behalf of the institution. Others should hold off being in touch with the family until they are sure that the VC-ESME has made the initial contact.

University Police have procedures in place for responding and reporting incidents involving student deaths. Those procedures supersede this Guidance/Protocol when the University Police is the law enforcement agency responding to a situation involving the death of a student.

The Executive Director of Student Conduct & CARE will work with the Center for Student Counseling and other appropriate campus partners to help ensure that counseling support is available to students affected by the death.

EXCLUSIONS: None

RELATED DOCUMENTS, FORMS, AND TOOLS

Procedure for Handling a Deceased Student's File

Policy for Posthumous Degree Requests

Protocol for Response to the Death of a Student

HISTORY AND UPDATES

Revised 1/2026

Revised 1/2020

Revised 1/2017

Revised 11/24/08

Revised 1/6/09

Purdue Fort Wayne Office of the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management & the Student Experience Protocol for Response to the Death of a Student

While this protocol provides a guide response to word of the death of a student, it is recognized that each situation is unique and may require slight variations in order to assure sensitive, supportive, and thorough institutional action.

When any university office or person is informed of the death of a student, they shall immediately notify the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management & the Student Experience.

All follow-up activities and communication will be coordinated by the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management & the Student Experience and the Office of Student Conduct & CARE.

The Office of the Registrar will implement their Procedures for Handling Deceased Students Files.

University Police have procedures in place for responding to and reporting incidents involving students. Those procedures supersede this protocol when the University Police is the law enforcement agency responding to situation involving the death of a student.

Please note: FERPA applies until the death is verified.

The Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management and the Student Experience will make initial contact with the student's family on behalf of the institution. Others should hold off being in touch with the family until they are sure that the VC-ESME has made the initial contact.

The Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management and the Student Experience will notify the following, and each office will:

- Chancellor
- Other Vice Chancellors (as needed)
- Executive Director of Office of Student Conduct and Care
- Communications & Marketing
- International Education (if an international student)
- Athletics (if a student athlete)
- Student Housing (if student was a resident)
 - Restrict access to student's room and personal effects- Coordinate access to the student's room and property, planning for the return of student's property to their family.
 - Work with the student's roommate(s) to ensure their well-being and connect them to resources as appropriate and necessary.
 - Coordinate the relocation of roommates/suitemates to another location if requested.
 - Coordinate with the Bursar to ensure the allowable refunds of housing and meal plans fees are processed appropriately.
- Registrar
 - Update the student's official records.
 - Mark the local and permanent mailing addresses
 - Obtain external official verification (obituary, news article, death certificate, etc.) of the student's death for inclusion with the academic record.
 - Process a withdrawal, utilizing the date of death as the date of withdrawal.
 - Audit the deceased student's academic record to ensure the conservation of complete and accurate records and electronic data base elements (e.g., admission data, grades, registration

activity, etc.) such that the information is intact and viewable in the student information system and optical imaging system. All semester, course, grade, and other academic notations will remain on the student's record.

- Review the deceased Student's record for posthumous degree qualification
- Financial Aid
 - Review loans, scholarships, tuition, and fee assessments.
- Bursar
 - Review the student's account for any outstanding balances
 - Remove student(s) from any communications regarding payment reminders, deadlines, etc.
- Chief of Police
- Information Technology Services
 - Disable or deactivate student accounts, remove student from any email listserv's.
- Human Resources
 - Update employment records

5. Once notified by the Vice Chancellor for EMSE, the Executive Director of Office of Student Conduct and Care will inform the following of the death of the student and offer information on how students, faculty and staff affected by the student's death can access support:

- Faculty teaching courses in which the student was currently enrolled
- Student's academic advisor(s)
- Chair of the student's major department
- Dean of the student's major college
- Center for Student Counseling
 - Coordinate with the Executive Director of Student Conduct & CARE to ensure that psychological, counseling, and emotional support is provided to any groups that have been directly impacted as appropriate and/or requested.
 - Amend the student's file and code the record as deceased.
- University Housing (if the student was a resident)
- Other relevant offices at the discretion of the executive director

Purdue Fort Wayne Office of the Registrar
PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING A DECEASED STUDENT'S FILE

Information on the death of a student should be reported to the Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management & the Student Experience if the student is displayed as active in PFW Banner.

Obtain a death notice (obituary) from the newspaper or family member, which reflects a deceased date. A copy of the "Certificate of Death" is also acceptable documentation.

In PFW Banner, check if the student is registered in current or future semesters. If registered, drop the student at the 100% refund rate from all classes.

In PFW Banner, change the student's currently active permanent address to 2101 East Coliseum Blvd and the phone number to the Registrar's Office number (481-6815). This will divert any mailings or phone calls made inadvertently by the university. Mark the student "deceased" and enter a deceased date. Save all changes.

PWL Banner: Make appropriate updates in PWL Banner for both active and inactive students.

IU PeopleSoft: No action necessary if student is registered for the current semester. BIO/DEMO file process will update record. However, if the student is not registered for the current semester, access the "Decedent Data" screen in PS, enter the ID number and deceased date. This will automatically finalize the IU student record. On the Bio/Demo (Student) Data/Addresses screen, change the address and phone number to the PFW address/phone as described in step 3 above.

Check the Kettler file room to ascertain if the student has a paper file on record. If so, pull the student's file folder. In RED ink mark the outside of the folder as "DECEASED" and list the date of death. Place the death notice in the folder and staple the folder shut. Re-file the folder in the file room.

If the student is displayed as active on PFW Banner, notify the following campus offices:

Admissions: admsops@pfw.edu

CRM Team: sis_crm@pfw.edu (update SLATE)

Note: If notification of a deceased student is received during a break between terms, staff will be notified at the beginning of the next term.

Policy for Posthumous Degree Requests

Requests or recommendations for the awarding of posthumous degrees will be directed to the Office of Academic Affairs. That office will be responsible for shepherding consideration of such requests.

Response to requests for the awarding of posthumous degrees for students who had been enrolled in a Purdue degree program shall follow the Purdue University Policy and Procedures for Awarding Posthumous Degrees.

Response to requests for the awarding of posthumous degrees for students who have been enrolled in an Indiana University degree program (teach out program) at Purdue University Fort Wayne will be guided by the applicable Indiana University policy and procedures. At the current time, discretion regarding the awarding of posthumous degrees rests with individual campuses within the Indiana University system.

Requirements for Awarding Posthumous Degrees

- A. The awarding of a posthumous degree by Purdue University requires that the deceased student will have completed:
 - a. 85% of credit hour requirements; and
 - b. Most of the requirements of the major.
 - c. For awarding of a posthumous degree requiring a thesis, the following additional provisions will apply: The student must have completed the research to the extent that a thesis or one or more articles in lieu of a thesis can be prepared.
 - d. The advisory committee must approve the research and results, including a thesis or article(s), and recommend the granting of the degree.

Process for Approving Posthumous Degrees

- A. The awarding of a posthumous degree requires the following approvals:
 - a. Recommendation from department faculty, signature from chair or program director
 - b. Endorsement by the dean of the school
 - c. Endorsement by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
 - d. The Chancellor will submit Purdue degree requests to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs for transmittal to the President
 - e. The names of the candidates approved by the President will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for final action
 - f. The decision as to whether or not an Indiana University degree is to be awarded (and if an exception to criteria or procedures is to be granted) shall be vested with the Chancellor of Purdue University Fort Wayne

Academic ceremonies will be notified of any decision to award a posthumous degree and will request that the registrar issue a diploma and keep the student's record active until the appropriate academic year commencement has concluded.

Academic ceremonies will, unless otherwise requested by the family, arrange for the presentation of the diploma in a private ceremony to include the student's family, the department head/program director, the dean, the vice chancellor for academic affairs, the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management & the Student Experience, and the Chancellor. The Chancellor will present the diploma to the family. The registrar will arrange for the record to be updated after the ceremony. Academic ceremonies will serve as the repository for all files on degrees awarded posthumously.