

**Protocol for Announcing the Deaths of Currently Employed Faculty and Staff**  
**Approved January 6, 2010; Revised July 1, 2011**

Over the years, our Lehigh community has mourned the deaths of staff members and faculty who have passed away while actively employed with us. Although our current localized approach to sharing information about the death and services for the deceased has generally been effective, there have been some instances where colleagues of the deceased were not aware of the death and therefore not able to express their condolences in a timely manner or to attend services. The Provost and the Vice President for Finance and Administration asked the Deputy Provost for Faculty Affairs and the Associate Vice President for Human Resources to recommend a University protocol to be followed to assure consistent and timely sharing of information when a currently employed faculty or staff member dies.<sup>1</sup> The Council for Equity and Community also suggested that a protocol for such announcements be considered and developed.

The protocol was reviewed by the Employee Relations Advisory Committee, the Council of Deans, and the Council on Equity and Community and their suggestions were incorporated into the protocol. On January 6, 2010, the University's senior officers reviewed and approved this protocol.

**Protocol**

The primary modification to current practices would be that the Provost's Office (for a faculty member's death) or Human Resources (for a staff member's death) would send an announcement about the death including any information regarding services to all faculty (including all pre-tenure and tenured faculty, professors of practice, lecturers, adjuncts and visiting faculty) and staff (including all senior officers, classified staff and research scientists, research engineers, research associates and research interns). A simple template that provides the facts—"We are sorry to inform you that..." and provides the information about the services, with perhaps a link to a website if available, is suggested.

For Faculty (All pre-tenure and tenured faculty, professors of practice, lecturers, adjuncts and visiting faculty)

- The department chair or other department contact confirms with the deceased's family that an announcement regarding the faculty member's death may be shared with the larger community and verifies what information about services may be shared.
- The department chair informs the department faculty and staff.
- The academic department informs the President's, Provost's, and Dean's Office.
- The President's Office sends flowers to the immediate family under the current practice.
- Department members may inform others as they wish (Lehigh staff, faculty and students who knew or worked with the deceased).
- The Provost's Office sends a message to all faculty and staff regarding the death and provides information regarding services.

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<sup>1</sup> It is expected that current practices for announcing the deaths of retirees will continue.

- In accordance with current practice, a deceased full-time faculty member is memorialized at a subsequent faculty meeting.
- The Provost's Office, in consultation with University Communications, writes an article about the deceased faculty member for inclusion in the next issue of the publication *In The Spotlight*. (This quarterly HR publication features information on reward and recognition programs, lists faculty and staff who have reached service milestones and shares information about new staff, staff who have transitioned to new positions and staff who have passed away.)
- The program booklet for the annual Appreciation Dinner for Faculty and Staff held in April will list the names of any actively employed faculty who died during the academic year.

For Staff (All classified staff, senior officers, research scientists, research engineers, research associates, research interns)

- The supervisor or department head confirms with the deceased's family that an announcement regarding the staff member's death may be shared with the larger community and verifies what information about services may be shared.
- The supervisor or department head informs the department faculty and staff.
- The department head informs Human Resources (HR).
- HR informs the President's Office.
- The President's Office sends flowers to the immediate family under the current practice.
- Department members may inform others as they wish (Lehigh staff, faculty and students who knew or worked with the deceased).
- HR sends a message to all faculty and staff regarding the death and provides information regarding services.
- Human Resources, in consultation with University Communications, writes an article about the deceased staff member for inclusion in the next issue of the publication *In The Spotlight*. (This quarterly HR publication features information on reward and recognition programs, lists faculty and staff who have reached service milestones and shares information about new staff, staff who have transitioned to new positions and staff who have passed away.)
- The program booklet for the annual Appreciation Dinner for Faculty and Staff held in April will list the names of any actively employed staff members who died during the academic year.

It is possible that all individuals in the deceased faculty or staff member's office or department may wish to attend the funeral or memorial service for the employee. In those cases, the department may need to make alternative staffing arrangements for that date, or, if approved by the responsible Vice President or Dean, close for the event. Departments or offices that will be closed during normal business hours should notify the campus via the Lehigh Daily News and Staff News Digest.