

# LSU | Staff Senate

LSU Staff Senate Resolution No. 18-01

## Implementation of University Protocol following the Death of an LSU Employee

*Sponsored by: Senators R. Henry, A. Thibodeaux, A. Cherry, A. Salvadras, B. Corbitt, D. Adedeji, J. Henry, J. Clemmons, K. Kucharchuk, N. Lemoine, T. Millican, B. Vermiere*

Whereas, Louisiana State University does not currently have a standard University-wide protocol available to guide campus departments through the appropriate actions following the death of an employee.

Whereas, the loss of an employee can be devastating to families and work colleagues. A standard protocol or checklist could easily guide departments through the necessary administrative actions and communications to ensure everything is handled in a sensitive, appropriate, and highly coordinated manner.

Whereas, the LSU Strategic Plan 2025 recognizes the importance of creating a community in which all faculty and staff are valued for their contributions in their respective roles. This should not only include creating a culture of support for current employees following the death of a colleague, but should also recognize the contribution of the deceased employee, which can provide comfort to the loved ones of the deceased.

Whereas, Louisiana State University does have a similar process in place following the death of a student through Student Advocacy and Accountability.

Whereas universities, such as University of North Carolina at Charlotte, University of Illinois at Chicago, Utah Valley University, and others, have similar protocol and resources in place.

Therefore, be it resolved that the LSU Staff Senate hereby request that the LSU Administration, together with adequate staff representation, establish an appropriate protocol and resources following the death of an LSU employee.

Therefore, be it further resolved, that a copy of this resolution will be sent to F. King Alexander, LSU President; Stacia Haynie, Interim Executive Vice President and Provost; Daniel T. Layzell, Vice President for Finance and Administration/CFO; Gaston Reinoso and Mimi Singer Lee, Assistant Vice Presidents of Human Resource Management; Dereck J. Rovaris, Sr., Vice Provost & Chief Diversity Officer; Kenneth McMillin, President of the Faculty Senate; and Stewart Lockett, President of the Student Government; and the LSU Staff Community via broadcast email.

### **Certification of Resolution:**

I certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the LSU Staff Senate at a properly-noticed, open meeting held on the 20th day of June, 2018, at which a quorum was present.

  
Michelle Lowery  
Staff Senate President

7/9/18  
Date

## Proposed Protocol for Louisiana State University

This guide is intended to serve as a resource that outlines the actions to be taken when an employee passes away with three primary considerations in mind.

First, the needs of the employee's loved ones and co-workers are the principle concern. They must receive information and assistance in a respectful, timely manner with good judgment and sensitivity used at all times.

Second, applicable Federal and State laws, as well as required State policies and procedures, must be followed. Confidential information must be safeguarded and caution must be taken not to reveal confidential information to anyone who is not legally entitled to it.

Third, on-going communication and status updates among campus collaborating units is essential.

### Administrative Process

When the death of an LSU employee is reported to the department, a representative from the department should immediately contact the Human Resource Management office to initiate the necessary administrative process. A representative from the department should also be selected to serve as the point of contact for the family of the deceased employee leading to the funeral/memorial services.

Once an employee death has been verified, the Human Resource Management office sends an official death notification via email to the following departments:

- University Leadership (President's Office, Academic Affairs, Finance & Administration)
- Department/College Leadership of the Employee
- Accounting Services & Payroll (regarding outstanding tasks, turn off LaCarte Card, paycheck, tax forms)
- HRM (EAP, workday access, benefits, leave)
- ITS (regarding email and voicemail access as well as any other permissions)
- LSU Parking (regarding parking access and ensure solicitations are turned off)
- Auxiliary Services (regarding Tiger Card access)
- Financial Aid (Bursar); Registrar (in case the employee is registered for classes)
- Alumni Association, LSU Foundation, TAF (to ensure solicitations are turned off)
- Strategic Communication (for potential media inquiries, removal of information from website, and ensure mailings are stopped)
- LSU Mental Health & Student Advocacy & Accountability (to provide support for any students affected)
- Campus Affiliations (i.e. Staff Senate, Faculty Senate)

The official death notification would turn off the 89 number to eliminate potential fraud.

The Human Resource Management office would become the sole point of contact for the family of the deceased after the funeral/memorial service.

### Communications

A representative from the department should notify the Human Resource Management office to initiate the necessary administrative process. Department leadership should inform department employees, indicating additional details will be provided when available. *(Please review information under Affected Employee & Student Support to assist with communications to the department.)*

A representative from the department should be selected to serve as the sole point of contact for the family, leading up to the funeral/memorial service. This sole point of contact will alleviate excessive communications while the family grieves immediately after the employee's death. The representative should be sensitive to the needs and wishes of the family and ask for a contact person that can provide funeral/memorial service details when known.

In all cases, the next of kin should receive a letter from the Office of the President to offer condolences on behalf of the University and appropriately recognize the employee's contribution to the University.

In cases of employees with 10 or more years of service in the LSU system, an LSU flag should be flown in honor of the deceased employee. The department representative coordinates timing with the family and University departments (i.e. LSUPD and LSU Facility Services). Traditionally, the flag is donated by LSUPD and it is flown for 24 hours. The flag is folded and placed in an engraved case with the name and date it was flown in the employee's honor, funded by the Office of the President.

Following the funeral/memorial service, the next of kin should be contacted by the Human Resource Management office to answer questions and assess any needs. The department and HRM can work together on those needs, such as assistance moving personal items from office space, particularly if family are out of state or there are extenuating circumstances.

### **Affected Employee & Student Support**

LSU Mental Health is notified if the loss or circumstances of the loss impacts a large number of people on campus. Post-Interventions for affected students are organized and set up through the Assistant Dean and Associate Director of Advocacy & Accountability via the Director of LSU Mental Health. The department leadership or affected employees can request assistance from Human Resource Management and the Employee Assistance Program to provide grief counseling and other resources as needed.

Important things to consider:

- While it is important that employees are notified promptly of a co-worker's death, it is also important that the supervisor carefully plan what to say and how to deliver the information.
- It is reasonable to expect that many, if not all, employees who worked with the deceased will be unable to complete their work the day of the announcement. This reaction should be anticipated and arrangements should be made, in consultation with HRM, to allow those who need time off to receive it. HRM and the supervisor should work together to account for any time off taken and type of leave to be utilized.
- It is important that those who desire to attend funeral/memorial services be allowed to do so. This may require a department-wide closedown for a period of time, typically no longer than a morning or afternoon. The department leader should arrange for office coverage, if this is the case.
- The supervisor should mention the Employee Assistance Program as an option for employees in the days following their co-worker's death. Supervisors should be sensitive to the fact that many co-workers may have known the deceased on a personal level, and that their grief may affect their behavior and performance for a temporary period.
- In most cases, the employee will have personal belongings at work. It may be difficult for co-workers to see these items removed. Supervisors should make arrangements for a member of

the employee's family to collect those items after a respectable amount of time has passed.  
Arrange to have boxes and packing materials available.

- Replacing the deceased too quickly may make co-workers feel that the University did not value the contributions the deceased made. If possible, the department should consider having the position filled on a temporary basis or leave the position unfilled temporarily.