



## Nicholls State University Policy & Procedure

### PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO THE DEATH OF A FACULTY MEMBER, STAFF MEMBER, OR RETIREE

The death of a faculty member, staff member, or retiree requires responses from a number of University offices to assure that the deceased employee's interest, and those of his or her family and loved ones, are respected and protected.

Any person in the Nicholls community who initially learns of the death of a faculty member, staff member, or retiree should notify the Office of Human Resources. The Director of Human Resources, or a designated representative of Human Resources, upon receipt of such notification will be responsible for ensuring that the following procedures are followed.

#### **Death of a NSU employee away from work:**

1. The Office of Human Resources will notify the President's Office, the employee's department head, and the Office of University Relations of the death of a faculty or staff member.
2. The Office of University Relations will request that the University Police Department lower the flag as appropriate.
3. The Office of University Relations will prepare and disseminate a notice to the Nicholls community.
4. The Office of Human Resources will work with the employee's supervisor to secure the employee's personal belongings.
5. Within a reasonable period of time, an H.R. representative will contact the family to express condolences on behalf of the University and to schedule a meeting at a time convenient to the family. In this meeting the family will be informed of the employee's life insurance benefits, retirement benefits, etc. Also, arrangements will be made for the return of personal belongings, and collection of University property.



## **Death of a NSU employee while at work:**

Death notification is acknowledged to be one of the most difficult tasks faced by professionals. Learning of the death of a loved one often is the most traumatic event in a person's life. The moment of notification is one that most people remember vividly for the rest of their life – with pain and sometimes anger. Notification is an important duty. Besides being sensitive, university representatives have to be prepared in case a survivor goes into shock and requires emergency medical treatment. Notification should be done in person, in pairs whenever possible, in plain language and with compassion.

In the event that a faculty or staff member dies while at work, the University should take the responsibility to notify the next of kin, and provide as much assistance as possible. This process again requires responses from a number of University offices to assure that the deceased employee's interests, and those of his or her family and loved ones, are respected and protected.

With this in mind, the following procedure should be followed upon the death of a faculty or staff member while at work:

1. Any person in the University community who initially learns of the death of a faculty or staff member should notify the University Police Department.
2. University Police will proceed to the scene, and immediately notify the Office of Human Resources.
3. The Office of Human Resources will notify the President's Office, the employee's department head, and the Office of University Relations of the death of a faculty or staff member.
4. The Office of Human Resources will contact/notify any other department(s) on campus that need to know. For example, if the death appears to be work-related, then the Safety Department would be notified.
5. Provide notification to the next of kin as soon as possible, but not before taking these necessary steps: (Coordinated by the Office of Human Resources with necessary departments).
  - a. Confirm the identity of the deceased.
  - b. Gather details about the circumstances surrounding the death.



- c. Determine any health considerations of the person(s) to be notified.
  - d. Determine if assistance from the clergy, friends or neighbors, a counselor from the University Counseling Center, a nurse or medical professional from University Health Services, is needed.
  - e. Determine which personnel will take part in the notification, and determine if there are personnel who should not take part in the notification.
  - f. Determine if other persons are likely to be present at the notification.
6. **Once the next of kin has been notified**, the Office of University Relations will request that the University Police Department lower the flag as appropriate.
  7. The Office of University Relations will prepare and disseminate a notice to the Nicholls community.
  8. Within a reasonable period of time, an H.R. representative will contact the family to express condolences on behalf of the University and to schedule a meeting at a time convenient to the family. In this meeting the family will be informed of the employee's life insurance benefits, retirement benefits, etc. Also, arrangements will be made for the return of personal belongings, and collection of University property.

### **Death of a NSU retiree:**

1. Any member of the Nicholls Community who learns of the death of a NSU retiree should notify the Office of Human Resources.
2. The Office of Human Resources will notify the President's Office and the Office of University Relations.
3. The Office of University Relations will request that the University Police Department lower the flag as appropriate.
4. The Office of University Relations will prepare and disseminate a notice to the Nicholls community.
5. Within a reasonable period of time, an H.R. representative will contact the family to express condolences on behalf of the University and to schedule a meeting at a time convenient to the family.
6. The meeting will allow for completion of all necessary insurance claim forms and/or to transfer of health insurance coverage, if



applicable. If a meeting is not feasible, the appropriate paperwork will be mailed to the surviving spouse/beneficiary with specific instructions for completion.

NOTE: In all cases please refer to the policy on the appropriateness of lowering of the flag(s).