

## Communicating Death Announcements

### Policy

**Purpose:** The University sends death announcements as part of our shared dedication, as part of the University Purpose, to living in close community enlightened by the Christian faith and to serving God and humanity. When a life ends, the University aims to foster an environment of appropriate emotional support.

**Scope:** Death announcements are generally sent out about students, employees, and former employees.

**Statement:** When an enrolled student (undergraduate or graduate) or an employee passes away, the University sends a brief email announcement to all students and employees, and possibly also to former employees. When a former employee passes away, the University sends a brief email announcement to all employees and former employees, and possibly also to students. (See procedures below.)

**Exceptions:** Exceptions are considered on a case-by-case basis by the appropriate division head (vice-chancellor, deans, or provost).

*Exceptions might include:*

- Employees who have recently transitioned away from the University to work elsewhere but who are still widely known across the institution.
- The passing of a recent graduate who is still widely known on campus and by fellow students.
- The passing of former vice-chancellors, provosts, deans, or regents.

### *Audiences*

In cases of exceptions sending targeted messages to specific individuals or groups is often the most appropriate course of action.

For example, when a staff retiree from 20 years ago passes away or when a family member of an employee passes away, it may be appropriate, responsive, and necessary to send a notice to a smaller collection of individuals who have a reason to know. Careful attention should be paid to which individuals warrant such a communication and such decisions should be made by those closest to the situation and work environment. Not every situation will warrant broad communication to the entire University community and not every person's family members will want the information to be communicated broadly.

# Death Announcements

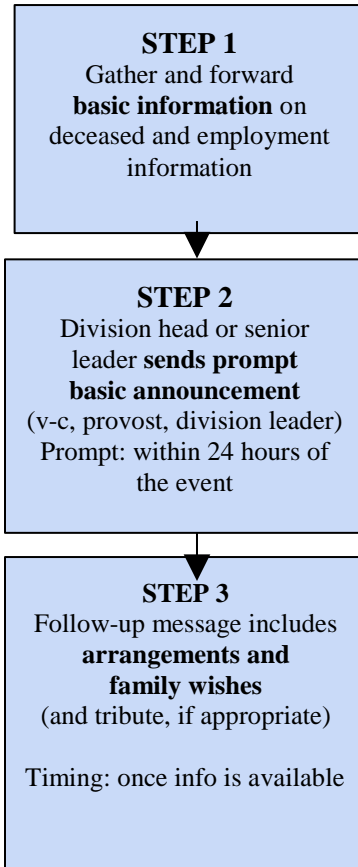
## Procedures and Communication Templates

**Step 1:** Identify basic information: Who passed away and what happened?.If funeral arrangements or family’s wishes are available, those should be identified as well. Usually, arrangement details are managed in subsequent messages unless they are readily available.

**Step 2:** The appropriate senior staff or division head will send a brief announcement to the cstudent, tstudent, facultystaff, and formeremployees email distribution lists, as described in the policy, as promptly as possible, typically within 24 hours of the event, using the template provided.

The message should include a salutation from an appropriate senior staff member.

- College student announcements should come from the Dean of Students (or Dean of the College).
- School of Theology or School of Letters students should be announced by the dean or director for those respective programs.
- Faculty announcements should come from the appropriate dean.
- Employee announcements should come from the appropriate division head.



### Step 2 Template—*basic information*

Dear University Community,

It is with sadness that I report the death of our friend and colleague, (name), (title/position/role). (name) served the University for (number) years.

*If arrangements are known:*

The funeral service will be held on (date/time) at (location).

Or

Additional arrangements will be at the (funeral provider) in (location).

*If family’s wishes are known:*

At this time the family requests (describe desired action to be taken regarding prayers, flowers, or donations).

Please keep (name’s) family and close colleagues in your thoughts and prayers.

Sincerely,

(name of senior staff member)

(title of senior staff member)

(Closing Scripture or quotation, if appropriate. See possibilities below.)

**Step 3** (if necessary): Communicate remaining details regarding arrangements, services, family wishes, and/or tributes.

Step 3 Template—*further details*

Dear University Community,

Arrangements have now been made for remembering (name). The burial will occur on (day and date) at (time) in (facility and city, state, if not in Sewanee).

*If applicable*

In lieu of flowers, the family recommends that donations be made in (name's) name to (name of fund, foundation, cause).

*If a funeral provider offers a webpage for remembrances or comments*

Please visit the (funeral provider's) website for more information and to offer your prayers and remembrances.

*If faculty or academic administrator, provide instructions on regalia and seating arrangements.*

Faculty will sit in the congregation without regalia. There will be a reception in (location) following.

*When a tribute/remembrance is available.*

Attached to this announcement is a remembrance written by (name). I hope that you will find some familiarity, gladness, and comfort from its words.

Sincerely,

(name of senior staff member)

(title of senior staff member)

*Consider appropriate closing Scripture or literary offering, if desirable. See below.*

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### **Scripture options for closings (if appropriate)**

**Psalm 46** God is our hope and strength, a very present help in trouble.

**2 Corinthians 4:16-5:9** We do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

**John 14:1-6** Jesus said to his disciples, “ Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.”

## **Literary options for closings (if appropriate)**

### **Those we love remain with us**

by Mary Alice Ramish

Those we love remain with us for love itself lives on, and cherished memories never fade because a loved one's gone. Those we love can never be more than a thought apart, for as long as there is memory, they'll live on in the heart.

### **What we have once enjoyed**

by Helen Keller

What we have once enjoyed we can never lose. All that we love deeply becomes a part of us.

### **Do not Stand at My Grave and Weep**

by Mary Elizabeth Frye

Do not stand at my grave and weep;  
I am not there, I do not sleep.  
I am a thousand winds that blow.  
I am the diamond glints on snow.  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.  
I am the gentle autumn rain.  
When you awaken in the morning's hush  
I am the swift uplifting rush  
Of quiet birds in circled flight.  
I am the soft stars that shine at night.  
Do not stand at my grave and cry;  
I am not there, I did not die.

### **The Comfort and Sweetness of Peace**

by Helen Steiner Rice

After the clouds, the sunshine,  
after the winter, the spring,  
after the shower, the rainbow,  
for life is a changeable thing.  
After the night, the morning,  
bidding all darkness cease,  
after life's cares and sorrows,  
the comfort and sweetness of peace.

### **A Clear Midnight**

by Walt Whitman

This is thy hour O Soul, thy flight into the wordless,  
Away from books, away from art, the day erased, the lesson done,  
Thee fully forth emerging, silent, gazing, pondering the themes thou lovest best.  
Night, sleep and the stars.

**Irish Blessing**  
unknown author

May the road rise to meet you.  
May the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face,  
And the rains fall soft upon your fields.  
Until we meet again,

March 20, 2017