



Policy No. 1-22

Subject: Response to Loss in the VHCC Community

Last Revised: 03/21/2023

Historical Status: 03/21/2023; 03/15/2018

Division	Policy Manager	Administrative Supervisor	Reference
General Administration	Vice President of Institutional Advancement	Vice President of Institutional Advancement	N/A

I. POLICY

It is the policy of Virginia Highlands Community College (VHCC) to respond to personal tragedies affecting members of the college community including students, employees, board members, and others with close college affiliation.

II. PERTINENT INFORMATION

A. Respectful, timely, and caring communication and action in the event of the death of an individual connected to the College is reflective of and central to the culture of VHCC. These individuals may include current students or alumni, current/former faculty or staff members, current/former College or Foundation Board members, or long-time donors to the College. Similar processes may apply in the passing of an immediate family member of a current/former faculty or staff members, current/former College or Foundation Board members, or long-time donors to the College.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. College Community: current students or alumni, current/former faculty or staff members, current/former College or Foundation Board members, or long-time donors to the College.
- B. Immediate Family: parents, siblings, spouse, children, or other close relatives, as appropriate.

IV. GENERAL GUIDELINES

A. The procedure outlined in Appendix VII offers guidelines for communication and other activities, though every instance may be different. One factor to consider, for example, is the relationship of the individual to the College community (i.e. a current or recent employee versus an employee of several decades ago). Above all else, the wishes of the family of the deceased should be paramount in the communication around a death. If there is a death on campus, additional policies

and procedures may need to be consulted.

V. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

- A. The College President has the authority and delegates to the Vice President of Institutional Advancement the responsibility to establish procedures to meet the requirements of this policy.

APPENDIX

VI. RELATED STANDARDS, LEGAL CITATIONS, OR SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- A. As noted by FERPA and AACRAO (American Association of Collegiate Registrar and Admissions Officers), the privacy interests of the individual are no longer in effect with the student's death. FERPA rights and the rights of privacy regarding the student's academic record end at death. As a matter of institutional policy, the following are the procedures regulating under what conditions the student's academic information should be disclosed to survivors or other third parties:
1. The College continues to treat the academic records of the deceased student the same as a living student in that only directory information may be release to third parties. The College requires documents that certify power of attorney or executor/executrix authorization to allow disclosure of information (other than directory) to survivors or other third parties. Either the parents or next of kin, with proper documentation, are considered the owner of the student's academic records.
 2. Unless authorized by the executor/executrix, parent, or next of kin the College does not permit release of the deceased student's educational record information for a period of 10 years after death.

VII. OPERATING REQUIREMENTS

- A. The Office of Institutional Advancement will coordinate the College's response among the VHCC divisions and departments as appropriate, including but not limited to the Office of the President, Marketing and Communications, Student Services, Instruction, and/or Human Resources.