

**STATEMENT 4.1.0 – DEATH OF A MEDICAL STUDENT**  
Undergraduate Medical Education

Approved by:	Curriculum Committee
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**I. PURPOSE**

In the event of a learner death or tragic event affecting the learner population in the Doctor of Medicine program (the Program) or Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry in Western University, the following document will serve as a guide for action.

This information is meant as a guideline, acknowledging that in many cases the protocol may be unique due to circumstances of the event.

**II. STATEMENT**

The following will serve as guidelines for leaders in the Program.

In all cases, Western University Protocol will be followed in conjunction with specific actions necessary for the community at Schulich. The *Student Death Response Protocol* is listed as an additional resource on this web page.

- a. Notification of a learner death may come to Schulich Medicine from a variety of sources. In order to comply with the Western University's Student Death Response Protocol, Campus Police should be informed to allow them to verify the information regarding the death and inform stakeholders as per Campus Police General Orders.

*NOTE: See Western's Student Death Response Protocol for more information.*

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies\\_procedures/section3/mapp36.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section3/mapp36.pdf)

- b. One communications coordinator will be appointed within Schulich Medicine (*Schulich Coordinator*) who will work within the faculty as well as with Western University. The name and contact information of the Schulich Coordinator should be delivered to the Vice-Provost of Academic Programs and Students to work alongside the main campus identified Coordinator and fulfill the necessary steps required.
- c. The Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) Associate Dean (or his/her designate) may assume the role of lead communicator in the case of a tragic event. They should decide who needs to be informed within Schulich Medicine, how information should be communicated and what supports may be needed. These decisions should be made in a timely way to attempt to mitigate impact on those who may be adversely impacted by the tragic event.
- d. At a minimum, the UME Associate Dean should:
  - i. Ensure that the news has been communicated to the Dean of Medicine, the Dean's Office, the Vice Dean Education, Associate Dean Windsor Program, Associate Dean and Assistant Dean (Undergraduate) Learner Equity & Wellness – or their delegates.
  - ii. Identify which learner, faculty & staff groups and hospital sites will likely be impacted by the news and ensure that communication is delivered in a timely and sensitive fashion.

- iii. Enlist the assistance of onsite counseling resources (in collaboration with the Learner Equity & Wellness Office), Student Health and Student Development Services and the Employee Assistance Program's services.
- iv. Assess and address the status and timing of impact on any immediate or upcoming curricular scheduled events.
  - v. Identify and access additional assistance for students, faculty and staff. The Learner Equity & Wellness Office and Western Rehabilitation Services can help to enlist mental health support for those affected.
  - vi. Identify or recommend one individual who could serve as a liaison to the learner's family regarding any arrangements or decisions needing to be made.
- e. The Schulich Coordinator should connect with Schulich Medicine Communications and request they work with any and all other communications offices so that uniform communication will occur. This will include the development of a media release and briefing for senior faculty and student leaders. A Communications liaison should be identified.
- f. The Schulich Medicine Communications lead would arrange for a message to be sent from Dean's Office to the learner's family. This may include correspondence from the Dean and or other appropriate leaders.
- g. Schulich Coordinator will work with Western Coordinator to contact and identify availability of support services (EAP, LEW Office, SHS, SDC, Case Manager, Chaplains). They will work with communications to inform all stakeholders of where individuals can go for immediate support.
- h. Schulich Coordinator should work with the Undergraduate Medical Education and Learner Equity & Wellness Offices to address issues related to learner registration, employment, accounts, taxes etc. (see Section 3, Responsibilities: Registrar's Office & Faculty Dean of Western's Student Death Response Protocol).
- i. Schulich Coordinator will work with the Associate Dean UME (or designate) to determine a need and timing for an on-site memorial event. Communications should be consulted re dissemination of such information.
- j. Schulich Coordinator will work with the president of and senior leaders from the Schulich Medicine Hippocratic Council to address any concerns or assist student body in their response to the tragic event.
- k. Schulich Coordinator will work with Schulich Medicine faculty and student leaders on ongoing communication.
- l. Schulich Coordinator to connect with family liaison regarding private memorial service details (e.g. time, date, location, and whether an open invitation would be welcomed) and communication of such.