

Proposed actions, and sequence thereof, upon the death of a member of the Purdue Faculty

Drafted by Neera Jain and Joyce Main

Motivation

Communication of the passing of current Purdue faculty appears to be localized and inconsistent. Cross-college collaborations among faculty are no longer uncommon. Therefore, confining communication mechanisms to individual colleges may no longer be appropriate. The Faculty Affairs Committee of the College of Engineering is proposing a set of guidelines that could be adopted university-wide to address this issue. A clear and consistent set of guidelines that are exercised university-wide is particularly important and can serve as a resource to administrators, faculty, and other stakeholders.

Proposed Process

1. When a member of the faculty learns that a colleague has passed away (through communication from the deceased faculty member's family/friends, through a public obituary, or other means), the school/department head is notified immediately.
2. School/Department Head connects with family and asks the following:
 - a. Does family want to review any communication sent to all university faculty?

We propose that the Associate Provost of Faculty Affairs e-mail all faculty and announce that the individual has passed away. At the family's request, the text of the e-mail can be reviewed/edited/approved by them. For example, they may or may not want to provide a link to the public obituary or information about memorial service.

- b. Does family want to be involved in any celebration of life organized by the deceased faculty member's home school/department?

We propose that the home unit consider organizing a celebration of the individual's academic contributions (research/teaching/service) to Purdue (in addition to or in conjunction with services the family might be planning). The unit is encouraged to coordinate the date and time with the family.

3. School/Department Head takes the following actions ***within one week of faculty member's passing (or within a reasonable timeframe given the circumstances):***
 - a. Notifies the Human Resources department.
 - b. Asks their Business Office Manager to contact SPS and alert them about the passing of the individual;

Business Office Manager should ask whoever managed that faculty member's accounts to contact and notify any listed collaborators.
 - c. Contact Provost's office with draft e-mail (approved by family if requested per 2.a) to be sent to all Purdue faculty notifying them about the passing of their faculty colleague and announcing the memorial service, if any. (If the memorial service is not yet planned or there is other reason to delay the announcement, this step should be completed within a reasonable time frame given the circumstances.)

4. School/Department Head takes following suggested actions *within three weeks of faculty member's passing (or within a reasonable time frame given the circumstances)*:
 - a. School/Department Head drafts memorial resolution and sends to their Faculty Senate representative.
 - b. If a celebration of life is to be organized, Head identifies 1-2 faculty within their unit to help organize it in coordination with the deceased faculty member's graduate students and family.
 - c. Celebration of life event announcement and/or In Memoriam is sent to Purdue Today for wider circulation.