

MISSING STUDENT NOTIFICATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) requires institutions that participate in a Title IV federal student financial aid program and maintain on campus housing facilities to establish an effective Missing Student notification policy and procedures. Although HEOA only requires the University to establish this policy for students who live in on-campus housing, certain protocols within this policy may be utilized to address certain situations involving non-residential students. For example, University staff and UIC Police may assist local authorities in their investigation of a missing, off-campus UIC student.

As described in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, any campus policy related to a Missing Student must:

1. Inform each student that they have the option to identify an individual to be contacted by the institution not later than 24 hours after the time that the institution determines the student to be missing;
2. Provide each student with the means and opportunity to register their confidential emergency contact information that is accessible to staff in the event the student is determined to be missing for a period of more than 24 hours;
3. Notify each student who is under 18 years of age (and not an emancipated individual), that the institution is required to contact their emergency contact or a parent or guardian no later than 24 hours after the time that the student is determined to be missing;
4. Inform each residential student that the institution will notify the appropriate law enforcement agency or campus security department no later than 24 hours after the time that the student is determined missing;
5. Include communication procedures for official notification of appropriate individuals at the institution that a student has been missing for more than 24 hours; and
6. If campus law enforcement personnel has been notified and makes a determination that a student who is the subject of a missing person report has been missing for more than 24 hours, the institution is required to initiate emergency contact procedures as outlined in institutional protocol.

STUDENT COMMUNICATION

Emergency contact information will be requested of newly matriculating students via the UIC Connect portal. The checklist of required items for matriculation to UIC will include population of the Emergency Contacts field. E-mail notices to continuing students regarding registration include a reminder to update Emergency contacts using Banner Student Self-Service. Students will have the opportunity to update Emergency Contact information via Banner Student Self-Service throughout the year. A standard message will be developed to accompany the email notices informing students about the institution's missing student policy and the institutional requirements listed above.

MISSING STUDENT POLICY

A student is defined as missing once the UIC police are notified and initiate a formal missing person investigation. The University will actively investigate any report submitted that describes a Missing Student incident. For purposes of this policy, the University defines a student to be any person enrolled in any class or program of the University. The University staff's role in the Missing Student investigation may vary depending upon a student's academic and residential status (e.g., living on or off campus, study abroad, full time or part time, etc.).

Efforts to locate the student will be coordinated through a collaboration of the UIC Police, Campus Housing, Dean of Students' office, local authorities, and friends and family members of the Missing Student. When information is received by the University regarding a Missing Student, there will be no waiting period before an investigation is initiated. All investigative procedures will be governed by university policy and procedures and federal, state, and local laws.

Formal police investigations and community notifications will typically take place after the initial staff investigation on the whereabouts of the student. Initial staff investigations, prior to any formal police investigation, will include a thorough review of the student's recent activity on campus which may include, but not be limited to: questioning the student's roommates and friends, visiting the student's room or apartment and reviewing the student's recent use of his/her ID card. If not located within 24 hours, the Dean of Students or a designee of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, in collaboration with the police, will contact the person(s) listed on the student's Emergency Contact page or the student's parent or guardian to alert them that their student may be missing. Once this occurs, a University official or a family member will file an official missing person report with the law enforcement agency within the appropriate jurisdiction.

CAMPUS PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO A MISSING STUDENT REPORT

Initial Response

The first step in the process will be an informal staff investigation to seek information related to the circumstances around the missing person allegation and then inform the UIC Police. Typically, the initial response will be coordinated by staff in Campus Housing, staff in the Dean of Students' office, and the UIC Police. At the early stage in the investigation, the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs will be notified.

Staff should document the situation, creating a factual written report, while obtaining as many details as possible from the persons reporting the incident. While speaking with persons who reported the disappearance, staff should verify the accuracy of information previously provided. Once facts are documented the written report and all other information available will be provided to the UIC Police and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. Understanding that in these types of incidents time is critical, the creation of a written report by Student Affairs staff should not deter them from verbally sharing important information with the UIC Police. The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or designee will be responsible for alerting the appropriate University officials of the Missing Student situation.

Investigations

The formal investigation of a Missing Student is the responsibility of the UIC Police. The UIC Police, who are the investigative body, will decide when to promptly dispatch officers to conduct a formal investigation.

The responding officers will be apprised by staff of all information and the police will obtain a photograph of the student from the campus ID office. Staff will work with the police to obtain from friends or acquaintances, any notes, records, recordings of telephone communications, etc., pertaining to the student. (As University protocol would require, the campus police will be present with the Student Affairs staff when they search the Missing Student's room). The search will be initiated to obtain academic, housing, food service, and general student record information that will help support the police in their efforts to locate the Missing Student.

The Dean of Students office will act as the Student Affairs liaison with the UIC Police, University offices and the Colleges concerning Missing Student incidents and may also aid the police in the coordination of meetings or certain communications to be established during the Missing Student search process.

Investigative Considerations

Recognizing that each circumstance will be different, there are general questions that may be helpful to answer as an investigation proceeds:

1. When and where was the last time the student was seen and by whom? (i.e., is the student missing from the campus, his or her family residence, or another location, etc?)
2. Do we have updated information related to parents, family members, roommates, friends and acquaintances?

3. Does the student live alone? If not, has anyone talked to the roommates?
4. Have we initiated outreach communications with the student, family, and friends (i.e. phone calls, emails, etc.)?
5. What are the student's class and work schedules and when was the last time he/she attended these commitments?
6. Have we visited the student's classes and talked to the student's faculty?
7. What are some of the places the student most frequented? Have we talked to anyone at those locations?
8. Have we examined the pattern of activity on the student's I-card? When was the last time he/she used the ID card to enter a building or purchase goods?
9. Is there information that leads others to believe that this behavior is normal or out of the ordinary for the student? Has the student been reported missing before?
10. Is there information that might lead us to believe the student is despondent or struggling with mental health issues? Is there evidence of suicidal risk or concerns?
11. Does the student have a known substance abuse problem?
12. What is the student's academic status? Is the student experiencing academic or financial problems?
13. Does the student have a criminal or conduct record?
14. Do we know if the student has received any threats? Is there a witness to or evidence of abduction or other foul play?

Communication

To the extent possible, the UIC Police will keep the designated student affairs staff apprised of the investigation as it continues. The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or designee will ensure that pertinent details are appropriately relayed to staff and will make notifications to supervisors and the University administration in accordance with established policies and procedures as the investigation progresses.

The Dean of Students office will serve as a liaison to the family. Through this role, the Dean of Students will coordinate on-going communication with family and friends of the Missing Student and help to provide additional support services that may be needed. Also, the Dean of Students will work with the UIC Police and the Public Affairs office to coordinate messages to the campus community ensuring that pertinent details are accurately prepared, updated, and disseminated through official notices.

In the case of a Missing Student, multiple offices and academic units may be notified by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or designee. Notification of a Missing Student may include, but not be limited to the following:

- Chancellor and Provost
- Deans; Academic Colleges
- Vice Chancellors
- Office of Registration and Records
- Office of Student Financial Aid
- Office of International Services
- Public Affairs
- University Counsel

***Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
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