

Memorial Service Planning Guide

Memorial Service Synopsis

In an effort to alleviate additional stress and uncertainty, the University has created a memorial service planning guideline to assist your organization in creating a simple and elegant memorial service to honor the deceased.

While a memorial service may not be appropriate memorial for every death, a memorial service can be a beautiful way to memorialize and honor the deceased. Please note that if you are interested in sponsoring a memorial service you should seek approval from the Division of Student Affairs before proceeding with the planning process.

After seeking approval, the sponsoring party should seek to secure a location, date and time. Ensuring the memorial service is planned in a timely manner is pertinent to the mourning and healing process of those involved. Moving quickly and scheduling the vigil within 7-10 days of the death is ideal. Try to avoid conflicts other memorial services or arrangements.

If you are using candlelight, make sure to hold the memorial service at a time when the candles will have their most powerful visual impact (dusk or after), but not so late that mourners of all ages cannot attend. If the family is planning on attending, be sure to consult with them to identify a date and time that is best for them.

Student memorial services may be held at any location on campus as long as the sponsors go through the proper reservation process – speaking with the University Center and Programs Staff. Two of the recommended locations for quick and easy access are:

The Pavilion - It is easily accessible but cannot be reserved – it can be made available very quickly and there are power sources available on site to accommodate amplified sound or additional lighting.

The Water Feature – This is an aesthetically pleasing location, but should be reserved before the memorial service takes place. Typically there is a low volume of programs that take place in this area so it should be simple to reserve at short notice.

Indoor locations may be used if weather does not permit an outdoor ceremony, but you should follow up with facilities regarding policies regarding open flames if you plan to use any candlelight.

The memorial ceremony should include a speaker/master of ceremonies to keep the event running smoothly. This individual will introduce other speakers, lead prayers or words of condolences, and keep the service focused on the reason for the memorial service. Below, you

will find a recommended program that may be modified as needed. Additional ideas for speakers or activities include: music, religious speaker or guest, table or space for cards or flowers, etc.

Greetings This should occur as guests arrive to the memorial service site. You can provide them with a copy of the program or hand them a candle – if applicable.

Welcome/Invocation This should be completed by the master of ceremonies to focus attention and set the tone for the service. An overview of the evening's service would be appropriate at this time.

Words of Condolences or Remarks (friends, Family, Faculty or Staff) provide an opportunity for individuals to share memories or remarks regarding the deceased.

Inspirational Words This could be conducted by the master of ceremony, a priest, or a guest speaker. This could come via method of prayer or speech.

Music (solo or small ensemble, background music, live music, etc.) Music can often serve as a time to reflect on the life that has been lost. This could also be a moving time to light candles if you are hosting a candlelight vigil.

Moment of silence and reflection is a period of silent contemplation, prayer, reflection, or mediation. This is seen as a gesture of respect, particularly in mourning.

Closing Remarks This is typically conducted by the master of ceremony as well.

If you are anticipating speakers or live music, make sure to secure audio equipment ahead of time so that all participants can hear what is being said in memory of the deceased. Small speakers may be picked up at the University Center Information Station. Larger speakers may be reserved when speaking with Facility Operations staff.

Please note that all Facility Operations equipment including speakers, tables, chairs, stages, podiums, etc. may be reserved through the Facility Reservation System (<https://reservations.uncp.edu/>) up to four days prior to the event date. To request items not reserved at least four days in advance, Facility Operations should be contacted directly.

Step-by-Step Process

1. Refer to Section IV. Follow-Up Response Plan part D and E of the Death of a Student Response Plan on page 5.
(https://www.uncp.edu/sites/default/files/Images_Docs/Departments/Student_Affairs/policies/Death%20of%20a%20Student%20Response%20Plan.pdf)
2. Seek approval from the University's Executive Staff before proceeding with the planning process.
3. Contact Information - Phone: 910-521-6175; Email: studentaffairs@uncp.edu; Location: Lumbee Hall – 3rd Floor Suite 329
4. Reserve a location, date, and time by speaking directly with the office of University Center and Programs.
5. Contact Information - Phone: 910-521-6899; Email: uc@uncp.edu ; Location: James B. Chavis University Center Suite 220.
6. Contact Facility Operations to request the delivery of chairs, tables, stage, or a podium as needed. You will need to arrange a meeting with them at the memorial service site to discuss set-up needs.
7. Contact Information - Phone: 910-521-4056; Email: tawanna.locklear@uncp.edu; Location: Walter J. Pinchbeck Maintenance Building
8. Notify the Division of Student Affairs with the final date, time, and location so an official announcement can be sent to the campus community. At this time, you should provide the Division with a detailed outline of the ceremony including the contact information for the master of ceremonies. (Contact Information listed above)
9. The sponsoring organization is responsible for purchasing any supplies needed for the memorial and plan to set-up at least 30 minutes in advance of the designated starting time.
10. A speaker and microphones can be picked up at the University Center Information Station Located just inside the James B. Chavis University Center with a valid UNCP ID. The Information Station is open Monday-Friday, from 9:00 am – 9:00 pm, Saturday 9:30am -5:30pm Sunday 11:30am – 5:30pm. During school vacations and summer sessions, the hours are adjusted and posted.
11. Contact Information: Phone: 910-521-6575; Email: uc.infostation@uncp.edu.