



Missing Students

The risk that a student might go missing is a concern for all colleges and universities. A report of a missing student can come from a variety of sources, including family, friends, or fellow students. Because of our concern for student safety, and in accordance with federal law, we have established this missing student notification policy and procedure.

A. Scope of Policy

1. **Residential Students:** “Residential students” are students enrolled at the College of Law and who reside in dorms, apartments, and residences owned by the College. This policy applies when the College of Law’s Public Safety Department—based on facts and circumstances known to the College—determines that a residential student is missing. For purposes of this policy, a student may be considered to be “*missing*” if the student’s absence is contrary to his or her usual pattern of behavior and unusual circumstances may have caused the absence. Such circumstances could include, but are not limited to, a report (a) of a student’s absence from multiple classes in which the student is enrolled, (b) that the student may be the victim of foul play, or (c) that the student has expressed suicidal thoughts, is drug dependent, is in a life-threatening situation, or has been with persons who may endanger his or her welfare.
2. **Non-Residential Students:** The College also is concerned about the safety of its non-residential students. Concerns about these students should be reported to Public Safety. But Public Safety’s scope of authority is limited to the campus and College-owned property. Therefore, when a non-residential student is believed to be missing, the reporting person also should immediately notify local law enforcement authorities, and then provide the information to Public Safety in case the College is asked to assist external authorities with the investigation.
3. **Study-Abroad Students:** Special procedures have been established to handle potentially missing students in the College of Law’s study-abroad programs. Under College guidelines that are applicable to students traveling in study-abroad programs, any travel from the program housing location must be provided, in writing and in advance, to the Resident Director. The Resident Director will follow up in an attempt to locate any student who fails to timely return from planned trips or otherwise appears to have gone missing. The follow up will include contacting the U.S. Embassy and law enforcement officials as necessary.
4. **Students Traveling for College Activities:** On occasion, students travel in connection with College-sponsored activities, such as competitions, professional

organization activities, and the like. In those instances, the faculty member in charge of the trip is responsible for collecting confidential emergency information and enforcing procedures for monitoring the whereabouts of students. If a student appears to have gone missing, the faculty member will notify local law enforcement and Public Safety as necessary.

B. Reporting Procedures

1. Any individual who believes that a residential student is missing should report that concern to the Public Safety Department.
2. Any faculty or staff member outside the Public Safety Department who receives such a report will immediately pass the information on to the Public Safety Department.
3. The Public Safety Department, upon receiving the report, will first check to see if the student completed a [*Notice of Absence from Residence*](#) notification (discussed in more detail below). If the student's absence is not accounted for, or the duration of reported absence exceeds the time period stated in the *Notice*, Public Safety will initiate an investigation and will attempt to obtain all reasonably necessary information. This will typically include descriptions of the student and what he or she was wearing when last seen, any individuals with whom the student may be, vehicle description, information about the student's habits and patterns, and any concerns about the student's physical or mental well being. Public Safety will obtain a photo from the Office of Student Life, if available; the student's class schedule and emergency contact information from the Registrar; and the student's assigned College residence address from the Office of Residential Life.
4. Public Safety will conduct a quick, but thorough, search of campus buildings, campus-owned residential facilities, and parking lots. Public Safety also will contact the Office of Information Technology to check access card logs to determine the last time the student's I.D. card was used and to review surveillance videos. Public Safety will notify appropriate campus staff to aid in the search for the student as needed, and will contact known friends and acquaintances to try to ascertain the student's whereabouts.
5. If Public Safety determines from the report (e.g., witnesses abduction) that the student is a missing person, or when the search efforts described above do not locate the student, Public Safety will contact the appropriate local law enforcement agency to report the student as a missing person. Such contact will occur ASAP, and not later than 24 hours after determining that a residential student is missing. The local law enforcement agency will then take charge of the investigation.
6. No later than 24 hours after determining that a residential student is missing, the College of Law—through the Dean unless otherwise designated—will notify the

student's emergency contact (for students 18 and over) or the parent/guardian (for students under 18).

C. Possible Missing Student Outcomes

Multiple outcomes are possible in the case of a missing student. The three most likely possibilities are:

1. **After a search, the student is safe and well:** In this situation, Public Safety will contact the individual who reported the student as missing and give him or her basic assurances without disclosing confidential information.
2. **After a search, the student is in difficulty:** Public Safety will obtain as much information as possible about the student's difficulty, offer assistance as appropriate, and refer the matter to the Student Support and Emergency Team (SSET) for further assessment and support. If the student is in any immediate danger, Public Safety will contact local law enforcement.
3. **After a search, the student does not respond:** If all efforts to contact a student have been exhausted and the College of Law has been unable to verify that the student is safe, Public Safety will notify local law enforcement and the student's emergency contact (for students 18 and over) or the parent/guardian (for students under 18).

D. Registration of Emergency Contact Information and Notice of Absences

1. **Designation of Emergency Contact:** New residential students—when the student's housing arrangement is finalized—will be given an opportunity to designate one or more individuals that the College will contact in case of an emergency. The designated individual(s) will be the emergency contact under this policy. At Orientation, residential students may update their emergency contact information. Thereafter, a student may update and change his or her emergency contact by completing the online change of address form on the Registrar's web page. A designation on file with the Registrar will remain in effect until changed or revoked by the student.

This emergency contact information will be registered confidentially, will be accessible only to authorized campus officials, and may not be disclosed, except to law enforcement personnel in furtherance of a missing person investigation.

For students who are under 18 and not emancipated, the College of Law must notify the student's parent or guardian within 24 hours after determining the student is missing, in addition to notifying any emergency contact person identified by the student.

2. **Annual Notifications to Residential Students:** When the student moves into College housing, and thereafter on an annual basis, the Office of Residential Life will send a copy of this policy to each residential student.
3. **Notice of Absence from Residence:** All residential students are expected to complete the [*Notice of Absence from Residence*](#) form when he or she plans to be away from assigned College housing for more than three days, or for any length of time if due to academic breaks, holidays, study abroad, or weather-related or other emergencies.

E. Campus Communications

1. **In General:** In cases involving missing persons, law enforcement personnel are typically best suited to provide information to the media that is designed to elicit public assistance in the search. Therefore, unless otherwise approved by the Dean under the College's Crisis Communications Plan, communications regarding missing students generally will be handled by outside law enforcement authorities. Internal communication to the College community (other than Security Alerts issued by the Public Safety Department) will generally be handled by the Dean, or by the Office of Communications with the Dean's approval.
2. **Outside Inquiries:** All inquiries to the College of Law regarding missing students, or information provided to any individual at the College about a missing student, will be referred to the Office of Communications. The Office of Communications, in collaboration with the Public Safety Department and the Dean, will determine whether to handle and/or refer to law enforcement any such inquiries and information. Before providing the College of Law community with any information about a missing student, the Office of Communications will consult with the Public Safety Department, the Dean, and local law enforcement authorities as needed to ensure that communications do not hinder the investigation.
3. **Responding to Other Students:** It is often possible that other students will be anxious about the "missing student." In such circumstance, the Assistant Dean of Student Life, in collaboration with the Public Safety Department and the Dean, will coordinate education about personal safety, to the extent appropriate, let students know what effort is being made to locate the missing student, and provide emotional support and counseling referrals as warranted.

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