

# Campus Life *and* Death: Memory, Reconciliation, and the Dead in Higher Education

## Editor

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## Call for Proposals

College campuses are often understood as spaces of vitality, learning, and intellectual growth. Yet they are also places where the dead are physically present and culturally influential. Cemeteries, graves, mausoleums, memorial practices, funeral rituals, and pedagogical uses of the deceased body situate human remains within the everyday landscape of higher education. These presences heighten and complicate memorialization while actively shaping how campus communities understand history, responsibility, and belonging.

Far from existing only as symbols of the past, the dead continue to shape campus life. They influence how students, faculty, and administrators interpret institutional history, promote selective narratives, and negotiate moral responsibility toward those who came before them. Whether revered, feared, avoided, ritualized, or rediscovered, the dead exert influence on living academic communities. Their presence reveals how institutions choose to remember, whom they choose to remember, and how colleges and universities, intentionally or not, incorporate the dead into pedagogical, moral, and institutional practices.

This edited volume examines the relationship between campus life and death by exploring how colleges and universities have used the deceased and their physical remains to construct institutional narratives, legitimize authority, foster belonging, and, in more recent years, confront troubling histories tied to slavery, medical exploitation, and memorial erasure. The volume brings together historical and interdisciplinary perspectives to examine how death remains embedded in campus life not only as memory, but as presence.

## Proposed chapters may address topics including (but not limited to):

- College and university cemeteries, graves, mausoleums, and memorial landscapes
- Campus-based funeral services, lying-in-state rituals, and commemorative ceremonies
- Student death, collective mourning practices, and cultures of remembrance
- Fraternity and sorority traditions involving symbolic death and rebirth
- Campus newspapers, obituaries, and student-produced memorial texts
- Religious belief, secularism, and funerary symbolism in campus spaces
- Medical education, anatomical donation, and burial practices
- Slavery, grave robbing, and the ethical history of bodies used in higher education
- Rediscovered burial grounds and contemporary memorialization efforts
- Disinterment, reburial, and the relocation of human remains
- Race, gender, class, and power in campus cultures of death and remembrance
- Contemporary debates over memorials, reconciliation, and institutional responsibility

## Submission Guidelines and Audience

Prospective contributors should submit a **400–500-word abstract** and a brief **(100-word) biographical statement** by **April 1, 2026**. Abstracts should outline the proposed chapter's argument, sources, and contribution, and should address how the campus dead influence the living and shape institutional memory. Full chapters will be approximately **7,000–8,000 words** (excluding notes). The editor is in contact with a **university press** and will submit the completed volume for consideration. This interdisciplinary volume will be of interest to scholars of the history of education, higher education studies, American history, religious studies, memory studies, and campus heritage and preservation.



Headstone of Father Albert Bieber, S.J.  
Spring Hill College, Mobile, AL

Abstracts should be sent to: [eep032@shsu.edu](mailto:eep032@shsu.edu).

*A full CFP is available upon request.*