RESPECTING CHOSEN NAMES AT CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

A Guide for Faculty and Staff

In 2017, Cleveland State University adopted a new Preferred Name Policy, which states that "the university seeks to allow the use of preferred names wherever possible, consistent with the law and the constraints of university systems."

A preferred name is any name other than an individual's legal name that they choose to go by. Using an individual's preferred name shows respect and creates a nondiscriminatory academic and work environment.

The policy uses the term "preferred name" and is meant to support those who have chosen names as well as those who have preferred names. The term "chosen name" is used throughout this guide to affirm that a name is more than a preference.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

Class Rosters

Students can manually change their name in CampusNet. This will update a variety of university systems automatically, including class rosters generated in CampusNet and Blackboard. To ensure the use of chosen names, refer to these systems when accessing student information.

Email Addresses

There are several CSU platforms that do not yet display chosen names due to system limitations. A primary example of this limitation are the display names connected to CSU email addresses. As a temporary solution, we encourage faculty and staff to be flexible in email policies by allowing the use of an alternate email address for course communications if possible.

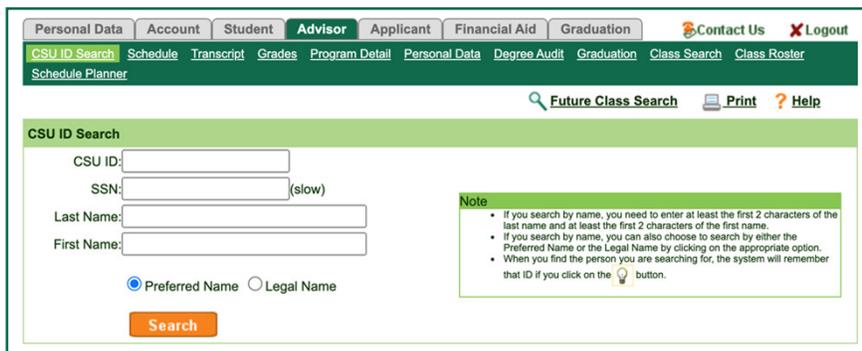An example email policy might say:

"If not using their CSU email address, students are required to use a professional email address which identifies them by name (e.g., magnusviking@gmail.com), and notify the instructor that this is their preferred email address."

When communicating through email, take extra caution to always use the name used in the body or signature of the email rather than the name used in the "To:" line, which may not be accurate.

Complete details on which university systems are updated with chosen names are available on the guide for students.

Searching for Students in the CampusNet Advisor Tab

Some faculty and staff have the ability to look up student information via the "Advisor" tab in CampusNet. When searching for a student's record, CampusNet defaults to searching by 'Preferred Name'. When this is selected, the system will automatically include preferred/chosen names in search results as well. There is no need to know or enter a student's legal name to view their information. Students who do not have a preferred or chosen name will still appear in the search results when searching by 'Preferred Name'.

Those who are working with legal documents and must view a student's legal name can search by CSU ID using the "Legal Name" option.

FAQ ON SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH CHOSEN NAMES

Who uses a chosen name?

People who go by a nickname or middle name, transgender people who have chosen a name that aligns with their gender identity, and international students are a few examples of people who may use a chosen name.

What if a student uses a chosen name, but hasn't updated CampusNet?

Some students who use a chosen name may not know how to officially update it in university systems. Inform the student about how to change their name in CampusNet, or refer them to this guide for students.

Class rosters and other university systems may not update immediately. It is important that faculty and staff take note of a students' chosen name and make every effort to use their chosen name even if it is not listed correctly on class rosters or in CampusNet.

How are pronouns related to the preferred name policy?

Some students who indicate a chosen name, including transgender students, may also wish to indicate the pronouns they use. While CSU does not have a way for students to indicate their pronouns in university systems, faculty and staff should make an effort to take note of pronouns when they are shared.

What If I Use the Wrong Name/Pronoun?

Apologize for the mistake and move forward. Do not draw additional attention to the error. If you need additional clarification or a reminder of a student's name or pronouns, ask them privately and respectfully.

Should I ask students for their chosen name or pronouns?

Introducing yourself with your name and pronouns (or including them in your email signature, syllabus, etc.) invites students to do the same. If students provide chosen names and/or pronouns, write them down for future use, and consider sharing with the student details on how to update their chosen name in university systems.

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(an example of an email signature with pronouns included)

Tip: When multiple pronoun sets are listed, any of them are acceptable to use when referring to the person.

How do I avoid inadvertently offending someone who uses a chosen name?

Be respectful of student privacy, including on their reasons for using a chosen name. Don't make assumptions about gender identity based on appearance. Be mindful of language that stigmatizes the use of a chosen name, or the identities of people who commonly use them. For example, say "legal name" instead of "real name," and cisgender and heterosexual to describe people who are not in the LGBTQ+ community, as opposed to "normal."

What if I have more questions about this policy?

The Office for Institutional Equity is available to answer questions about the Preferred Name Policy. They can be contacted at oie@csuohio.edu.

LGBTQ+ Student Services is available to support transgender and gender diverse students wishing to learn about available support services and other relevant policies. They can be contacted at lgbtq@csuohio.edu.

To learn more about LGBTQ+ inclusive policies, you can sign up for Safe Space Training.

USING A CHOSEN NAME AS A FACULTY OR STAFF MEMBER

University employees are currently unable to change their name in CampusNet. Employees can report a legal name change by submitting their current name, previous name, CSU ID, social security number, photo ID, and legal documentation to Human Resources, AC 113. Employees may direct questions regarding a name change to Human Resources, 216-687-3636 or HR@csuohio.edu.

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