**Preferred Names and Pronouns**

Ask students and employees for their preferred names and pronouns and use those consistently in all interactions including in written materials, face-to-face and on-line discussions, narrative evaluations, etc. This is essential for maintaining inclusive learning, working, and living environments that promote dignity, equity, and mutual respect for all persons involved.

**Taking Attendance**

Taking attendance on the first day of class or during initial organizational meetings have the potential for publicly identifying students whose preferred names do not match their legal names, as well as students who just prefer to use a name different from their legal name. Faculty are therefore encouraged to call roll in a way that allows students and employees to use their preferred name from the beginning, so that classmates and/or co-workers only hear the name that the student or employee uses. Whatever pronouns, or the lack of them, appear in information systems, it is still best practice to confirm with students before reading names aloud.

One simple way to do this is to call roll by last name and to have students and/or employees respond with their preferred first name and pronouns. For example, a professor would call “Robinson” and a student would respond, “Susanna, and I use she/her/hers for pronouns.” Everyone’s preferred name and pronoun can then be noted on the class roster.

However, it is also important to acknowledge not everyone will feel safe sharing pronouns and names in front of classmates on the first day or at any point during the semester. Therefore, faculty are encouraged to consider using other approaches to obtaining such information. One such option is passing out, collecting individual index cards to students, and asking them to write this information down. Once collected, faculty can edit their rosters accordingly. If an instructor or supervisor prefers to take attendance by passing around a sheet of paper, it is important not to pass around the official class roster, which may include names students do not use. Instead, pass around a blank sheet of paper with spaces for preferred names, pronouns, year, etc. Alternatively, you may give people an index card and ask them to write down their information, which can be helpful if the instructor or supervisor wishes to ask additional questions.

In regards to sharing pronouns, it is important not to make this a mandatory process. However, part of facilitating a trans/non-binary inclusive space, is having the faculty member (or staff member in regards to other group spaces) share their own pronouns first. This will give an indication that you welcome sharing pronouns in the space. Regardless, do not force the issue. If a student does not want to share their pronouns, then do not draw further attention to this.

**Constructing Syllabi and Training Materials**

In similar fashion to including and reviewing statements regarding discrimination and sexual harassment with students, co-workers, and employees, syllabi, training manuals (e.g., for student employees) as well as co-curricular or extracurricular program learning materials should have a statement regarding preferred names that is consistent with the SU preferred name policy. Consider including the following:
It is the policy of Shippensburg University that any student or employee may choose to identify themselves within the university’s information systems with a preferred name in addition to their legal name. Individuals should consult the preferred name policy for definitions, restrictions, and procedures for requesting a preferred name (https://www.ship.edu/EIC). Students and employees are encouraged to use preferred names in all university venues and during university functions to promote an inclusive and affirming campus climate.

**Supervising or Interacting with Student Employees and Colleagues**

In initial interactions with student employees and colleagues, ask about their preferred name and pronoun before continuing. One way to do this is to first introduce yourself with your name and pronouns and then invite others to share theirs. Again, if an individual does not share their pronouns, do not pressure them to do so.

There may be times when you will receive documents, packages, or other items that do not align with an individual’s preferred name or pronouns. For example, to receive services, a student or employee may submit an ID that does not align with their preferred name/pronouns. Clarifying and establishing preferred names and pronouns before such circumstances occur is essential. In this instance, one way to establish this is by asking the individual submitting their ID what their name is. Do not simply rely on the name displayed on the identification.

It is vital that supervisors provide access to training and information for the respective unit on both this policy and best practices. It is important for unit employees (student and professional) to understand the purpose and significance of using preferred names and pronouns in the higher education setting from both human understanding and quality point-of-service lenses.

**Student Group Services**

Campus Groups – our student group management and engagement platform – pulls student information from University identification systems. It is important for program administrators to review that the software has the correct preferred name/pronouns and make corrections, as they are able and as they arise.

Advisors to student organizations (faculty or staff) are encouraged to clarify and establish preferred names and pronouns when working with students within their respective organizations. One way to do this is to first introduce yourself with your name and pronouns and then ask others if they would like to share similarly.

Advisors to student organizations are encouraged to use preferred names in all university venues and during university functions to promote an inclusive and affirming campus climate, including student organizations. Advisors should recognize their role in upholding an inclusive campus climate within group interactions and responding and/or reporting when appropriate.
Preferred Name Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is a preferred name?

A preferred name is a name that differs from one’s legal name. It is a name that a person chooses to be known by. This may include a person’s full name, or any part thereof.

The University recognizes that as a community, many of its members use names other than their legal names to identify themselves. As long as the use of this different name is not for misrepresentation, the University acknowledges that a preferred name may be used in addition to the person’s legal name.

Who is able to request a preferred name at Shippensburg University?

Any student or employee at Shippensburg University is able to request a preferred name that differs from their legal name on certain University records.

Under what circumstances can a preferred name be denied?

A preferred name will be denied or revoked when it is deemed inappropriate for reasons, including, but not limited to, avoidance of a legal obligation, fraud, use of obscene or offensive language, or misrepresentation.

Where will preferred name be used on campus?

Preferred names will be shown on University records and documents, and for other educational or professional purposes, within the technological capabilities of the various campus IT systems.

The preferred name will be used in select University-related systems and documents as listed below.

- Learning Management System
- Student Advising Systems
- Faculty Class Lists
- Student Co-Curricular Systems
- Hosing System
- Student Judicial System
- Email Display Name
- Student Reports
- Commencement Program and Ceremony
- Alumni System
- Student and Employee ID Card
- Degree Audits
- Diploma
- Athletic Rosters
Where will legal name be used instead of preferred name?

The preferred name may not be used where the use of the legal name is required by policies applicable to Shippensburg University, the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, or applicable local, state, federal regulations or law.

The legal name will be used for official University records including, but not limited to following items:

- Academic Transcript
- Enrollment Verifications
- Employment Verifications
- Degree Verifications
- Employment Documents
- Payroll Documents (paycheck, W2, etc.)
- Athletic External Reporting
- Student Medical Records
- Legal Documents and Reports
- Student Accounts Statements
- Financial Aid Documents
- Scholarship Documents
- Mailing Information
- Admission Applications

How do Shippensburg University students request use of a preferred name?

The student will complete and submit the Preferred Name Request form, available at http://www.ship.edu/EIC, to the Registrar’s Office registr@ship.edu. A student is permitted to change a preferred name one time per semester. The request will be reviewed and if any questions or follow-up is necessary, the student will be contacted through their university email account. Otherwise, the applicable updates will be made. If a student would like assistance with completing the request form and any follow-up regarding preferred name request, students may seek assistance from the Pride Center Director. If a student feels their request is unjustly denied, the student may file an appeal with the Shippensburg University Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Compliance (titleixcoordinator@ship.edu).

How do Shippensburg University employees request use of a preferred name?

Employees requesting a preferred name should send the request by email to Human Resources hr@ship.edu. The employee will be notified of the status of their request within 10 business days. The request will be reviewed and if any questions or follow-up is necessary, the employee will be contacted through their university email account. If an employee would
like assistance with completing the request form and any follow-up regarding preferred name request, they may seek assistance from the Pride Center Director. If an employee feels their request is unjustly denied, the employee may contact their respective union representative and file an appeal with the Shippensburg University Office of Social Equity, Inclusion, and Compliance.

**When is the optimal time to request a preferred name?**

From a University perspective, applying at least two weeks prior to the start of a semester provides time to process student preferred name form and for those changes to then be in effect at the start of the semester.

However, students can submit a preferred name change form at any time. Students opting to use a preferred name after the start of the semester are responsible for notifying their teaching faculty and academic advisor; as well as other relevant parties to potentially include coaches, student group advisors, campus employment supervisors, etc. Students residing in the residence halls are responsible for notifying their Resident Director and Resident Advisors.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Office of Equity Inclusion and Compliance is grateful to the LGBTQ+ Concerns and the APSCUF Social Justice Committees for their work on preparing this guidance.

**DATE**

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