Names & Pronouns 101
Navigating Gender Non-Conformity in OSU Systems

In Fall 2021, Oklahoma State University updated our Banner system to allow OSU faculty, staff, and students to identify their chosen names and pronouns in our online databases.

That means that it is more important now than ever to ensure we refer to others in a respectful and welcoming manner – it’s the Cowboy way.

By enabling features in Banner and Canvas for name and pronoun identification, OSU hopes to make it easier to get this important information right. However, there are multiple systems that we are either still working on or will not be able to show chosen names. Those systems are:

- Degree works (expected in winter 2021)
- Enrollment verification
- Graduation application (glitch shows legal in name drop-down list but chosen name can be entered for diploma)
- Registration overrides (glitch shows legal on first page only)
- Request official transcript
- Student addresses and phones
- Student email addresses

Because of this, we all need to become comfortable double-checking someone’s chosen name and pronouns.

- **Just ask!** It is best to ask privately, but you don’t need to ask in a particular way. Just simply: “What are your pronouns?”
  - Don’t assume; appearance does not determine gender – understand the difference between identity and expression
  - **Gender identity** = how we identify our gender or lack of gender – female, male, both, neither, nonbinary, etc.
  - **Gender expression** = how we express our gender identity to others – in clothes, mannerisms, appearance, etc.
- **Introduce your own pronouns!** Another way to make someone comfortable sharing their own is by including yours. For example: “Hello nice to meet you, my name’s Irissa and I use she/her/hers pronouns. And you are?” While not asking outright, it opens the door for another person to share
- **What if you make a mistake?** Simply acknowledge your mistake openly, apologize, and move on. Don’t let it become a drawn-out issue, but rather a momentary correction and reminder to get it better in the future.
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Using someone’s correct name and pronouns is an act of respect and inclusivity. Transgender and nonbinary people report experiencing distress when they are misgendered and/or deadnamed (Knutson et al., 2019). College is a stressful environment for everyone, but transgender and nonbinary people experience even higher levels of distress when their identities are not honored as they pursue their education (Knutson et al., 2021).

“OSU provides equal employment and educational opportunity on the basis of merit and in a manner which does not discriminate because of an individual’s age, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity or expression, national origin, disability, protected veteran status, or other protected category.”

Ways to avoid misgendering/deadnaming:
• Have students fill out a ‘Get to Know You’ pamphlet where they have the option to put a chosen name (even a nickname) and pronouns
• Encourage students to correct their name and pronouns/gender identification on Banner and Canvas before the first day of classes

Interested in learning more about LGBTQ+ allyship? Become involved in OSU’s LGBTQ Safe Zone Allyship Program. Learn more by contacting irissa.baxter@okstate.edu or at the QR code below!
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#### Some Language to Know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agender</td>
<td>Someone who does not identify with a particular gender.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ally</td>
<td>A person who is a member of a dominant or majority group who works to end oppression in their personal and professional life through support of, and as an advocate for, an oppressed population.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chosen Name</td>
<td>The first name an individual chooses to go by that is different from their legal name. While most often used in reference to transgender/non-binary individuals, this term also applies for nicknames!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cisgender</td>
<td>A person who identifies as and expresses their gender in ways that align with the sex they were assigned at birth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadnaming</td>
<td>The act of referring to a transgender/non-binary individual by their legal or birth name, rather than by their chosen name. Deadnaming a transgender/non-binary person can cause extreme mental distress by invalidating the person’s identity and trauma.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genderfluid</td>
<td>This term is used by individuals who do not identify with a singular gender identity as traditionally defined but whose gender identity/expression changes regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Binary</td>
<td>The idea that there are only two genders - male/female or man/woman - and that a person must strictly be gendered as one or the other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersex</td>
<td>Describing a person born with any of several variations in sex characteristics including chromosomes, sex hormones, and/or genitals. Such people are often incorrectly assigned “male” or “female” at birth by doctors and might not even be aware of their sex difference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misgendering</td>
<td>The act of referring to someone by the incorrect gender pronouns. Like deadnaming, this can cause extreme distress in a transgender/non-binary person.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td>Someone who identifies as neither a man or woman, but rather as a third (or fluid) gender identity. This term can be used to describe a wide range of gender expressions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pronouns</td>
<td>This term refers to the gender pronouns that an individual is referred to by, such as he/him/his, she/her/hers, and they/them/their.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>The term for someone who identifies with a gender other than the gender that they were assigned at birth, represented by the &quot;T&quot; in LGBTQ+. This means that the gender that was written on legal paperwork at birth does not match the person's identity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Resources:

- Nonbinary Fact Sheet. The Society for the Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity. Em Matsuno, PhD, Arielle Webb, MS, Halleh Hashtpari, MS, Stephanie Budge, PhD, Mira Krishnan, PhD, Kimberly Basam, PhD. https://www.apadivisions.org/division-44/resources/nonbinary-fact-sheet.pdf

On Campus Resources:

Office of Multicultural Affairs – home to LGBTQ resources and programming
www.oma.okstate.edu

Office of Equal Opportunity
If someone is being treated unfairly based on their “age, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity or expression, national origin, disability, protected veteran status, or other protected category”, contact them at 408 Whitehurst or www.eeo.okstate.edu

Employee Queers and Allies League (EQuAL)
Regular events for LGBTQ faculty/staff and allies
List of gender-neutral restrooms: www.equal.okstate.edu/all-gender-restrooms
To be added to the listserv, email irissa.baxter@okstate.edu or find EQuAL on Facebook: OSUEQuAL

Oklahoma State Queers and Allies (OSQ&A)
Regular events for LGBTQ students and allies
To be added to the listserv, email osqanda@gmail.com or find on Facebook: OklahomaStateQueersAndAllies

Gender, Women’s, and Sexuality Studies
Regularly offers LGBTQ-focused classes
www.womensstudies.okstate.edu for current and upcoming class offerings