

SUNY Potsdam Employee Preferred/Chosen First Name Policy

Definitions

The following terms are used in this policy.

Term	Definition
Employer	The State University of New York at Potsdam (The College)
Employee	A public employee working for The College or a Research Foundation or PACES employee associated with The College.
Preferred or chosen name	A name that a person chooses to be called that is different from their legal name.
Legal Name	The name that identifies a person for legal and other official purposes. A person's legal name is generally the name given and registered at birth, and which appears on a birth certificate. Procedures are in place to change an employee's legal name of record, if the legal name change has been approved through appropriate official processes.

Basis for Policy

SUNY Potsdam is dedicated to providing a safe and inclusive environment that is welcoming to all faculty and staff. As such, the College has created this Preferred/Chosen First Name Policy.

Policy

The College will allow employees to request a preferred/chosen first name, and have this change reflected in some on-campus college communications. The preferred/chosen first name process allows employees to officially notify the College of their preferred/chosen first names, and have this change reflected in some on-campus college communication systems, as long as the preferred/chosen first name is not used for purposes of misidentification, fraud or misrepresentation and the preferred/chosen first name aligns with community standards. The College reserves the right to review all preferred/chosen first name changes.

This policy is consistent with current Title IX federal law which protects against discrimination based on gender identity and expression, and is a best practice for supporting transgender and gender non-conforming members of the college community. This service is not limited to use by transgender and gender non-conforming employees, however, and is available to anyone who uses a preferred/chosen first name on a daily basis other than their legal/primary first name.

Procedure

SUNY Potsdam allows an employee to identify their preferred/chosen first name through their BearPAWS account. When an employee selects a preferred/chosen first name, it will appear, instead of their legal name, on some on-campus college communications.

The preferred/chosen first name can be used for certain internal communications and external communications. Internal applications for the use of approved preferred/chosen first name include but may not be limited to:

- Class and Grade Rosters,
- Advising Lists,
- Potsdam email and sign on names,
- On-Campus Performance and Event Programs,
- Directory including biography,
- College issued Identification Cards will display both legal and preferred/chosen first name.
- Diplomas *

*Diplomas are considered a ceremonial document in the United States, but may be considered an official document by international employers. Reissuing diplomas is a standard business practice, and campuses should follow their standard protocol for the reissuance of diplomas.

The College is obligated to use the legal first name for official records and reports, including but not limited to:

- All employment, benefits, and payroll records,
- Billing records and reimbursements,
- Official transcripts,
- Medical & counseling records,
- Expense reimbursements,
- Travel and purchasing authorizations,
- External reporting and federal immigration documents,
- College and State University of New York (SUNY) reporting for compliance purposes,
- Parking tickets.

Requests for use of preferred/chosen first name shall be limited to one request per academic year.

All requests will be reviewed by Human Resources. Appeals for denied requests should be presented in writing to the Chief Diversity Officer.

Any member of the campus community who experiences problems related to misuse of their preferred/chosen first name, or who experiences discrimination should contact the Bias Response Team (BIRT) through their on-line reporting form: <http://iesurveys.potsdam.edu/biasincidentreportingform.htm>

Employees who have legally changed their names must update their employment record through the Office of Human Resources.

Responsibilities

Faculty and Staff

- Use preferred/chosen first name whenever possible.
- Use legal name when required, as outlined in this policy.

- Refrain from using gender specific titles or honorifics on correspondence whenever possible.
- Must not use others’ preferred/chosen first name in a negative, discriminatory and/or retaliatory manner.

Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion/BIRT/Human Resources

- Investigate and respond to complaints regarding misuse of preferred/chosen first names or gender specific titles.

Computing and Technology Services

- Oversee preferred/chosen first name functionality in BearPAWS, including maintenance and testing.

Title IX/Affirmative Action

- Assist students and employees to know where names are publicized on the campus (e.g., directory information) and documenting which name should be used by campus officials when speaking with support networks (e.g., family, guardians)

Human Resources

- Review/approve preferred/chosen first name requests.
- Notify employee in writing if preferred/chosen name was not approved.

Chief Diversity Officer

- Review appeal requests if Human Resources denied preferred/chosen first name.
- Notify employee in writing of outcome of appeal.

Prohibited Conduct

The preferred/chosen first name cannot be used for purposes of misidentification, fraud or misrepresentation and the preferred/chosen first name must meet community standards (i.e. not profane, obscene, lewd, indecent, or discriminatory names; and conform to technical requirements).

Employees who change their names for purposes of misidentification, fraud, or misrepresentation including but not limited to lewd, indecent, or discriminatory names may be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the appropriate collective bargaining agreement.

Employees who use a student’s or employee’s preferred/chosen first name in negative, discriminatory, and/or retaliatory manner may be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the appropriate collective bargaining agreement.

Dissemination

This policy will be included in the Faculty Handbook and be posted on the Human Resources web page.

Change History

Date	Change History
March 22, 2023	New Policy.

Effective Date: March 22, 2023

Responsible Party: Division of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion and Human Resources