Potsdam
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Student Preferred/Chosen First Name Policy

SUNY Potsdam is dedicated to providing a safe and inclusive environment that is welcoming to everyone. As such, the College has created this Preferred/Chosen First Name Policy, to take effect Fall 2019.

A preferred or chosen first name is a first name that a student chooses to be called that is different from their name of record. A name of record is the name that identifies a student for legal and other official purposes. A student's name of record is generally the name given and registered at birth, and which appears on a birth certificate. *Procedures are in place to change a student's name of record in SUNY Potsdam records, if the change has been approved through appropriate official processes; in this case, see the Office of the Registrar.*

SUNY Potsdam recognizes that students may choose to use a first name that is different from their name of record to identify themselves. SUNY Potsdam will allow students to officially notify the College of their preferred or chosen first names, and have this change reflected in some on-campus communication systems. The preferred or chosen first name cannot be used for purposes of misidentification, fraud or misrepresentation and the preferred first name must meet community standards (i.e. preferred/chosen first name cannot be profane, obscene, lewd, indecent, or discriminatory). There are limits to where preferred or chosen first names will be reflected in college communications (see below). Students should be mindful that in cases where the preferred or chosen name is used in publications (such as concert or performance programs), it may impact future professional documentation or credentialing. Thus, careful consideration should be given if a person decides to use a preferred or chosen name in this context.

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

SUNY Potsdam allows a student to identify their preferred name through their BearPAWS account. When a student selects a preferred/chosen name, it will appear instead of their name of record on some university related records and documents. Prospective students can also provide their preferred/chosen first name to the College through the admissions process.

The preferred or chosen first name can be used for certain internal communication and external communications (e.g. website staff bio pages, sports information). Internal applications for the use of approved preferred/chosen first name include but may not be limited to:

- class rosters (including Moodle),
- advising lists,
- housing roster,
- Potsdam email,
- performance and event programs,

- diploma,
- directory,
- Navigate & Campus Labs software,
- Athletic rosters,
- SUNY Potsdam ID card.

SUNY Potsdam ID Cards (student identification cards) will display both names of record and preferred or chosen first names.

The College is obligated to only use the name of record for many official documents and reports, including but not limited to:

- all employment, benefits and payroll records,
- billing records and reimbursements,
- financial aid documents,
- official transcripts,
- official agreements and documents,
- medical & counseling records,
- employee benefits records,
- expense reimbursements,
- vehicle requests (if listed as a driver)
- purchasing authorizations,
- enrollment reporting,
- student conduct,
- external reporting,
- federal immigration documents,
- College and State University of New York (SUNY) reporting for compliance purposes,
- parking tickets and working with law enforcement officers.

Requests for use of preferred or chosen first name shall be limited to one request per academic year. For more information about the preferred/chosen name policy contact the Dean of Students.

Protocol:

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

Students: The Dean of Students will first review preferred or chosen first name requests from students. Students with questions about the policy and/or process for requesting use of a preferred first name or appeals for denied requests should contact the Dean of Students Office. Students who change their name using profane, obscene, lewd, indecent, or discriminatory names may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. In addition,

students will be notified via their Potsdam email address and the preferred/chosen first name(s) will be removed.

Any student who experience problems related to misuse of their preferred/chosen first name, or who experience discrimination, should contact the Bias Response Team (BIRT) through their on-line reporting form:

https://www.potsdam.edu/current/student-resources/campus-reporting-forms

Adjusting our various information systems to include the use of the preferred or chosen first name will take some time due to the complexity and interrelated nature of systems and record sources. We appreciate your patience as we expand our ability to use the preferred or chosen first name in college records, and work toward providing a solution for this important need.

Students who have or would like to legally change their name should contact the Registrar's Office.

FAQ:

Can anyone update my preferred name?

No. Only you as the student with access to your BearPAWS account can update your preferred or chosen first name.

How do I set my preferred name?

Log into BearPAWS and go to the personal information menu.

Can I set my preferred name to whatever I want?

SUNY Potsdam reserves the right to review and remove a preferred or chosen first name if determined inappropriate.

Can I use my preferred name for everything at the College?

No. Your preferred or chosen first name can only be used and will only appear on the items listed above. Your name of record will appear on all other College reports and documents.

Responsibility

Faculty and Staff

- Use a student's preferred or chosen first name whenever possible.
- Use a student's name of record when required.
- Refer students to the Offices of the Registrar and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as needed.

- Refrain (or consult with the student) from using gender specific titles or honorifics on student correspondence whenever possible. (Note: Mx. May be used for gender non-conforming or gender-neutral individuals.)
- Refrain from using sex/gender on reports/lists except when needed (i.e. room assignments)
- Use pronouns that students request to be used.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion/BIRT

- Investigate and respond to complaints regarding misuse of preferred or chosen names.

Computing and Technology Services

- Oversee preferred or chosen name functionality in BearPAWS, including maintenance, testing, and reviewing for student of policy.

Dean of Students Office

- Will review and approve preferred or chosen first name requests.