

TRANSGENDER AND NON-BINARY EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

I. Policy Section

6.0 Human Resources

II. Policy Subsection

6.1 Transgender and Non-Binary Equal Opportunity Policy

III. Policy Statement

Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) is committed to a College culture that respects and values all students and employees and fosters understanding of gender identity within the College community. All students and employees will adhere to procedures established in connection with this policy to ensure a safe working and learning environment, free of discrimination and harassment, which promotes the educational and social wellbeing of transgender and non-binary students and employees.

IV. Reason for the Policy

To accommodate, support, and protect transgender and non-binary students and employees from discrimination and harassment.

V. Entities Affected by this Policy

All students, employees, and community guests.

VI. Who Should Read this Policy

Students
Employees
Board of Trustee Members
Members of the community

VII. Related Documents

Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy (6.2)
Harassment Policy (6.3)
Sexual Misconduct Policy (6.4)
Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy (6.5)
Misconduct Policy (6.25)
Privacy and Access to Student Records (FERPA) Policy (8.6)

Student Code of Conduct Policy (8.30)

VIII. Contacts

General Counsel: Policy owner
Registrar
Title IX Coordinator
Deputy Title IX Coordinators
Executive Director of Human Resources

IX. Definitions

A. Cisgender:

Refers to a person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex the person was identified as having at birth.

B. Sex:

The classification of people as male, female, or intersex. At birth, infants are assigned a sex, usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy (this is what is written on the birth certificate). However, a person's sex is actually a combination of bodily characteristics including chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics.

C. Gender Identity:

One's internal, deeply held sense of one's gender. For transgender people, their gender identity or expression does not conform to that typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Most people have a gender identity of man or woman (or boy or girl). For some people, their gender identity does not fit neatly into one of those two categories. Unlike gender expression (see below), gender identity is not visible to others.

D. Gender Expression:

External manifestations of gender, expressed through one's name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, or body characteristics. Western society identifies these cues as masculine and feminine although what is considered masculine and feminine changes over time and varies by culture. Most people seek to make their gender expression align with their gender identity and not necessarily with the sex they were assigned at birth.

E. Non-Binary:

This term refers to a person who experiences their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the categories of man and woman. They may define their gender as falling somewhere in between man and woman, or they may define it as wholly different from these terms. Although transgender people may identify as non-binary, the term is not a synonym for transgender.

F. Sexual Orientation:

Describes an individual's pattern of physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to other people. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Examples of sexual orientations, or lack thereof, include lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, heterosexual, or queer. People, regardless of their gender identity, can have any sexual orientation.

G. Transgender:

A broad umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. These individuals may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms - including transgender, non-binary, or trans.

H. Transitioning:

Transitioning refers to processes undertaken by some transgender people to align their gender expression with their gender identity. Aspects of transitioning may include social processes (e.g., telling others, changes in appearance, using a different name and/or pronouns), medical processes (e.g., hormone therapies, gender confirmation surgery), and/or legal processes (e.g., obtaining a court-ordered name change and/or change in legal sex designation). The processes undertaken vary widely from one transgender person to another. These processes are private decisions individuals make and might vary based on factors like safety, insurance coverage, access to resources, cost, etc.

I. Legal Name:

The name that is used to describe an individual on legal documentation, which may include driver's license, passport, birth certificate, etc.

J. Preferred Name:

The name a person uses and will be called at the College, which may be different than their legal name.

X. Procedures

A. Campus Records:

If GRCC is not legally required to use a student's or employee's legal name and gender on College records or documents, GRCC shall use the name and gender preferred by the student or employee. For example, when a department is sending communications, the expectation is that the query is based on preferred name to the extent possible.

Students and employees should be aware that while the College will use their preferred names wherever possible, some situations still may necessitate the use of a person's legal name. For example, external documents or documents provided to external sources (e.g., FAFSA forms) require the use of a person's legal name.

Students seeking additional information regarding the use of their legal name or preferred name on any documents should contact the Student Records office. Employees seeking additional information should contact the Human Resources Information System Specialist.

B. Restrooms:

All students and employees may use gender neutral, "all gender," or single-occupancy restroom facilities at GRCC. Students and employees may use any gender-specific restroom that is consistent with their gender identity or gender expression.

C. Privacy:

Except as set forth herein or as legally required, College employees shall not disclose information that may reveal a student's transgender status. Under the Family Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA), only those College employees with a legitimate educational need may have access to a student's records or the information contained within those records. Disclosing confidential student information to other employees, students, parents, or other third parties may violate privacy laws, including but not limited to FERPA. GRCC's Privacy and Access to Student Records (FERPA) policy defines information, known as directory information, that can be shared without student consent.

D. Names/Pronouns:

Students and employees should be addressed using their preferred/chosen name and pronouns. Students are not required to obtain a court-ordered name and/or gender change or to change their student records as a prerequisite to being addressed by the name and pronoun that corresponds to their gender identity. Students who need to change their names under this policy should submit this request to the Student Records Office by completing the Preferred Name Request Form. Employees who need to change their names under this policy should submit their names to the Human Resources Information System Specialist.

E. RaiderCards and GRCC E-mail addresses:

Once a student has submitted the Preferred Name Request Form to the Student Records office and the name change is completed, the student may visit the Office of Student Life and Conduct for an updated RaiderCard. Employees should contact the Human Resources Information System Specialist to process their request and may then visit the Office of Student Life and Conduct for an updated RaiderCard.

Should a student need to update their GRCC e-mail address to include the name that reflects the individual's gender identity, they should contact the Student Records Office. Employees who need to update their GRCC e-mail address should contact the Human Resources Information System Specialist.

F. Sports and Physical Education:

Transgender students have the same opportunities to participate in physical education as all other students. Students may participate in physical education and sports in accordance with the student's gender identity. Participation in NJCAA (or formal) competition will be resolved on a case-by-case basis by the Title IX Coordinator.

G. Locker Room Accessibility:

GRCC aims to support transgender and non-binary students and employees while ensuring the safety of all. The use of locker rooms by transgender students, employees, and members of the community requires colleges to consider numerous factors, including, but not limited to the transgender individual's preference, protecting privacy, maximizing social integration, minimizing stigmatization, ensuring equal opportunity to participate, the student's age, and protecting the safety of all persons.

Gender-designated locker room access is initially assigned based on gender as listed on the GRCC application. Should a student need to update their locker room access to correspond with their gender identity, they should contact the Student Records Office. Employees who need to update their locker room access should contact the Human Resources Information System Specialist.

A transgender student or employee who expresses a need or desire for increased privacy will be provided with reasonable alternative arrangements. Reasonable alternative arrangements may include the use of a private area, a separate changing schedule, or use of a single stall restroom. Any alternative arrangement should be provided in a way that protects the individual's ability to keep their transgender status confidential.

A transgender person will not be required to use a locker room or restroom that conflicts with the individual's gender identity.

H. Gender Segregation in Other Areas:

In any other circumstance where students are separated by gender in College activities (e.g., overnight field trips), students will be permitted to participate in accordance with their gender identity. Activities that may involve the need for accommodations to address student privacy concerns will be addressed on a case-by-case basis considering the factors set forth above.

I. Resources:

1. Resources for Transgender Students:

There are a number of resources available to support students, including transgender and non-binary students. Students can contact GRCC counseling faculty to confidentially discuss support needs. GRCC Counselors are a source of support for students regarding gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. Students can schedule an appointment with a counselor by calling (616) 234-4130. Students who feel unsafe may ask GRCC Campus Police for an escort around campus by calling (616) 234-4010. Student Organizations, including StandOut supporting LGBTQ+ students, offer connection and support for students looking to get involved at GRCC. Students can also contact GRCC's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for information regarding resources and support by calling (616) 234-3390.

2. Resources for Transgender Employees:

Employees should contact the Human Resources Information System Specialist or the General Counsel's office to discuss support needs under this policy or questions about any available processes. Employees who wish to connect with counseling can contact the Employee Assistance Program 24/7 by calling (800) 442-0809 or (616) 455-6210.

i. The following organizations provide support to transgender individuals:

- Grand Rapids Trans Foundation is a local organization seeking to create opportunities for the trans community in Grand Rapids by offering academic scholarships and other support, including legal name change support. The Foundation can also be accessed online at: <https://grtransfoundation.org/>.
- Grand Rapids Pride Center is an organization in Grand Rapids which seeks to empower the local LGBTQ Community through supportive services and awareness. The Grand Rapids Pride Center can also be accessed online at: <https://grpride.org/>.
- Transgender Michigan is an organization in Michigan which provides advocacy, support and education while also creating coalitions in the state of Michigan. It also maintains a crisis hotline which can be reached at 855-345-TGMI, and can be accessed online at: <https://www.transgendermichigan.org/>.
- The Trevor Project is the leading national organization focused on crisis and suicide prevention efforts among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth. The Trevor Project maintains a 24/7 suicide hotline, which you can reach by calling 1-866-488-7386, by texting START to 678678, or by accessing the Trevor Project's online chat feature located on their website at: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>.
- GLSEN (The Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network) is a prominent organization supporting GLBT youth. They have resources about creating safe and supportive environments, specifically focused on K-12 students. GLSEN can be accessed online at: <https://www.glsen.org/>.

XI. Forms

Preferred Name Request Form
Email Change Request Form

XII. Effective Date

August 2015

XIII. Policy History

August 2015 - New Policy

February 2016 - Updated to detail procedure for requesting changes in student/employee's official documentation at GRCC

November 2019 - Updated to make policy applicable to gender non-conforming students, update processes, clarify use of restrooms and locker rooms, adding relevant definitions and updating language used in policy to meet best practices.

January 2022 - Updated to clarify contacts for processes related to changing preferred names, email addresses and updating locker room access. Replaced the term "gender non-conforming" with "non-binary".

XIV. Next Review/Revision Date

January 2024