

NAME CHANGE POLICY

I. Policy Section

6.0 Human Resources

II. Policy Subsection

6.1 Name Change Policy

III. Policy Statement

Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) is committed to a College culture that respects and values all students and employees. GRCC recognizes the need or preference for students and employees to utilize a "preferred name" other than their legal given or first name. To encourage a more open and welcoming campus community environment, GRCC has established a policy whereby any community member has the option to use a "preferred" name on campus, wherever legally permissible.

IV. Reason for the Policy

GRCC recognizes and supports the members of its community who wish to use preferred names where legally permissible. This policy seeks to ensure the College's compliance with applicable laws and regulations; to protect campus community members against discrimination, including based upon gender identity and expression; and to support members of the GRCC community. The ability to utilize a preferred name is not limited to use by transgender and non-binary students and employees, and is available to anyone who uses a chosen first name on a daily basis other than their legal/primary first name. This policy outlines a process/procedure by which individuals may designate a preferred name to be used, as available in systems related to the College's business and education operations.

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

Title IX, Non-Discrimination, and Anti-Harassment
Policy (6.2)

Misconduct Policy (6.23)

Privacy and Access to Student Records (FERPA) Policy (8.6)

Student Code of Conduct Policy (8.30)

VIII. Contacts

Policy Owner: Director of Equal

Opportunity Compliance

Registrar

General Counsel

Deputy Title IX Coordinators

Executive Director of Human Resources

Director of Student Life and Leadership

IX. Definitions

A. Legal Name:

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

B. Preferred Name:

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

X. Procedures

A. 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 their preferred name and pronouns that correspond 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.

B. 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.

Development to accommodate use of a preferred name in College systems is ongoing. Not all College information systems, databases, and processes may be able to display a preferred name and many uses of an individual's name require display of the legal name; therefore, individuals who utilize a preferred name should always be prepared to reference their legal name and provide corresponding identification when necessary. A preferred name designation is not a legal name change.

C. Privacy:

Except as set forth herein or as legally required, College employees shall not disclose information in connection with this policy that is protected under the Family Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA). Under 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 policy defines information, known as directory information, that can be shared without student consent.

D. 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.

G. Complaints

It is an expectation of the College that, absent a legal obligation, students and employees be addressed by their preferred name and pronouns. Any campus community member who has questions or concerns about the use of their preferred name and pronouns by others may contact the Director of Equal Opportunity Compliance.

Any allegations related to discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other protected characteristic shall be investigated as outlined in applicable College policies, including: Policy 6.2 (Title IX, Non-Discrimination, and Anti-Harassment Policy).

H. Additional Resources for Transgender and Non-Binary Communities

This policy encompasses the use of preferred names and pronouns for all members of the GRCC community, reflecting GRCC's commitment to inclusivity and respect for individual identity. However, in recognition of the needs of individuals who identify as members of the transgender and non-binary communities, GRCC encourages campus community members to visit the LGBTQ+ Resources section on the Center for Student Life & Leadership webpage or to contact the College's Student Life and/or Title IX staff to learn more about available supports, including gender-inclusive restrooms and locker rooms.

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".

February 2025

XIV. Next Review/Revision Date

January 2027