**Classroom Best Practices Regarding Trans\* Community Members**

*Compiled by the Trans\* Policy Committee in collaboration with the Dean of Faculty and Dean of Students, Hampshire College*

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The following guidelines are designed to educate faculty about best practices in the classroom regarding trans\* community members, and serve as a reminder about the importance of all community members’ compliance with Hampshire College’s non-discrimination policy. Hampshire College considers discrimination and harassment on the basis of transgender status, gender identity, gender expression, sex and sexual orientation to be in conflict with the mission of Hampshire College.

The goal is to ensure that all of Hampshire College is a safe and welcoming environment for all trans\* community members.

While the Trans\* Policy Committee is looking at many different areas on campus to promote safety and respect, one of the first priorities of the committee is to address classroom experiences of trans\* students. The answers to most frequently asked questions below are intended to assist with creating an inclusive learning environment for all.

Students, staff and faculty as members of our community have the right to use and be referred to with their preferred name and preferred pronouns, which may differ from what is listed on their legal documents. Community members are expected to respect and use ONLY a person’s preferred name and pronouns when communicating with them in the classroom, and when referring to them elsewhere, including but not limited to course evaluations or communication with third parties (such as CASA or other administrative officers, to other faculty and staff etc.). Community members have the right to change their preferred name and pronouns at any point.

The Trans\* Policy Committee is working with the Dean of Faculty, Dean of Students and Human Resources to educate faculty, students and staff and will offer training sessions in the fall. These offices will also follow up on any difficulties trans\* community members may encounter.

We hope that this document will aid everyone in becoming acquainted with best practices and policies.

Eva Rueschmann, Dean of Faculty

Diana Fernandez, Dean of Students

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**Q: What if someone’s stated name doesn’t appear on your roster?**

A: On the first day of class ask students to go around and introduce themselves. If someone is not on your roster (because they are not registered, have a preferred name that is not listed, etc.), please ask them to communicate with you privately (i.e. via email, after class without other individuals present) about the matter and how they wish to be referred to. Though we have a preferred name system for class rosters, students cannot change the way their legal last name appears and this sometimes prevents them from having their preferred name appear on the roster. Additionally, Five College students do not have access to preferred name technology.

**Q: How do you normalize the use of your preferred name, title, and pronouns in the classroom?**

A: When introducing yourself, it is helpful to include your pronouns (“I use he and him, she and her, they and them, and/or zie and hir,” etc.) along with what name(s) you are comfortable with others using for you, such as John, Professor John, or Professor Doe.

**Q: Is it useful to have students write their pronouns on notecards during class**

**introductions?**

A: Yes, as long as it is connected to their name and face. This could be useful to have as a reference so you make sure to use the correct pronouns for each student in person or when writing evaluations. Note that if this is the only venue in which you ask students for pronouns, students will not know what pronouns to use for each other.

**Q: What if I use the wrong pronoun for someone in class or in a meeting?**

A: If you catch your mistake immediately, it might be appropriate to briefly apologize and correct yourself. If you miss the opportunity, contact the person privately and apologize, affirm your commitment to referring to them correctly, and ask how the person would prefer you handle a mistake in the future.

**Q: What if you witness someone using the wrong pronoun for another person?**

A: If you think the person might be comfortable with your intervention, interrupt to ask them, “Can you remind us of your pronouns Sam? Oh, you use they and them, thank you for reminding all of us of that.” If you do not catch it in time, or it is a repeated occurrence despite the reminders, ask them how you as the class leader can make them feel more comfortable. Also, state at the beginning of the class that it is an academic expectation (just as showing up to class, doing the work, and so on is required in order to receive an evaluation) that students, staff and faculty use the correct names and pronouns for one another. Perhaps briefly discuss a classroom policy for how to correct one another respectively and effectively if someone is mispronounced or misnamed.

**Q: What if I do not understand something about transgender people or experience?**

A: First ask, do I need to understand these concepts in order to appropriately engage with the community member(s) so as to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment? If the answer is yes, try self-educating or asking someone who is a trans\* ally to help you understand. One campus resource is Emily Rimmer, the Director of Women’s and Queer Services. Do not expect a trans\* community member to be your personal educator. While they may be a good resource for this information and they may feel comfortable answering your questions, it is not their personal responsibility as a trans\* individual to answer any or all questions you may have about trans\* identities or related issues.

**Q: How do I refer to a student in their evaluation?**   
A: Professors should use student's preferred names and pronouns in their evaluations. You are not required to use a student's legal name or assigned pronouns in their evaluation.