MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Name, Gender, Sexual Identity and Pronoun Data Policy
July 2021

Background:
In April of 2021, Jabbar R. Bennett, Ph.D., MSU's vice president and chief diversity officer, and Dr. Melissa Woo, Executive Vice President for Administration, charged a short-term cross-campus workgroup to propose a set of university-wide standards regarding the collection and sharing of name, gender, and pronoun data of our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and donors.

Recommendation and How to Use This Document:
Using input from students, faculty, and staff, as well as looking at current best practices referenced below, the workgroup has determined that the following changes be implemented as soon as possible across all campus data systems that identify individuals (name, pronoun, honorific, etc) or collect demographic data (gender, sexual identity).

Where possible, system field names should be updated to reflect the recommended changes. If a database label change is not possible, at a minimum, any public facing data entry form or public display (i.e., directory or bio update form) must adopt these changes.

The fields of "GENDER", "SEXUAL IDENTITY", and "PRONOUNS" must allow multiple responses. Allowing users to select multiple options will enable them to list their identities as accurately as possible, and give them the ability to decide how they want to be represented and referred to.

Names: Two Options Required

1. **LEGAL NAME:** The name that appears on an individual's legal documents (i.e., passport, driver's license, Social Security card). The LEGAL NAME field should only be used when required by local, state, federal law or University policy.
2. **NAME:** to refer to the name that is used by the individual for self-identification. This field should be used for all regular communications with the individual (unless LEGAL NAME is required by law).

   - An Individual's NAME field should be used when the university sends general communications to that person. If no NAME exists for an Individual, the LEGAL NAME may be used.
   - In current external data collection/display forms and internal databases, the "PREFERRED NAME" data label (if used) should be replaced with "NAME."
   - The NAME field should be populated based on the individual's directive and can be changed without documentation.
   - If a database label change is not possible, at a minimum any public facing data entry form or public display (i.e., directory or bio update form) must adopt these changes.
   - Where possible, pronunciation aids should be incorporated (such as ability to record how one pronounces their own name).

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Gender: Two Options Required

1. **LEGAL SEX**: This is distinct from birth-assigned sex. This is the gender marker on a person's government issued ID. This value should only be used when required by local, state, federal law or University policy. In all other cases, GENDER should be collected and used.

   Data Values:
   - ❖ Male
   - ❖ Female
   - ❖ X

2. **GENDER:** This field is to be made available to be leveraged by the individual but must not be information that they are required to provide.

   Data Values (multiple responses allowed):
   - ❖ Woman
   - ❖ Man
   - ❖ Cisgender
   - ❖ Transgender
   - ❖ Non-binary
   - ❖ Genderqueer
   - ❖ Gender non-conforming
   - ❖ Agender
   - ❖ Two-spirit
   - ❖ Prefer not to specify
   - ❖ Enter your own: (open text field)

   - ● The GENDER field should only be populated if the information is obtained directly from the Individual - it should never be assumed.

Additional Data Fields:

3. **SEXUAL IDENTITY**: This field is to be made available to be leveraged by the individual but must not be information that they are required to provide.

   Data Values (multiple responses allowed):
   - ❖ Asexual
   - ❖ Bisexual
   - ❖ Demisexual
   - ❖ Gay
   - ❖ Lesbian
   - ❖ Pansexual
   - ❖ Queer
   - ❖ Questioning or unsure
   - ❖ Same-gender Loving
   - ❖ Straight
   - ❖ Prefer not to specify
   - ❖ Enter your own: _____

   - ● The SEXUAL IDENTITY/ORIENTATION field should only be populated if the information is obtained directly from the individual - it should never be assumed.

4. **PRONOUNS:**

   Data Values (multiple responses allowed):
   - ● She/her/hers
   - ● He/him/his
   - ● They/them/theirs
   - ● No pronouns, just use my name
   - ● Enter your own: (open text field)

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5. HONORIFICS/PREFIXES:

Data Values (minimum required values):
- ❖ Mr.
- ❖ Ms.
- ❖ Mx.
- ❖ Miss
- ❖ Mrs.
- ❖ Dr.
- ❖ Enter your own: (open text field)
- ❖ None

- The HONORIFICS/PREFIXES field should only be populated if the information is obtained directly from the individual - it should never be assumed.

Maintaining Privacy

- Include a disclaimer on any data collection forms as to how the information will be used.
- Where possible, a University unit or member who is collecting information about University members' legal sexes, sexes assigned at birth, and/or genders should explain at the time of collection the reason for collecting the information and how the information will be used. University members do not have to respond to requests to disclose their legal sex, sex assigned at birth, or gender identity, except when legally required or when there is a legitimate University-related reason for the request.
- Units must take reasonable steps to maintain the privacy of the names, pronouns, genders, and legal sexes of University members that are maintained in University records. Only school officials with a legitimate educational interest in knowing the name, pronouns, gender and legal sex of a student maintained in University records should access, or be provided access to this information. Only individuals whose work assignments reasonably require access to the name, pronouns, gender and legal sex of any other University member maintained in University records should access or be provided access to, this information.

List of Terms

The following are a set of definitions for the above terms that may be used for roll-over or informational text on data collection:
- LEGAL NAME: The name that appears on an individual's legal documents (i.e., passport, driver's license, Social Security card)
- LEGAL SEX: This is the gender marker on a person's government issued ID (i.e., driver's license or passport)
- NAME: The name used by an individual for daily self-identification and should be used at all times to refer to that individual unless legality requires otherwise.
- GENDER: A person's deep-seated, internal sense of who they are as a gendered being, specifically, the gender which they identify themselves
- SEXUAL IDENTITY: Identities related to a person's feelings of attraction towards other people
- PRONOUNS: Linguistic tools we use to refer to ourselves or others
- PREFIX: a title used before a person's name (i.e., Mr., Ms., Mx., Dr.)

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References

Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals. "Suggested Best Practices for Asking Sexual Orientation and Gender on College Applications." April 2015, on Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals website, https://www.lgbtcampus.org/assets/docs/suggested%20best%20practices%20for%20asking%20sexual%20orientation%20and%20gender%20on%20college%20applications.pdf

Green, E. R., & Maurer, L. (2015). *The teaching transgender toolkit: A facilitator's guide to increasing knowledge, decreasing prejudice & building skills*. Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes.