

Recommendations to Make Your Classroom Trans-Inclusive

For the Classroom

For students, it is important to feel safe, especially in the classroom. Regardless of their gender identity, students have the right to learn in a healthy and safe classroom environment. By reading this handout you can be more inclusive in your classrooms. Please read this information with an open mind, some information may be new and seem discouraging, but this is to inform you of some incidents that happen in the classroom at CSUN.

Classroom Guidelines and Standards

Set the tone of the classroom beginning with respect and inquiry. Establish guidelines that the classroom will be set in a respectful environment where everyone can participate without fear or hesitation. Everyone should be referred to by their chosen name and chosen pronoun. A chosen name is given by the student

Roll Call

On the 1st day of class have students introduce themselves instead of calling roll, some students feel they shouldn't disclose their trans identity in the class room, or even avoid telling professors their chosen name all together. Often when the roster is read aloud for attendance, transgender students don't feel comfortable disclosing their chosen name in front of the entire class if a previous name was used. If you require attendance for your classroom, please pass along the attendance sheet. Avoid making assumptions that the name they prefer is on the roll sheet already. There may be an error if they have filled out a preferred name request form.

Pronouns

During class introductions have students share pronouns. Allow students to disclose pronouns to use inside the classroom. Please use the student's preferred name and pronoun the student gives you.

If you aren't sure of a person's pronoun ask, or refer to them by their name only. Assuming someone's pronoun can lead to possibly misgendering further ostracizing students. One way to ask is: "I use he/him/his pronouns, how do you like to be addressed?" This often may be very difficult at first, but it is important to respect anyone, regardless of gender identity.

	Subject	Object	Possessive Adjective	Possessive Pronoun	Reflexive
Female	She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself
Male	He	Him	His	His	Himself
Gender Neutral	They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themselves
Gender Neutral	Ze	Hir	Hir	Hirs	Hirself
Gender Neutral Pronunciation	/zee/	/here/	/here/	/heres/	/hereself/

Previous Names

If a student has a previous name and/or pronoun that you are aware of because you have had the student before or because the name is different on the roster do not reveal this information to others. It will unnecessarily draw attention to the student and may cause discomfort in the classroom. For example, if you knew a student last semester with a different name, use the name the student gives you for new semester.

Identification Cards

If you must require identification after an exam, please be aware not all students' identification matches their preferred name on the class roster. Please be respectful of this matter and talk to the student privately if you have questions or concerns. This can be very stressful for students to go through. Please be aware and cautious when asking for identification.

Address Mistakes

If you make a mistake about someone's pronoun, correct yourself, apologize and carry on the conversation. Please do not focus on the issue entirely, it may cause problems or make the situation worse. This also saves the student from correcting an incorrect pronoun in front of the classroom.

Correcting Others

Whether it be in office hours, speaking with other students, professionals, or staff, when someone makes a pronoun mistake, correct them. It is important and polite to provide the correct information whether the student is present or not. Allowing the mistake going untreated can cause repeated offenses and uncomfortable interactions.

Respect Boundaries

Avoid asking transgender students about personal info; such as: medical care, their birth name, status, name/legal marker changes status, sexual orientation, or even other related inquiries. These questions are inappropriate and would not be asked of other students. These questions are irrelevant to your relationship to this student unless they voluntarily share this information to you or the classroom. It is a student's choice whether or not to disclose in class. Please don't rely on the student to educate the class or speak for the transgender community.

Frequently Used Terminology

Cisgender – A person who by nature or by choice conforms to gender/sex based expectations of society

Transgender – people are those whose psychological self ("gender identity") differs from the social expectations for the physical sex they were born with.

Gender Non-conforming – A person who don't conform to society's expectations of gender expression based on the gender binary, expectations of masculinity and femininity, or how they should identify their gender.

Agender – A person who is internally ungendered or does not have a felt sense of gender identity.

Genderfluid – A person whose gender identification and presentation shifts, whether within or outside of societal, gender-based expectations.

Genderqueer – A person whose gender identity is neither man nor woman, is between or beyond genders, or is some combination of genders.

Two Spirit – American Indian/First Nations/Native American persons who have attributes of both men and women, have distinct gender and social roles in their tribes, and are often involved with mystical rituals (shamans).

Challenge the Gender Binary

There are many CSUN students, who identify outside of the gender binary of woman/man. Students may identify as genderqueer, genderfluid, or a number of gender identities. The reference to only women and men in the classroom can be misleading, unwelcoming, and discouraging to students. Be aware of language, and try to use inclusive language within the classroom:

- Use “individuals of all gender identities” or “students” instead of “men and women” or “ladies and gentlemen.”
- Use “partner” or “significant other” instead of “boyfriend”/ “girlfriend” or “husband”/ “wife.”
- Avoid titles such as “Mr.,” “Mrs.,” “Ms.,” “Ma’am”, and “Sir.”

Taking it Further

Include transgender issues on your syllabus and help your students learn to talk about issues of gender respectfully and understand the importance. State on your syllabus that discrimination will not be tolerated within the classroom and everyone’s gender identity is valid. Include a nondiscrimination statement on the syllabus which includes gender identity. Important transgender issues can be found in housing, healthcare, employment, criminal justice, education, public benefits and legal protection.

The Pride Center at California State University, Northridge is always readily available to help students and faculty. To request a transgender awareness presentation email trans@csun.edu to schedule a workshop.