



# **PERSONAL PRONOUNS: A RESOURCE FOR FACULTY**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

### **What are personal pronouns, and why do they matter?**

Personal pronouns take the place of a person's name. The only way to be certain about a person's pronouns is to ask them; making assumptions may lead to misgendering, misidentifying, and/or otherwise negatively impacting the person. To respect each person's identity and maintain and enhance our inclusive environment in the Coast Community College District, it is important that we use correct pronouns.

### **How do I initiate a conversation about personal pronouns with students?**

Instructors can create an inclusive in-person and online classroom environment by speaking about pronouns from the start. Here are a few options:

- Include your pronouns on the course syllabus.
- Include your pronouns in your email signature.
- Include your pronouns in your Zoom display name.
- Wear a pin, button, or badge displaying your pronouns.
- Provide students with the opportunity to fill out a first day questionnaire and/or write a short introductory letter. Offer them the option to share their pronouns in this space.
- Select your pronouns in your Canvas profile; they will display next to your name.
- Notify students that they may identify their pronouns in Canvas so that their classmates and instructors can refer to them properly.
- Use your students' correct pronouns. Do not make assumptions.

## How do I promote inclusive language in class?

- Avoid making assumptions about a student's pronouns.
- Use students' first names when possible.
- Omit gendered generalizations (instead of "Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for a great session!" go with, "Everyone, thank you for a great session!").
- Use examples in class discussion, assignments, etc. that reflect your attention to inclusive language.

## Where will personal pronouns be displayed?

Starting Summer 2020, each Canvas user will have the option to select their pronouns from a dropdown menu on the Canvas profile page. Users are not required to select pronouns in Canvas; in this case, the user's name will still display. When users do select pronouns, their pronouns will be displayed next to their names in Canvas in these places:

- Assignment Creation Menu
- Assignment Peer Review Page
- Comment Fields
- Course Sections List
- Discussions
- Inbox
- People Page (Course and Groups)
- SpeedGrader
- Student Context Card
- User Navigation Menu
- User Profile Page
- User Settings Page

Because Canvas users who select pronouns will have their pronouns displayed in so many places throughout the system, it should be easy for instructors to reference their students' correct pronouns in this space.

## How do I use the pronouns available in Canvas?

The pronouns available in Canvas are listed here:

- She/Her
- He/Him
- They/Them
- Ze/Hir
- Ze/Zir
- No Pronouns (Use my name.)

Here are examples of how to use the pronouns available in Canvas:

- **(She/Her) She** is a great student, and I appreciate **her** contributions in class!
- **(He/Him) He** is a great student, and I appreciate **his** contributions in class!
- **(They/Them) They** are a great student, and I appreciate **their** contributions in class!
- **(Ze/Hir) Ze** is a great student, and I appreciate **hir\*** contributions in class!
- **(Ze/Zir) Ze** is a great student, and I appreciate **zir\*\*** contributions in class!
- **(No Pronouns. Use my name.) Max** is a great student, and I appreciate **Max's** contributions in class!

\* "Hir" is pronounced like "here."

\*\* "Zir" rhymes with "here."

For additional information on using these pronouns, please see [www.mypronouns.org](http://www.mypronouns.org).

## What happens if I make a mistake?

### *A Learning Opportunity*

As faculty are getting to know their students, mistakes may happen. Remember this important rule: Oops. Ouch. Educate!

In other words, apologize for the error, acknowledge that you are not intentionally disrespecting the person, and correct yourself or ask for a correction. People will appreciate your efforts and diligence as you quickly learn and adapt.

### *Antidiscrimination*

The Coast Community College District has an antidiscrimination policy (BP 3410: Prohibition of Discrimination and Harassment), which includes protections for sex and gender identities. To create a welcoming and safe environment for all members of the Coast community, we participate in the respectful use of personal pronouns.

## Where can I get more information or training on this subject?

All of the Coast Colleges offer SafeZone training regularly, and this is an excellent option for those who want to understand more about pronouns and LGBTQ+ inclusive environments. Please contact your campus Title IX coordinators for more information on upcoming opportunities.

For more specific training and/or information on this subject, please visit the Name Standards and Pronouns section of the [Coast Colleges Equity, Inclusion, and Compliance](#) site or contact Sacha Moore, District Coordinator of Equity, Inclusion, and Compliance, at [smoore@gwc.cccd.edu](mailto:smoore@gwc.cccd.edu).