Preferred Name Policy – College of Social Work

Adopted 06.25.2020

Scope
This policy applies to students at the College of Social Work, University of South Carolina.

Policy Statement
The College of Social Work, University of South Carolina recognizes that some students prefer to identify themselves by a First Name and/or Middle Name other than their Legal Name. Except when the use of an individual’s legal name is required by law or policy, the College will make every effort possible to identify students by their preferred name. This policy does not pertain to official university systems and will not affect how a student’s name appears in Banner or Blackboard. This policy shall not supersede any university policy regulating the use of names legal or otherwise.

Reason for Policy
Students of the COSW community use a name that differs from their legal name to identify themselves. These may include individuals who prefer to use:
- a middle name instead of a first name;
- an anglicized name;
- a name to which the individual is in the process of legally changing;
- a name that better represents the individual’s gender identity; or
- a stage or performance name.

Procedures
An individual seeking to adopt a preferred name that is different from that individual’s legal name must submit this request in writing to the Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion. The Associate Dean will issue a formal letter indicating the student’s preferred name meets the criteria; the Assistant Dean of Students shall distribute said letter to the student’s faculty each semester.

The COSW will not accept a preferred name that is vulgar, offensive, obscene or fanciful, creates confusion of the individual with another individual, or otherwise constitutes misuse or abuse as defined in this policy. The use of a preferred name cannot be used for the purpose of misrepresentation and must otherwise comply with university policies, including the Student Code of Conduct. The Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion in consultation with the Assistant Dean of Students will determine if a student’s preferred name is appropriate under these criteria.

Systems & Processes
The use of a preferred name is internal to the College of Social Work only and does not affect official university systems. A student’s legal name will be used in official records and all electronic systems at the university.

Definitions
Preferred Name – an alternative to the individual’s legal name as designated by the individual
Legal Name – the name an individual uses for official governmental documents
Sanctions
The COSW will address reports of misuse or abuse of preferred names to the College Student Review Committee. The College reserves the right to prohibit the use of preferred names that are deemed misrepresentative and to suspend the individual’s privilege to update a preferred name.