

# Preferred Name Policy

## Purpose

Lawrence University respects the dignity of every individual and therefore establishes this policy to acknowledge and enable the use of a Preferred Name by students and employees who have not legally changed their names. This Policy outlines where a Preferred Name can be used and also outlines the limitations of where the legal name must appear. It also acknowledges an individual's choice of pronouns.

There are many reasons why someone would use a preferred name. A preferred name can be used to express a more accurate gender identity. Some use a preferred name to westernize or Americanize their name or because they prefer a nickname. This policy helps to create a learning environment in which students, faculty, staff and community partners can fully and genuinely participate in the academic and work experience. In that spirit, the University supports all of the members of its community to use their preferred or chosen name where possible.

## Definitions

**Legal Name:** means the first, middle, and last name of an individual that is recorded on the individual's birth certificate, social security card, driver's license, passport, or other legal documents.

**Preferred Name:** also referred to as a chosen name or name in use, means a first name, other than the legal first name, by which the student or employee chooses to be identified, which has been designated by the student in Voyager or supplied on an application. Employees can change their preferred name through the Human Resources Office using the Employee Data Form.

**Pronouns:** means an individual's personal pronouns (for example, he/him/his, she/her/hers, and they/them/theirs are all pronouns that an individual may use).

## Policy Statement

An individual's name is an important aspect of their identity. Lawrence University community members (hereinafter "Community Members") are encouraged to elect a Preferred Name if needed, and to choose their personal pronouns. It is the Policy of Lawrence University that all Community Members respect each other's Preferred Name and Pronouns.

### **I. Electing a Preferred Name & Pronouns**

Community Members who wish to elect a Preferred Name can make the change in Voyager. Lawrence University offers options to allow for some flexibility for how preferred names will be used in the system.

**Option 1:** Provide an alternative first name and/or a middle name. This will become the default name used for communications. This option is often used for members of the community who use a nickname instead of their legal first name. This option does not change your Lawrence University email address if you are a student or prevent other members of the campus community from seeing your legal name.

With Option 1 the preferred name and often the legal name will appear in these locations:

**A. Voyager**

- Salutations and addresses directed to the user
- Instructor class lists (includes both preferred and legal name)
- Advisor lists (includes both preferred and legal names)
- Co-curricular records
- Student Organization rosters and membership displays

**B. Moodle**

- Students can choose to update their preferred name directly in Moodle

**C. Directory Listing**

- Email system address book
- The legal name is shown in the publicly searchable information at [find.lawrence.edu](http://find.lawrence.edu). The preferred name is only shown to authenticated users.

**D. Other Campus Systems**

- Library, Mailroom, Housing, Sunstone and many others
- Merit pages (graduation, Deans List) - <https://lawrence.meritpages.com/>

**Option 2:** Provide an alternative first name and/or a middle name **AND** elect to use this provided name instead of your legal name in all possible display locations including in your Lawrence University email address. **This option will remove your legal name from display in most campus systems.** Please see “Limitations of Using a Preferred Name” section for instances where a legal name must still be used. You can also choose to have your original email address retained for continued mail delivery or removed completely. If you elect to keep your original email addresses based on your legal name that address will remain visible in certain locations within the email system.

With Option 2 only the preferred name will appear in these locations (unless otherwise indicated below):

**A. Voyager**

- Salutations and addresses directed to the user
- Instructor class lists (includes both preferred and legal name)
- Advisor lists (includes both preferred and legal names)
- Co-curricular records
- Student Organization rosters and membership displays

**B. Directory Listing**

- Email system address book
- Public directory at [find.lawrence.edu](http://find.lawrence.edu).

### C. Other Campus Systems

- Library, Mailroom, Housing, Sunstone and many others
- Merit pages (graduation, Deans List) - <https://lawrence.meritpages.com/>

To select either of these two options and to make a change to how your name is displayed login to Voyager and then click **Personal Information**, choose **How to Change Personal Information**, and then pick the option for **Name, Gender, or Pronouns**.

## Limitations of Electing a Preferred Name

Lawrence University has developed this policy to reflect best practice recommendations for the use of a Preferred Name. However, this policy will not be interpreted inconsistently with federal, state, and local requirements governing records. Accordingly, while the University will ensure its due diligence to honor the use of a Preferred Name, a Preferred Name cannot be honored beyond the following parameters:

- Legal Identity.** Certain University records and systems require a legal name. A Community Member's legal name must match that shown on the social security card (in the case of employment) or other documents establishing the employee's or student's legal name, such as a birth certificate, marriage certificate, or court order effecting a change of name. The University cannot change a student's legal name.
- Academic Records.** A student's (or alum's) legal name will remain the key to their academic record. In general, information about the student is used to conduct the regular business of the University and, upon their request, will be sent to others (i.e., transcript).

A Community Member's legal name will appear in the following locations:

- Academic transcripts
- Enrollment and degree verifications (scholarships, financial aid, insurance, employment, other education)
- Diplomas (unless specific request made prior to graduation)
- Financial aid materials
- Student accounts
- Human Resources/Payroll
- LU voter ID card

## II. Legal Name Change Procedure

Prior to processing a legal name change with the Registrar, Community Members must legally change their name by submitting the appropriate documents at the appropriate office.

Community Members should ensure that their name change has been processed with the Social Security Administration to avoid any issues accessing records, such as academic records.

- Student Procedure.** Students who wish to change their legal name with the University must contact the Registrar's Office. To update a student's academic record, the Registrar

must see at least one of the following documents as proof of the change: a court order, marriage certificate, new visa or passport. Once a student's degree is conferred, their legal name will become their permanent academic record name and will not change. Name changes made after graduation will be reflected in the correspondence name that the University will use in its contact with the alum, and for reunions and other events.

- B. **Employee Procedure.** Employees who wish to change their legal name with the University must contact their Human Resources representative to inform them of the name change and submit the requisite legal documents of proof, a social security card, in person.

### III. Names as “Directory Information”

Information associated with a student's academic record is not shared with others except to the extent allowed under the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#). Although most information cannot be disclosed to third parties without written consent, **preferred and legal names are considered “directory information” under FERPA. Therefore, preferred and legal names can be disclosed without written consent unless a student submits a request of non-disclosure to the Registrar.** (See 34 CFR § 99.37).

To request non-disclosure of directory information, use this form:  
[Non-Disclosure of Directory Information](#)

#### **QUICK LINKS:**

1. **Voyager Login to Elect Your Preferred Name and/or Update Your Legal Name:**  
<https://voyager.lawrence.edu/>  
Go to: “Personal Information” > “How to Change Personal Information” > “Name Change Information.”  
Or [Employee Data Form](#)
2. **Legal Name Change Information:**
  - a. [Wisconsin State Form CV-490: Basic Steps to Handling a Name Change](#); *See also* Wisconsin Statute §§ [786.36-37](#).
  - b. [Social Security Article: KA-01981](#).
3. **Emotional Support:** [Wellness Center's Counseling Services](#).
4. **Additional Information:**
  - a. [Supporting Transgender Students in the Classroom, by Dr. Sherry Zane, PhD](#).
  - b. [Transgender Visibility Guide 042013](#)

Please contact the Registrar's Office at [registrar@lawrence.edu](mailto:registrar@lawrence.edu) for additional information.