

# GENDER, TRUE NAME & PRONOUN RESOURCE QUICKGUIDE

As employees of El Camino College, we have the responsibility to ensure our students have a safe and supportive learning environment that is free of discrimination and harassment.

## ***What is gender identity?***

Gender identity is the personal sense of one's own gender. It is based on how much you align (or don't) with what you understand to be the option for gender. It can differ from a person's assigned sex and may be fluid. For example, a student may identify as female, male, or non-binary.

## ***How do I know which pronouns to use?***

El Camino provides students the option of submitting a name change request to their true and preferred name information is submitted to Colleague and used to update your class roster.

If you're not sure which pronouns to use, just ask! You cannot assume anyone's pronouns just by looking at them. You can make students feel more comfortable by telling them your preferred pronouns first, then asking how they would like to be addressed. If they are not comfortable sharing, please do not push them.

**Tip:** If you're not yet sure which pronouns someone goes by, it's generally acceptable to use "they/them" until you find out, or you can refer to someone by their name.

## ***Helpful Definitions***

### ***What is a true name?***

A name that reflects one's gender identity that may not be consistent with the name given at birth. Please note, this is not a "nickname."

### ***What is a dead name?***

The name that a transgender person was given at birth and no longer uses.

**Note:** A student may have both a true and legal name (used on documents such as transcripts or legal identification). Because the legal name change process can be lengthy and costly, a student may not update their legal name until a later point in time.

## ***What are gender neutral pronouns and why do they matter?***

A gender neutral/inclusive pronoun is a pronoun which does not associate a gender with the individual who is being discussed. Examples of gender neutral pronouns are "they/them."

Pronouns can be a major part of person's identity. Making an effort to get someone's pronouns right and referring to people the way they want to be identified is important to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

## ***Do I have to call a student by their true or preferred name?***

Using a student's true name is crucial to their success at El Camino College. It can take some practice to use the right pronouns, so don't stress if you slip up at first. Just apologize and move on.

Many transgender students cite gender identity as a central feature in their leaving college—for example, citing the discrimination they faced as a trans person and the lack of gender-affirming resources to support their transition (Goldberg, Kuvalanka, & Black 2019).

**Intentionally misusing or persistently refusing to respect and use a student's true name and pronouns can deny equal educational opportunities and may be perceived as a violation of Board Policy 3410 (Non-Discrimination).**

**For more information, please visit:**

**LGBTQIA+ Safe Zone Project Website:**

<https://bit.ly/3AUDJux>

**Office of Title IX, Diversity & Inclusion:**

<https://bit.ly/32RfdxM>



**Office of Title IX, Diversity & Inclusion**

