**PRONOUNS**

Pronouns are how we refer to each other in the 3rd person and are the words that serve as a placeholder for someone’s name. Gender pronouns specifically associate gender with the individual who is being referenced or discussed, but there is also a range of gender-neutral pronouns.

**WHY SHOULD I ASK MY STUDENTS ABOUT THEIR PRONOUNS?**

It is impossible to know someone’s pronouns just by looking at them or by reading your students’ names on your class-list. Your students may have a range of pronouns including he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/them/theirs, ze/zir/zirs, and more! For many trans\*, non-binary, and/or genderqueer students, being misgendered (being referred to by the wrong pronouns) can be a very upsetting and dehumanizing experience.

**ASKING FOR PRONOUNS**

It is appropriate and respectful to ask students’ about their pronouns, but just remember that they may not be comfortable sharing them! Let students know they can choose to self-identity or not. It is a good idea to make it optional and encourage students to share their pronouns if they would like to. Once a student shares their pronouns with you, you may also wish to ask them in what contexts they are comfortable being referred to by those pronouns and if they are comfortable with you correcting others who may misgender them.

Some ideas for asking your students about their pronouns:

* When doing introductions, ask students to give their names and share their pronouns if they feel comfortable. Remember to share your own pronouns so you can model inclusive practices and make students feel more comfortable doing so!
* Consider using a confidential “Getting to Know Your Students” survey via Blackboard. Asking about your students’ pronouns through a private survey ensures you are not putting students on the spot and asking them to out themselves in a public setting.

**SHARING YOUR OWN PRONOUNS AND MODELING INCLUSIVE PRACTICES**

A great way to signal to your students that you want to be respectful of their pronouns is to share your own and model the inclusive use of pronouns. The format for sharing your pronouns is simple – write your pronouns in parentheses next to your name e.g. First Name, Last Name (She/Her/Hers)

* Consider including your pronouns in:
  + Your TLP
  + Your Email Signature
  + Your screen name on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra sessions or other online conferencing platforms you are using with students

**WHAT IF I MISGENDER A STUDENT?**

If you misgender a student and you catch it in the moment: correct yourself, apologize, and move on. “Sorry, I meant THEY.” If you realize your mistake after the fact, apologize in private and move on. Do not make this about you and offer a lengthy apology coupled with an explanation!

**WHAT IF I DO NOT KNOW SOMEONE’S PRONOUNS?**

Easy – if you know their name, go with that. If you do not know their name, go with they/them/their to ensure you are being inclusive and not making assumptions about their gender.