06-01.30 - POLICY ON CHOSEN AND PREFERRED NAMES

I. Policy Statement:

Towson University ("University") recognizes that some members of the campus community choose or prefer to use names ("Chosen/Preferred Names") to identify themselves other than their Legal Name. In support of its commitment to providing an inclusive environment, the University has established this Policy to allow members of the campus community to indicate their Chosen/Preferred Name even if they have not changed their Legal Name. The University will endeavor to use the Chosen/Preferred Name where feasible, and will make good faith efforts to use the Chosen/Preferred Name consistent with its capabilities. However, in certain instances, the University must use an individual’s Legal Name, such as on transcripts, financial aid documents, payroll, or when a Legal Name is otherwise required by law, regulation, policy, or procedure.

II. Definitions:

1. "Chosen Name" or "Preferred Name" means the first, middle, and/or last name a person chooses or prefers to use to identify themselves. Examples include, but are not limited to: an individual whose legal first name is Marcia but who now identifies as Marc, may choose or prefer to be called Marc; an individual whose legal first name is Daniel, may prefer to be called Dan; an individual whose legal first name is Xiaojiao, may go by the first name Jessica; and an individual whose legal last name is Smith, may prefer to be called by their prior last name or another last name, such as Rodriguez.

2. "Legal Name" is a person’s official name of record as it appears on government-issued identification such as a birth certificate, driver’s license, passport, social security card, etc.

III. Responsible Executive and Office:

Responsible Executive: Vice President of Administration and Finance
Vice President of Inclusion and Institutional Equity
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Responsible Offices: Division of Administration and Finance
Office of Inclusion and Institutional Equity ("OIIE")
Office of the Provost
IV. **Entities Affected by this Policy:** This Policy applies to all students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

V. **Use of Chosen/Preferred Name:**

Students, faculty, staff, and alumni may identify their Chosen/Preferred Name and the University will use this information where feasible subject to the following:

A. **Permissible Use of Chosen/Preferred Name:** Members of the University community may use their Chosen/Preferred Name to identify themselves and the University acknowledges its responsibility to use a Chosen/Preferred Name where feasible. However, it is solely the responsibility of the individual with the Chosen/Preferred Name to ensure others can accurately identify them (e.g., identifying academic work, processing payroll, etc.).

B. **Prohibited Use of Chosen/Preferred Name:** Chosen/Preferred Names shall not be employed for the purpose of misrepresentation, confusion, disruption (including use of obscene, lewd, profane, or derogatory names, or names that reference illegal acts), avoidance of legal obligations, or in any manner that violates the University’s policies or federal, state, or local laws. As such, the University may deny the requested use of a Chosen/Preferred Name that violates these guidelines. Chosen/Preferred Names that are not administratively possible to implement, including, without limitation, symbols or images, are prohibited. The University reserves the right at any time to discontinue the use of a Chosen/Preferred Name without prior notice to the individual in the event of a policy violation.

C. **Limitations on Use of Chosen/Preferred Name:** A Chosen/Preferred Name does not constitute a change to an individual’s Legal Name. The University is obligated to use the Legal Name for certain purposes. The University will use a Chosen/Preferred Name when feasible and make good faith efforts to update reports, documents, and systems appropriately. Nonetheless, the University cannot guarantee an individual’s Chosen/Preferred Name will necessarily be used in every instance or in a fashion entirely consistent with an individual’s expectation.

VI. **Identifying a Chosen/Preferred Name:**

A. **Students** may request use of a Chosen/Preferred Name electronically at: Towson.edu/ChosenName

B. **Faculty and Staff** may request use of a Chosen/Preferred Name electronically at: Towson.edu/ChosenName

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C. Alumni may request use of a Chosen/Preferred Name by contacting:
Towson.edu/ChosenName

For more information on identifying a Chosen/Preferred Name, please see the
Procedures on Chosen and Preferred Names, available at: Towson.edu/ChosenName

VII. Student Privacy

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), a student’s name,
including the Chosen/Preferred Name, may be disclosed to the public as “directory
information” unless the student opts not to permit such disclosure. Please see
https://www.towson.edu/registrar/grades/ferpa.html for more information.

Related Policies: TU Policy 06-01.00 – Policy Prohibiting Discrimination

Approval Date: 09/04/19
Effective Date: 09/04/19

Approved by: President’s Council

Kim Schatzel, Ph.D.
President

Date 10/3/19