

Senate Document SD 23-9

MEMORANDUM

Amended and Approved,

TO: Fort Wayne Senate 2/19/2024
FROM: Steven A. Hanke, Chair of the Education Policy Committee
DATE: 11/14/2023
SUBJ: Responding to Concerns from Campus Climate Survey: Deadnaming

WHEREAS, the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) is the parent committee of the Senate Advising Subcommittee; and

WHEREAS, the Senate Advising Subcommittee requested that EPC review a resolution to respond to concerns from the Campus Climate Survey regarding “Deadnaming”; and

WHEREAS, EPC completed the review and voted in support of the document going forward;

BE IT RESOLVED, That the attached resolution be considered by the Senate.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Steven Hanke, Chair
Educational Policy Committee

FROM: Ann Livschiz, Chair
Senate Advising Subcommittee

DATE: 3 November 2023

SUBJECT: Responding to Concerns from Campus Climate Survey: “Deadnaming”

Whereas, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are one of PFW’s stated strategic goals;

Whereas, PFW’s diversity commitment statement states that

“Each member of the department/school is committed to working to build and sustain an equitable and inclusive work environment where cultural diversity is celebrated and valued. We believe diversity benefits and enriches the development of all of our students, staff, and faculty in our department.”

And

“Diversity is a core value at Purdue University Fort Wayne and in the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We are passionate about building and sustaining an inclusive and equitable working and learning environment for all students, staff, and faculty. We believe every member on our team enriches our diversity by exposing us to a broad range of ways to understand and engage with the world, identify challenges, and to discover, design and deliver solutions.”

Whereas, PFW defines inclusion as “A welcoming culture in which differences are celebrated and everyone is valued, respected, and able to reach their full potential,”

Whereas, PFW has a statement about civility, which states that

“Prominent among the values that define the academic community is civility, which includes mutual respect, fairness, and politeness. Membership in any community requires a concern for the common good for all who belong to that community. Each individual may possess different ideas, as well as different ways of communicating those ideas, particularly in a community as varied and diverse as a university. Because of these differences, respect and civility are integral to maintaining the quality of the academic environment and free inquiry. Respect and civility should therefore be afforded to all individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion, family status, socioeconomic level, educational background, veteran status, or position at the university.”

Whereas, during the discussions of the results of campus climate survey, deadnaming of students by instructors in class was identified as a significant student concern;

Whereas, “deadnaming” refers to incidents of using the name someone was assigned at birth, rather than the name they choose to identify by in class or in writing, or using a name that the individual no longer uses;

Whereas, the practice of “deadnaming” can be invalidating and traumatic, a sign of disrespect, and in some cases even dangerous as it potentially outs an individual;

Whereas, studies show that use of chosen names helps lower mental health risks;

Whereas, studies show that deadnaming can result in avoidance of certain situations, people, and places, attention to this problem and efforts to reduce deadnaming is an important retention and student success initiative;

Whereas, the university has taken important steps in reducing the risk of deadnaming by allowing students to enter preferred name in addition to legal name in the university system;

Whereas it is Purdue University policy that students (and staff and faculty) may use their preferred names on campus regardless of whether it matches their legal name;

Whereas, we want to promote an inclusive classroom environment both as respect for our students’ humanity and important recruitment and retention tool;

Whereas, up to now different interfaces and reports in the university system include students’ preferred name, or legal name, or both;

Whereas, a new Banner update that is currently scheduled to be implemented during Summer 2024 will make it possible for students’ preferred names to appear on the rosters that are accessible to faculty;

Whereas, we believe that at least part of the problem of deadnaming can be attributed to people not realizing that different reports may give them legal and not preferred names;

Whereas, Office of Institutional Research has been working hard to update the reports to include students’ preferred names or ensure that the column headings on the reports specify “legal name” or “preferred name,” rather than “first name,”

BE IT RESOLVED, that senate encourage academic units—departments and colleges—to discuss the importance of using the students’ preferred names and the importance of fostering an inclusive classroom environment, which includes using students’ preferred names in the classroom setting;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that since not all students take advantage of the option to enter preferred name into the system (for example, if they live at home and do not want their preferred name to appear on the mail that they receive), we encourage faculty to respect and honor students' requests to use their preferred names that may be transmitted to faculty through means other than the up-to-date class roster;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that once Office of Institutional Research finishes updating current reports in COGNOS, a list of updated reports will be made available to faculty and staff, who would be encouraged to look at whether their reports are using preferred or legal names;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that individuals and units that utilize COGNOS reports for student outreach and retention efforts, and other related activities, verify to make sure that the reports they are using include students' preferred names rather than legal names;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that since accurate information on rosters that will be available by Fall 2024 only addresses the problem of faculty deadnaming due to inaccurate information, we ask the OAA to look into clarifying and promoting policies that will protect students from being deadnamed, in particular clarifying the distinction between "free speech" and commitment to an inclusive classroom environment, and making sure that students understand their rights in these situations.