Preferred Name Usage

The University of Denver is aware that many of its constituents routinely use a first name or full name other than their legal name. As part of being a welcoming and inclusive campus, DU will implement changes to increase the use of preferred names in the course of DU business and education.

Because use of legal name is necessary in certain records and communications, both the legal name and preferred name (if desired) are stored in DU's information systems. Implementation of the use of preferred names will be a process that occurs over time. When a student or employee contacts a DU office in person or by phone, the staff in that office may only have electronic access to the legal name.

What is a “Preferred Name?”

DU will maintain two types of Preferred Names: 1) A preferred first name; and 2) A chosen/professional name.

A first name by which an individual wishes to be identified that is other than the individual's legal name is a "preferred first name". Students and employees can submit a preferred first name online. DU will work toward using preferred first name in most instances such as correspondence and online applications. In some instances the preferred first name will be displayed in addition to legal name, for example: Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta (Lady Gaga).

If an individual's preferred identity includes a different surname or wishes to limit the display of their legal name, they may specify a "chosen/professional" name. This "chosen/professional name" will replace the legal name in most cases as the University is able to implement them. For example, chosen/professional name of Shania Twain would replace the legal name of Eileen Regina Edwards.

While DU will work toward primary use of the preferred first name or chosen/professional name in most instances, students and employees should be aware that the use of the legal name will continue to be necessary in certain communications and processes due to DU business or legal requirements and/or system limitations.

Students may also specify a “diploma name” to use on DU diplomas. Additional information on diploma names can be found here: http://www.du.edu/registrar/records/diplomas.html.

What are the reasons for using Preferred Names?

Many members of the DU community use a first name or full name that differs from their legal name. These may include individuals who prefer to use:

- a middle name instead of a first name;
- a nickname;
- an anglicized name;
- names with special characters: e.g., Renée, François, Zoë, Sørina, Peña
- a name to which the individual is in the process of legally changing;
- a name that better represents the individual’s gender identity;
- a name that reflects professional activities, publications, etc.

When will DU begin to use Preferred Names?

DU began using preferred names in certain internally developed processes such as the online directory several years ago. Our information systems have recently been enhanced to include preferred names in other places such as the Student Profile and class lists. However, initially, many systems and processes (including, but not limited to: student bills, transcripts, and health records) will continue to display only the legal name. Going forward, and in a manner consistent with legal and/or business requirements, DU will continue to implement processes by which the preferred name, not the legal first name, may be used. Due to the scope of this project, system modifications will take several months to complete.

Campus departments will be encouraged to use preferred names in their business practices.

How can I request that my preferred name be entered in DU information systems?

Members of the DU community can submit a preferred first name online now. Log onto PioneerWeb (https://pioneerweb.du.edu). Click the “MyWeb” tab. Expand the menu and click "Personal Information." Click "Update Preferred First Name" and submit your preferred first name. Preferred first names can be removed by clicking Update with nothing in the field.

To update your "chosen/professional name" obtain the Name Change Request Form here: http://www.du.edu/registrar/media/documents/namechange.pdf. Submit the form to the office indicated in the instructions. The form may not be submitted electronically. Chosen/professional names may be removed by the same form.

Where will my Preferred Name be used?

It is the University’s intent to use Preferred Name in most public-facing uses. This would include written communications, web displays and internal reports and processes. Preferred Name is already used in the DU online directory, class and grade lists and in selected online applications. Full
implementation of the use of Preferred Name will take place over time. Not all University departments will have access to Preferred Name while interacting with students.

**Where will my legal name be used?**
Use of legal name is necessary for certain data exchanges such as those to government agencies that verify the identity of a student by using the student's legal name. These include (but are not limited to) transcripts, payroll, tax, insurance, banking, financial aid and federal or state reporting.

**Can I request any Preferred Name I want?**
Individuals may designate a preferred name with which they identify and by which they prefer to be known. DU reserves the right to deny a request to include a preferred name in its information systems if the request is fraudulent, carries connotations offensive to good taste and decency, or violates University Regulations and/or Student Code of Conduct.

**Do I have to use a Preferred Name?**
No. The decision to submit a request to include a Preferred Name for DU's information systems is entirely optional.

**Can I get a new Pioneer card with my Preferred Name?**
DU will issue a new ID card, upon request, for students or employees who have requested a chosen/professional name. ID cards do not reflect preferred first names.

**Can I get a new email address with my Preferred Name?**
DU will provide a new DU email address, upon request, for students or employees who have requested a chosen/professional name. For further information, contact the UTS Computer Help Center: http://www.du.edu/uts/helpdesk/.