

**Adopted:** February 1, 2023

The Admissions Office and the Office of Student Records collaborate with Information Technology Systems to provide students with the opportunity to request a name change or chosen name as it appears in class rosters and information exchange as part of the commitment to promoting and providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. It acknowledges the need and preference for those that identify themselves by a first name other than their legal first name. This could include individuals that may prefer being known by a nickname, adopt a first name that better represents an individual's chosen and preferred identity or expression, prefer to use a version of their first name instead of their legal first name, or represents the first name that an individual is in the process of legally changing

Sandhills also recognizes the importance for students to update their last name in college databases to match their legal name when changed for marriage, divorce, or other circumstances.

The College acknowledges that a chosen name will be used where possible in college systems and records and in the course of college business and education, except when the use of an individual's legal name is required by law or state policy and as long as the use of a chosen name is not intended for the purposes of avoiding legal obligations, for misrepresentation, or as otherwise prohibited.

### **Definitions**

*Chosen name:* The name an individual wishes to be known as that is a selected alternative to that individual's legal first name, used by persons to refer to themselves, as designated in college systems and records.

*Legal name:* The name that appears on a person's official governmental documents, such as social security cards, licenses, passports, and tax forms.

### **Chosen Name**

Students may determine the chosen name they prefer to go by in the college system and are allowed to change or remove their chosen name at any time a maximum of once per calendar year. **Only the first name may be designated for the chosen name;** the last name must remain the same as a student's legal last name. Thus, students' chosen full name is their *chosen* first name and their *legal* last name.

In implementing the use of chosen names, the College will make a good-faith effort to update systems and records designated for the use of chosen names in a timely manner. The College utilizes multiple systems, applications, and forms to manage its operations, and it is continually updating software and incorporating new electronic and other files. Thus, the process of modifying College systems and records is ongoing.

Examples of specific systems and records where the College may use a chosen name include:

- Class and grade rosters
- Online attendance records
- Online learning management systems (e.g., Moodle)

Despite the examples shown, not all systems, databases, records, and forms support the display of a chosen name. Therefore, individuals who use a chosen name with the college should always be prepared to reference their legal name and provide corresponding identification, as necessary.

Chosen names should be stated before the start of each semester. If requested after the start of the semester, changes may not be communicated to faculty

### **Legal Name**

If individuals wish to change their name on a specific college record, they must legally change their name.

- Legal name changes due to marriage are recognized by submitting a copy of a marriage certificate or a signed social security card.
- Legal name changes due to divorce are recognized by submitting a copy of a divorce decree stating such divorced individuals may resume the use of their maiden name or use an alternative name confirmed by the court or a signed social security card.
- All other legal name changes are recognized by submitting a signed social security card, driver's license, passport, government-issued visa, or applicable court documents.

A legal name change shall be required for the following purposes:

- reporting to state and federal agencies
- federal and state tax forms and reporting, including W2, W4, 1099, 1095C, and 1098T
- immigration and visa records
- international student reporting
- financial aid records
- student accounts, billing, and cashiering records
- medical and health records

- insurance enrollment and other records
- student conduct records
- campus police and security records
- student employment, payroll, and benefits records
- official transcripts
- professional licensures
- course enrollment and degree verification
- National Student Clearinghouse reporting

## **Student Privacy**

The College allows the release of directory information in certain circumstances. This includes information regarding a student's chosen name.

## **Limits**

The College reserves the right to refuse the use of a chosen name in instances that may result in include arbitrary, random, or repeated chosen name changes, chosen names used for the purpose of avoiding legal obligations or for misrepresentation or fraud, or chosen names used in any other manner that violates College policy or federal, state, or local law.

Chosen names may not include symbols (except apostrophes, periods, or hyphens) or numbers or reference illegal activity. Further, chosen names may not include those whose usage may be hurtful to others or may be considered vulgar, offensive, derogatory, or obscene, including words and terms commonly perceived as slurs against an individual or group on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, age, disability, or other protected characteristics.

The Office of Student Records has the authority to deny any chosen name request or to suspend or remove a chosen name in extreme cases — including, but not limited to, the reasons noted in this procedure. In the rare circumstance when such a denial is made, a student may appeal the decision in writing to the Director of Records and Registration, whose will consult the appropriate vice president of the College and render a decision that shall be final.