



For Professors and Educators:

How to Create Trans-Inclusive Classrooms and Campuses

Trans and gender non-conforming students often experience challenges that cisgender students do not. This includes: difficulties having the correct name, gender marker, and pronouns on their student records; lack of gender-inclusive campus housing and facilities; lack of access to safe and affordable health care; a greater likelihood of being abandoned by family and experiencing financial need; and experiencing higher rates of harassment, violence, and policing than their cisgender counterparts.

As a result, many trans and gender non-conforming students may not feel safe being out on campus or to their professors and advisers. However, trans and gender non-conforming students also show resilience to succeed and are becoming more vocal about their needs. Furthermore, trans students are protected in [Iowa State's Non-Discrimination Policy](#), which includes gender identity. Trans and Gender-nonconforming Students are also considered a protected class in the [Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965](#).

Many professors, advisers, and other educators want to advocate for trans and gender non-conforming students, but they are not sure how. The following are ways to create classrooms and campus spaces that are more welcoming to and inclusive of trans and gender non-conforming students:

- Do not assume that students' names will match their student records. Do not assume that you can guess which pronouns a student uses by the way they look or the perceived gender of their name.
- Create opportunities for students to share their names and pronouns with you and with other students. Instead of taking roll on the first day, let students introduce themselves with the name and pronouns with which you should refer to them. Or, have students fill out information cards at the beginning of the semester. These are just two possibilities; see the resources at the end of this document for more ideas.
- In your syllabus or in a pre-semester email, include a short statement like, "I will happily refer to you by a preferred name and pronouns, even if these differ from your legal name or your University record. Please let me know how I should refer to you."



- If you teach a large lecture course and do not often have the opportunity to learn students' names, role model ways to introduce yourself that respect lived names and pronouns and show that you value the importance of respecting them. For example, "My name is Dr. Bell and I use she/her pronouns"
- Do not out students. If a student shares with you that they are trans, do not disclose this to other. Allow the student to be in control of who has this information about them. If you want to highlight the experiences of trans students in professional settings, be careful about what information you include and do not share students' names or identifiable details.
- Use gender-inclusive language. Avoid statements like: "Good morning ladies and gentlemen," or, "Yes, sir, with your hand up in the back," or, "You guys did great with this assignment!" Instead use statements like "Good morning everyone!" "Good morning cyclones!" "Yes, person with the red shirt in the back" "Y'all did great on this assignment"
- Include trans authors and the trans experience in your curriculum. In the same way that we should be include authors that are women and authors of color we should be continuing to expand the perspectives of authors represented in curriculum by including queer authors. If your course already considers gender, make sure you are reflecting on HOW your course considers gender. Is it related to men vs. women or have you considered work outside of the traditional gender binary.
- Advocate for gender-inclusive policies at Iowa State. Be vocal about challenges or barriers that have a disproportionate impact on trans and gender non-conforming students on campus. Ask questions and advocate for students in department meetings, university open forums, organizational meetings, and so on.

[Pronouns.org Inclusive Language](https://pronouns.org/inclusive-language)

['Ask Me': What LGBTQ Students Want Their Professors to Know](#)