Professional and Cultural Name Use Task Force

Mid-year Report – 2021-2022

Membership:

Chairs:	Robin Bryan and Samantha Prins
Members:	Ruthie Bosch, Jennifer Kester, Brent Lewis, Joy McBride, Gwyn Mellinger, Wolf Sherrill, Alison Waide, Michele White

Charge: As part of being a welcoming and inclusive campus, we recognize that many of our constituents routinely use a first name or full name other than their legal name. In recent years, JMU adopted policies and processes that allow for the use of preferred first names, and we would now like to begin the next phase of this work by exploring options for enhancing the use of preferred last names for professional or cultural reasons.

The current work of this task force includes:
1. Identifying naming options that can be supported and consistently applied within the confines of JMU's current systems as well as
2. Identifying desired functionalities for future JMU systems.
3. Exploring ways to best allow both legal names and preferred names (when desired) to be stored and displayed in current and future JMU systems.

Summary of Current Semester Activity

Task Force members initially explored the various reasons motivating the establishment of the task force and known issues regarding incompatibility of systems with professional and cultural name use. Task Force members reached out to colleagues and units on campus (IT, DEI Directors) and off-campus (LGBTQ centers, listservs, HR departments at other institutions) to learn about professional and cultural name use in a wide variety of professional and cultural settings. More outreach is planned**.**

1. Identify naming options that can be supported and consistently applied within the confines of JMU's current systems as well as
   - IT is investigating the current options that can be supported e.g., use of punctuation within a name.
2. Identify desired functionalities for future JMU systems.
   - Allow maximum flexibility in name use.
   - Allow individuals to enter their last name and have systems use it as-is.
   - Most important systems or places for preferred last name to be used, especially in the short-term before a CRM is available:
     - Canvas
     - Campus Directory
3. Exploring ways to best allow both legal names and preferred names (when desired) to be stored and displayed in current and future JMU systems.
   - Recommendations:
     - Consistent entry of names; feed the naming conventions into the data governance process.
     - Think globally regarding name formats.
     - Make it transparent how to change your name on Canvas.
     - Provide options to allow individuals to use a name different from that on their visa or passport.
     - Clearly communicate the importance of honoring the use of preferred names.
     - Clearly communicate the limitations of systems with regard to use of preferred versus legal names where such limitations exist.

- Clearly communicate which external communications e.g., with parents, based on future systems will use preferred names and which will use legal names.

Future Work Planned
- Complete exploration around whether there should be limits on what is used as preferred names e.g., use of offensive names and what constitutes offensive.
- Engagement with Faculty Senate, SGA, Employee Advisory Group and administrative units on campus to further explore the use of Professional and Cultural Names and thus desired functionality of the systems, as well as constraints of current systems.