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From: St. Francis Xavier University
Sent: Friday, September 11, 2020 2:03 PM
To: Faculty & Staff Distribution List
Subject: Accessibility – Using chosen names in Collaborate classrooms.

Dear Faculty and Teaching Staff,

When we welcome students into our online classes, we want to welcome the whole student. That includes using the name and pronouns that students choose to use. We encourage all staff who feel comfortable to display their pronouns alongside their name as well. This will set a great tone for the class and demonstrate that the professor is aware that people use pronouns that may not be in line with the expectations of others.

For some of our students, their chosen name is different from the ‘legal’ names that appear on Banner.

Accessibility related to Student’s Names/Pronouns

To ensure that we use students’ chosen names and pronouns, a best practice for instructors is to send a quick survey out to students, prior to the first class, and ask them to identify their name on the class list, the name that they use, their pronouns (optional) and any other information that would be helpful for an instructor to get to ‘know’ a student before they come into the first class. This is helpful in all classes, but especially in online classrooms, where personalization needs to be more deliberate. Alternatively, and depending on class size, instructors can ask students to personally introduce themselves in the first class, with the option of stating their pronouns and the instructors can discreetly can make notes of any variations from the official class list.

Current State of Affairs with Collaborate and Moodle

There is process for students to update their legal name on campus. Students currently are able to associate a chosen first name in Banner. They can also have their email address updated with their chosen first name and have their ID card reprinted. (See <https://www2.mystfx.ca/registrars-office/personal-information-change-requests>). However, students should be aware that this change applies only to the campus community and is not a replacement for updating their legal documents through the government.

Currently Moodle synchs with Banner. However, when Moodle pulls the names from Banner, it is not yet able to pull the chosen name. Therefore, when the student clicks the Online Classroom Link to enter the Collaborate classroom, the name that will show up in the participant panel will be the ‘legal’ name pulled from Banner. This is not the accessibility that StFX is satisfied with and the Registrar’s Office and Student Life have begun working on a process to make it so chosen names are pulled from Banner to Moodle. However, the task of transitioning to Fall 2020 teaching and the scheduling/timetabling issues involved was enormous, and creating a process enabling students to have their chosen names recognized on Moodle (and by extension Collaborate) was delayed.

Moving Forward

There are several paths for moving forward to help us as we transition to the level of accessibility that StFX aspires to:

- 1. The first is ensuring the Registrar’s Office and Student Life continue the important work that was started in terms of finding a process for being able to have chosen names recognized by Moodle.** This will resume as soon as is possible, given the challenges of teaching during COVID in Fall 2020. StFX recognizes this is an issue

that requires attention and the Task Force has drawn this matter to the attention of the AVP to ensure this issue continues to be prioritized.

2. **The second is a partial workaround for Collaborate classroom.** Best practice for keeping Collaborate online classrooms secure is to have all students sign in using the ONLINE CLASSROOM link in Moodle. When students do this their legal name (pulled from Banner) appears in the participant list.
When the instructor knows that there is a student with a chosen name in their Collaborate online class, they may, if the student wishes, send the student a ‘Guest Link’ to use to enter the Collaborate class. The guest link is normally used to bring in guest speakers, but it can be a workaround for having a student to come in to the Collaborate Classroom using their chosen name. A student whose legal name on Banner is Margaret Smith, but who goes by the name “Maggie” could sign in, using the guest link, as “Maggie”. A student whose legal name on Banner is Brian Brown, but who goes by the name “Taylor” could sign in as “Taylor” using the guest link.

The student would have to sign in each time with the guest link. It would be communicated with the student that, for security purposes, the guest link is NOT to be shared with anyone outside the class community.

While this is a possible short-term workaround for the Collaborate online classroom, no such workaround is possible using Moodle. So, for example, if the instructor was using Discussion Forums in Moodle, the student’s legal name from Banner would reappear. This is clearly a stopgap measure, while we wait for a more permanent and inclusive solution.

3. **To further assist in this process, we have reached out to Gender and Sexual Diversity Student Advisor: Claydon Goering to inform them of this issue which may have impact for students in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community at X.** If Claydon becomes aware of students who require support and advocacy related to this issue, they will contact faculty and teaching staff members. Claydon is a tremendous asset and resource to our campus community and faculty or teaching staff should draw upon Claydon’s expertise and leadership in diversity and inclusion cgoering@stfx.ca.

Many thanks
Joanne and Janice
Task Force Chairs