



## **NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERSITY**

### **CHAPTER 200 – EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

#### **UNIVERSITY POLICY 211, PREFERRED FIRST NAME**

#### **SECTION 211.1 POLICY STATEMENT**

The preferred first name policy allows members of the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (“N.C. A&T” or “University”) community to designate a first name other than their legal first name to be used to identify themselves in some University systems.

#### **SECTION 211.2 PURPOSE**

The University recognizes that some members of the University community may prefer to use a first name other than their legal first name. Except where an individual’s legal first name is required by business, policy or legal need, this policy establishes a consistent procedure for employees and students to designate their preferred first name and the criteria for use.

#### **SECTION 211.3 SCOPE**

This policy applies to all North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, faculty, staff, and students.

#### **SECTION 211.4 DEFINITIONS**

- (1) “Legal Name” means an individual’s legal name as it appears on official government documents such as licenses, birth certificate, passports, tax forms, or U.S. Social Security Card and may be comprised of a first legal name, one or more middle legal names, and a last legal name.
- (2) “Preferred First Name” means an alternative to an individual’s legal first name designated in accordance with this Policy.

#### **SECTION 211.5 USE OF PREFERRED FIRST NAME**

##### **Section 211.5.1 Permissible Use of Preferred First Names**

Members of the campus community are entitled to use a preferred first name to identify themselves. The University acknowledges that a preferred first name can and should be used wherever possible during University education and communication. All University offices and employees should respect an individual’s request to be known by their preferred first name, and use that name when interacting with that individual.

### **Section 211.5.2 Prohibited Use of Preferred First Names**

- (a) A preferred first name cannot be used if it contains inappropriate or offensive language (i.e., profane, derogatory, or derived from hate-speech); is otherwise inappropriate, such as for the purpose of misrepresentation, fraud, copyright infringement, or attempting to avoid a legal obligation; does not conform to technical requirements (i.e., includes numbers, symbols, or images); or in any manner violates University policies or federal, state, or local laws or regulations.
- (b) The University reserves the right to reject the use of or remove, without prior notice to the individual, from any University system or official documents any preferred first name that the University deems in its sole judgment to be in violation of this policy.

### **Section 211.5.3 Display of Preferred Names**

The University will attempt to display preferred first names to the University community where feasible and appropriate. It will make a good faith effort to update reports, documents, and systems that are designated to use preferred first names. Preferred first names will appear in the university systems listed in Appendix A.

It is the responsibility of the individual using a preferred first name to request a new Aggie One card within thirty (30) calendar days of the approval of a preferred first name. An Aggie One card with a preferred first name rather than a legal name cannot be used for identification purposes when voting in local, state, and federal elections.

Individuals must contact the Office of Diversity and Inclusion by phone to 336-285-4619 or email to [diversity-inclusion@ncat.edu](mailto:diversity-inclusion@ncat.edu) to request correction to incorrectly displayed names.

### **Section 211.5.4 Use of Legal Name**

- (a) The use of a preferred first name does not constitute a legal name change. The legal first name will continue to be used in connection with certain official documents and systems that require the use of a legal name, including but not limited to admission records, diplomas, transcripts, financial aid forms, tax forms, employment records, and payroll documentation. Legal names will be used and maintained in business and other processes that require the use of a legal name.
- (b) Students, faculty, and staff that wish to change the name on these official records must provide appropriate documentation of a legal name change, typically a court order. An individual seeking to obtain a legal name change must follow requirements as set forth by the individual's state and county of residence. NC A&T cannot change an individual's legal name.

## **Section 211.5.6 Privacy**

- (a) Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a student's legal name, including a preferred first name, may be disclosed to the public as "directory information" unless the individual chooses to prohibit such disclosure. Notice to opt-out of directory information disclosure must be given to the Office of the Registrar.
- (b) An employee's legal name, including preferred first name, may be disclosed in accordance with the State Human Resources Act (N.C. Gen. Stat. § 126-23).

## **SECTION 211.6 PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING USE OF A PREFERRED FIRST NAME**

- (a) There are two main processes for students and employees to designate the use of a preferred first name.
  - (1) Students and employees may designate a preferred first name as part of an initial application for admission or employment.
  - (2) Current students and employees may request the use of a preferred first name by completing and submitting the request form available on the website for the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.
- (b) The University's Executive Diversity and Inclusion Officer will review preferred first name requests to ensure compliance with the criteria set forth in this policy.
  - (1) Individuals will be notified in writing via University email of the approval or denial of a request for the use of a preferred first name. If the request is denied, the notification will include the reason for the denial and contain instructions for requesting an appeal of the denial.
  - (2) Individuals denied the use of a preferred first name may submit an appeal within 30 calendar days of the denial to the Executive Diversity and Inclusion Officer for review by the Preferred Name Committee.
- (c) The University may remove a previously approved preferred first name that the University determines, in its sole judgment, to be in violation of this policy, without prior notice to the individual. The individual may seek a review of the removal within 30 calendar days of the removal.
- (d) Individuals may choose to remove and discontinue the use of a preferred first name at any time by submitting a written request to the Executive Diversity and Inclusion Officer.

## **SECTION 211.7 COMPLIANCE**

All University offices and employees should respect an individual's request to be known by their preferred first name and use that name when interacting with that individual. Instances of non-compliance with this policy may be reported to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at 336-285-4619 or [diversity-inclusion@ncat.edu](mailto:diversity-inclusion@ncat.edu).

## **SECTION 211.8 NON-COMPLIANCE**

The University will address reports of misuse and abuse of both preferred first names and legal names in accordance with existing University policies and procedures. The appropriate University administrators will be notified depending on the allegation of misuse or abuse. The University reserves the right to remove preferred first names that are deemed misrepresentative and to suspend the individual's privilege to update a preferred first name.

### **POLICY HISTORY:**

Eff. August 1, 2022

**AUTHORITY:** Chancellor

**POLICY OWNERS:** Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICES:** Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Office of the Provost

### **RESOURCES:**

University Policy 1105, Student Education Records  
State Human Resources Act, N.C. Gen. Stat. § 126-1 *et seq.*  
North Carolina Public Records Act, N.C. Gen. Stat. § 132-1 *et seq.*



**NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**SYSTEM APPLICATIONS FOR PREFERRED FIRST NAMES**  
**Appendix A to University Policy 211, Preferred First Name**

The University will test additional systems in the future for Preferred first name capabilities which may expand on the list below:

**STUDENTS**

Students' preferred first names will appear in the following locations:

- Aggie OneCard (identification cards);
- Blackboard (Learning Management System);
- Residential Management System (RMS);
- Aggies Nav/EAB Navigate (Early alert system).

**EMPLOYEES**

- Aggie OneCard (identification cards);
- Blackboard (Learning Management System).