

# SELF IDENTITY: PRONOUNS & PREFERRED NAMES

## Abstract

The purpose of this research is to investigate, gauge relevant opinion and recommend courses of action related to the use of preferred pronouns, preferred names, and preferred gender on documentation at Florida International University (FIU). A survey was conducted, and it was found that students are generally supportive of administrative actions that seek to accommodate students with preferred pronouns, preferred names, and preferred genders. Based on this research, the research team recommended that FIU take action to accommodate the requests of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, asexual and allies (LGBTQA) students regarding these matters.

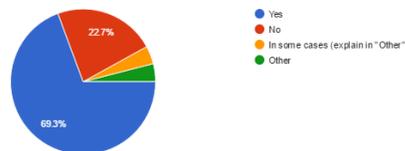
## Methodology

A survey was the primary means of data collection for this research. The survey was available online through a link for students to access on their phones, tablets and laptops. In person surveys were also conducted at the Modesto A. Maidique Campus. The link for the survey was given to students, faculty, and alumni of Florida International University and their response was automatically recorded to our database. As for the in person surveys, students, faculty, and alumni throughout the Modesto A. Maidique Campus were to be asked to participate in answering the thirteen question survey.

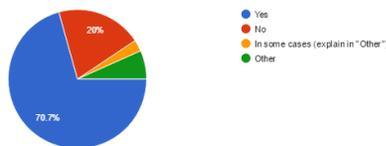
## Results

75 people completed the survey distributed by the group. The overwhelming majority of respondents, 97%, were FIU students while 1.5% of respondents were alumni and 1.5% were faculty. Respondents generally supported the use of preferred pronouns and names for student identification cards, class rosters, and Blackboard; but were less supportive of their use for diplomas, transcripts and other legal documents. Multiple respondents indicated concerns about using a preferred name or pronoun for legal documents.

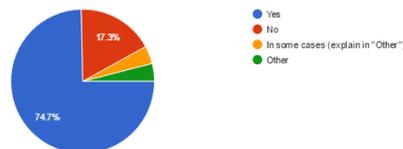
Do you think FIU should allow for students to select their preferred name?  
(75 responses)



Do you think FIU should allow for students to select their preferred pronouns?  
(75 responses)



Do you think FIU should allow for students to select their preferred gender?  
(75 responses)



## Interview & Conclusion

An interview was conducted with Gisela Vega, Associate Director of the Multicultural Programs and Services' (MPAS). Vega said that she is the only university employee whose job is serving the LGBTQA community at FIU. Vega noted that FIU recently adopted a policy of nondiscrimination regarding gender expression and identity. This change was meant to allow students to select their preferred gender for university documents, but thus far, no such option is available to students. It would be difficult to include a student's preferred gender without utilizing preferred pronouns as well; however, pronouns are not an essential element of university business. The university should consider including the use of preferred names for informal settings that still fall under university control. For instance, students could be allowed to display their preferred names to other students on Blackboard since professors and administrators can still identify students by their Panther IDs. Additionally, it would be good practice for faculty to adopt the practice of asking students to introduce themselves during the first class instead of simply calling each student by a legal name from the class roster. Finally, the construction of gender neutral bathrooms at the BBC campus is of paramount importance in showing FIU's commitment to supporting the LGBTQA community. These recommendations would allow the university to continue to be "Worlds Ahead" in the recognition of people's differences.