

What are pronouns?

Pronouns take the place of a *noun* (a person, place, or thing). Pronouns can be seen when referring to someone during a conversation or in written communication.

Example of “she” series: *“Hope has been doing very well in adjusting to her time at Tufts. I hope she continues to support staff and faculty in her efforts to create a respectful and affirming environment for all students!”*

How do pronouns affect me?

Tufts University has announced that students on all campuses can change their names in various online Tufts systems such as the Student Information System (SIS). SIS updates class rosters which contains the names of students. When updated, class rosters include the students *preferred* name as well as the pronouns students are using at that particular time (yes, pronouns can change!).

Rosters are points of contact for many student and professor interactions. Students are more likely to come to class and maintain retention if they feel affirmed and respected in classroom spaces.

How are pronouns being used?

In the chart below there are three examples of the most common pronouns used; she, he, and they. We are familiar with the most common pronouns (he and she) being used in the singular form; referring to only one person.

The pronoun series “they”, in this instance, is used in a similar way (in the singular form, referring to one person). Typically, “they” is an example of gender neutral or non-binary pronouns.

Example of “they” series as a singular: *“I like Cool’s work ethic, they are such a hard-working employee. It’s hard to imagine how their previous job let them go. We are so lucky to have Cool, they will make a great addition to the team.”*

	Nominative (subject)	Oblique (object)	Possessive Determiner	Possessive Pronoun	Reflexive
“She” Series	<u>She</u> laughed.	I called <u>her</u> .	<u>Her</u> eyes gleam.	That is <u>hers</u> .	She likes <u>herself</u> .
“He” Series	<u>He</u> laughed.	I called <u>him</u> .	<u>His</u> eyes gleam.	This is <u>his</u> .	He likes <u>himself</u> .
“They” Series	<u>They</u> laughed.	I called <u>them</u> .	<u>Their</u> eyes gleam.	This is <u>theirs</u> .	They like <u>themselves</u> .

(This is not an exhaustive list as there are many pronouns not listed that many people use!)

Why is this important?

It is up to us as faculty, staff, and administration to proactively create a culture of respect here at Tufts University and that can start in the classroom. As a Tufts University community member, it is important that we are fostering a culture of respect by acknowledging each other’s self-identified pronouns. With your commitment and effort to this initiative, there is a higher chance this respect can spread into campus culture.

Where can I go for support?

Practicing Pronoun Usage: minus18.org.au/pronouns-app/

The LGBT Center currently provides workshops and technical assistance on pronoun usage. We also have many resources one can use to practice using pronouns and we will soon be re-releasing a “Best Practices” guide for further tips.

For more information and additional support please contact:

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To report intentional misgendering, please contact the Office of Equal Opportunity:
 617.627.3298 or oeo@tufts.edu