

# MAINE COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN

## Maine College of Art & Design Student Chosen & Legal Name Policy

*last updated 08.01.2024*

**Purpose:** The College recognizes that members of our community use names other than their legal names. For some students a chosen name may be an important and vital component of their identity.

To reinforce the importance of identity within our inclusive community, the College has established this policy which allows community members to be recognized as often as possible by their chosen name regardless of their legal name.

These may include individuals who prefer to use:

- A name that better represents the individual's gender identity;
- A name to which the individual is in the process of legally changing;
- A middle name or nickname instead of a first name;
- An anglicized name; or
- An abbreviated name (i.e. Rob instead of Robert).

### Definitions

#### *Chosen Name*

A chosen name is an alternative to the individual's legal name as designated by the individual officially to the College. For the purposes of this policy, we will use the term "chosen name" to cover both the term of preferred and chosen names. A chosen name can include first or middle. A chosen name can only have alphabetical characters and hyphens.

#### *Legal Name*

A person's legal name is the name they use for official government documents, such as licenses, passports, and tax forms. Any change to legal name must be accompanied by appropriate documentation. For students designated with an F-1 or J-1 visa status, the first and last legal name must be used on all immigration documents including, but not limited to I-20s and DS-2019s.

### Name Usage Policy

Once a student's chosen name is registered with the Registrar, the chosen name will be used instead of the person's legal name in select College systems and documents as listed below:

- MECA&D ID Card (must contact [security@meca.edu](mailto:security@meca.edu) and provide an updated photo, if desired—name will be changed in system.)
- Business Cards
- MECA&D Directory Information\*

- Official MECA&D Email Display Name
- Cafe tap in screen
- Class and Grade Rosters
- Learning Management Systems
- Reports and/or lists generated for academic purposes
- Labels, folders, or other paperwork used within the College that are not considered legal name only requirement
- Residential Facilities
- Press Releases
- Social Media and Marketing Efforts
- When communicating with individuals approved on the student's FERPA, the chosen name will be used.

Because the use of legal names is necessary for specific records and communication, both the legal and chosen name still appear in Student Information Systems (SIS). Employees including faculty are reminded to maintain the privacy of students, and to use chosen names in communication when the use of those names is in alignment with this policy.

Legal/primary names will continue to be used for official College records including, but not limited to the following:

- Legal documents and reports produced by the College
- Enrollment reports to the National Student Clearinghouse
- Enrollment lists for student health insurance
- Applications for admission, however you will be able to share your chosen name as well
- Student Account Statement (Bills)
- Financial Aid, Scholarship and Loan Documents
- Transcripts (official and unofficial)
- Enrollment Verifications
- Degree Verifications
- Degree Tracking Sheets
- Employment Documents
- Paychecks, W2s, and other Payroll document
- Reimbursements and payments for services
- Benefits Enrollment
- IRS, SSA, and other state and federal reporting requirements

Official communications that require a legal name will use that name; other communications will use the chosen name. **Students should be aware that non-legal documents sent to home address include their chosen name.**

## **Diplomas**

Graduating students who have registered a chosen name with the Registrar may opt for either their legal or their chosen name to appear on their diploma and/or commencement program. This must be confirmed by the student before graduation through the Registrar's Office.

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## **How to Request a Chosen Name Change**

Please complete the [Chosen Name Form](#) with your request. The Registrar's Office has seven business days to approve or deny the chosen name change and notify the student and offices. This name will show on class rosters from that point forward, and other lists consonant with the above policy.

The Registrar's Office will notify Admissions, Information Technology, Security (student ID name), Financial Aid, Student Accounts, and Student Life of the chosen name. Each department will update their database and Student Information Systems to reflect the chosen names. The chosen name will be reflected in the email name. Students who want their email address changed and not just the displayed name as the chosen name must contact Information Technology at [helpdesk@meca.edu](mailto:helpdesk@meca.edu).

For student ID photo changes a student must contact [security@mece.edu](mailto:security@mece.edu) and submit a photo.

## **Chosen Name Requests Approval and Denial**

Chosen name change requests may be denied or revoked by the College when the chosen name is used to avoid legal obligation, commit fraud, misrepresent, or otherwise violate College policy or law. The College reserves the right to contact you and deny your chosen name, if your chosen name could be interpreted as disrespectful or offensive, or used for the purpose of misrepresentation. Reports of such activity will be adjudicated under the College policies and procedures and applicable law. Based on the circumstances this could include Academic Affairs, Human Resources, Student Life, and/or law enforcement agencies.

## **Changes to Legal Name**

If you have legally changed your name via a court order or with the United States Social Security Office, please submit information to the Financial Aid Office at [meca.leapfile.net](https://meca.leapfile.net), select "Secure Upload" and choose [finaid@meca.edu](mailto:finaid@meca.edu) as the recipient.

## **Changes to the Chosen & Legal Name Policy**

If you feel that something is missing or should be added to the Chosen & Legal Name Usage Policy, please email the Dean of Student Life and Title IX Coordinator, Melvin D.

Adams III, Ed.D. at [melvin.adams@meca.edu](mailto:melvin.adams@meca.edu) who will review the request, convene a feedback panel if needed, and update the policy if warranted.

### **Pronouns**

The College upholds that personal pronouns are essential in affirming the diversity and fluidity of gender identities. Pronouns are neither preferred nor optional. We strive to ensure that every member of our campus community is addressed in a way that acknowledges and respects the fullness of their gender identity. We encourage all students, faculty and staff to communicate their pronouns to others, through spoken communication when meeting or greeting someone in person or virtually, or in writing, such as email signatures, business cards, resumes or nametags. To learn more about pronouns, "[What Are Personal Pronouns And Why Do They Matter](#)" from [mypronouns.org](http://mypronouns.org).