

5.09

CHOSEN NAME POLICY

Purpose

To establish systems and processes that enable students to disclose what chosen name they would like to use while attending RVCC.

Policy

The College will allow students to request the use of their chosen first name in addition to their legal first name where possible, as long as the use of this chosen name is not for the purposes of misrepresentation and if technological systems allow for such a name. Although students are generally free to determine the chosen names they wish to be known by, inappropriate use of the chosen name (including but not limited to avoiding a legal obligation, misrepresentation, or the **use of highly offensive or derogatory names**) may be cause for denying the request. Raritan Valley Community College reserves the right to remove a chosen name if it is used inappropriately. Where possible and legal, a chosen name will be used in the course of College business and education. Chosen names that are administratively impossible to implement are not permissible, including but not limited to symbols and images.

Faculty, Administrators, and Staff are required to adhere to this policy and respect the wishes of the individual that has a chosen name. Failing to do so will be in violation of this policy and the NJ Law Against Discrimination (LAD) resulting in discipline.

Definitions

Chosen Name - Sometimes referred to as the preferred name or nickname, is the name that an individual wishes to go by that is not the given, legal name.

Legal Name - The name that is reflected on legal documents such as a birth certificate, social security card, passport, driver's license and other such documents controlled by local, state or federal agencies

Procedure

Students must request the use of a Chosen Name. Students should print and complete the Chosen Name Change form and return the form to the Enrollment Services Office to be processed.

The College reserves the right to refuse or remove a chosen name if deemed inappropriate. The following guidelines apply:

- Only the first and/or middle name may be changed to a chosen name;
- Last/family name must remain the same as the full legal last name in the College records system;

- The chosen name may be used in some College communications and informational materials, except where the use of the legal name is required by College business or legal need. These exceptions include but are not limited to financial, medical, and law enforcement documents; transcripts; diplomas; W-4 forms; I-9 forms; 1098-T forms; payroll documents; Visa/immigration documents; employment applications and related documents; background check documents; insurance documents; and student conduct records;
- Chosen names are limited to alphabetical characters (a-z).

Not all College information systems, databases, and processes may be able to display a chosen name and many uses of an individual's name require display of the legal name. Therefore, individuals who use a chosen name should always be prepared to reference their legal name and provide corresponding identification when necessary. A chosen name designation is not a legal name change.

Once approved, a student's chosen name will appear and be used in the following College documents, systems, and processes:

- 1) College E-mail
- 2) Class Rosters
- 3) Advising Lists
- 4) Learning Management System
- 5) Self-Service

The College will not use the chosen name on documents or in systems that require the use of a legal name for legal or business-related reasons. The individual's legal name will continue to be used for these records, which include but are not limited to the following:

1. Admissions records
2. Transcripts
3. Enrollment verifications
4. Employment and personnel records
5. Paychecks and tax documents
6. Financial aid records
7. Medical records
8. Disciplinary records
9. Law enforcement records

10. Study Abroad documents and travel records

11. Visa and immigration documents

12. Insurance documents

12. Mandated Reporting

The College will change a legal name on legal and business-related documents only upon receipt of documentation evidencing a legal name change.

Responsible Administrator – Vice President for Student Affairs and Outreach

Revised

January 2020

Communication – This policy is communicated to the College community in the following media:

- Electronic College Catalog
- Electronic Student Handbook
- Electronic Faculty Handbook
- College Website