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**Subject:** Cultivating a Sense of Belonging  
**Date:** Thursday, September 19, 2024 1:26:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [Cultivating a Sense of Belonging Memo - Fall 2024 Final.pdf](#)

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## Memorandum

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**To:** The College Community  
**From:** Kristen Roe, Director of ADA Compliance and Title IX Coordinator  
Kimberly Jones, Interim Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer  
**Subject:** **Cultivating a Sense of Belonging**  
**Date:** September 19, 2024

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In alignment with the College's Strategic Plan Goal #2: *Cultivating a Sense of Belonging for Everyone at the College*, this memo serves as a reminder about college policies and individual actions that support an inclusive environment that is free from discrimination based on sex or gender.

Montgomery College is committed to fostering a safe, non-discriminatory, and inclusive environment for all students and employees, including those who have a gender identity or expression that differs from their sex assigned at birth, as well as those who identify outside the traditional gender norms. Further, Montgomery College recognizes that gender identity and expression intersect with other aspects of identity, including race, ethnicity, religion, disability, and more. Our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion extends to creating an environment that respects and supports all aspects of an individual's identity.

This memo provides guidance in accordance with MC policies and practices that demonstrate equity, inclusion, and belonging. It is best practice to apply these approaches when engaging with anyone in our Montgomery College community. Not only does this respect the identities of those who are transgender or gender non-conforming, but it creates a culture of inclusion and diversity that benefits all students, staff, faculty, administrators, and guests.

**MC Policies** – The College's [Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy \(31006\)](#) and [Equal Education Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy \(41002\)](#) affirm that **discrimination against persons on the basis of gender, gender identity, or gender expression in its educational programs and activities is prohibited**. Additionally, individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ are protected by Title IX, meaning persons cannot be discriminated against based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Harassment on the basis of one's gender identity or sexual orientation constitutes discrimination "because of sex," and thus, violates MC policy and Title IX.

**Restroom Facilities** – Montgomery College supports individuals using restroom facilities that correspond to their identity. Individuals are encouraged to use the restroom that aligns with their gender identity and makes them feel most comfortable.

The College also offers gender-inclusive restroom facilities to serve diverse needs, including privacy; managing child/family, medical, or disability needs; and providing options for people who identify as transgender. Be aware of the gender-inclusive restrooms located on each campus and be prepared to provide directions. A list of gender-inclusive restroom locations for each campus is posted on Montgomery College's [Title IX webpage](#).

**Chosen Name and Pronouns** – To foster a college environment that is inclusive and encourages self-expression, Montgomery College has established procedures that allow individuals to designate a chosen first name. Montgomery College supports all students, faculty, staff, and administrators in

using their chosen first name, regardless of whether they have legally changed their names. Legal names will only be used when required by law, industry standards, or strong business needs. **The process for designating a chosen name is described on the [Title IX webpage](#).**

**Pronouns** – Using an individual's chosen pronouns is a fundamental aspect of respect and helps build an inclusive and welcoming environment. Identify your pronouns when introducing yourself and use the pronouns that individuals designate for themselves. The website [Pronouns.org](https://www.pronouns.org) provides guidance on the importance of using personal pronouns, how to use personal pronouns, what to do when making a mistake referring to someone's pronouns, how to share personal pronouns, and how to ask someone for their personal pronouns.

Employees are strongly encouraged to include their pronouns in their email signature lines to promote a culture of respect and inclusion. In addition, the Office of Information Technology provides guidance on how to designate chosen names and pronouns within Zoom. Visit [this page](#) to learn how.

### **Gender-Inclusive Language**

In addition to using chosen pronouns, we encourage the use of gender-inclusive language in all communications and interactions. This includes avoiding gendered terms in favor of inclusive alternatives that respect the diversity of gender identities within our community.

### **What happens if I make a mistake?**

If you make a mistake, apologize, acknowledge the error, and correct yourself or ask for the correct information and/or terminology. It is important to demonstrate that the mistake was unintentional and that you are committed to respecting everyone's identity.

A culture of civility is grounded in respect. Misgendering can cause harm and erode an individual's sense of belonging within the College community.

### **Reporting Concerns**

To report discrimination or harassment based on gender identity or expression, please contact the Title IX office, your supervisor, or Human Resources. Reports will be handled with confidentiality and care. More information on how to report incidents can be found on the Title IX webpage.

By adhering to the guidance provided in this memo, we can collectively create a more respectful and inclusive environment for everyone.

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