

TO: SUNY University Faculty Senate
FROM: UFS Equity, Inclusion & Diversity Committee
RE: Resolution on Gender Neutral Language in All SUNY Correspondence
DATE: 180th Plenary, October 18-20, 2018
LOCATION: SUNY Binghamton
RESOLUTION #: 180-01-01
VOTE TALLY: For: 39; Against: 6; Abstain: 0

RATIONALE:

WHEREAS the SUNY Board of Trustees September 10, 2015 Resolution “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy” desires to “make SUNY the most inclusive higher education system in the country”; and

WHEREAS SUNY seeks to be respectful of all members of our community; and

WHEREAS SUNY respects each person’s right to determine their own identity; and

WHEREAS transgender matters have gained increasing attention in recent years, and academic writing and communications can better reflect a range of gender identities and be inclusive of transgender people; and

WHEREAS most notably, the use of male and female pronouns (*he/him/his, she/her/hers*) is being challenged, and many argue for the acceptance and use of *they* (i.e. not *s/he*, which is still based on a binary notion of gender) as an epicene—a gender-neutral singular pronoun:

RESOLUTION:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UFS requests the Chancellor to require gender-neutral pronouns *they/their/theirs* be used instead of the current practice of using gender specific pronouns *he/she* in all SUNY communications from the Chancellor’s office or system administration, such as websites, policy documents, press materials, reports, recruiting materials, etc.

BACKGROUND:

Brown, Heidi K. “We Can Honor Good Grammar and Societal Change Together.” *ABA Journal*, vol. 104, no. 4, Apr. 2018, p. 1. *EBSCOhost*, ezproxy.cobleskill.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=128772172&site=eds-live&scope=site

Coogan, Peter, and Vanessa Fabbre. “Use of Singular *They* in Academic Writing and Communications: Background and Recommendations for the Brown School.” *Brown School*, Washington University in St. Louis, N.d. brownschool.wustl.edu/About/Documents/ Accessed 24 September, 2018.

Golden, Stephanie. “We need the singular ‘they’ – and it won’t seem wrong for long.” *Aeon*, Aeon Media Group Ltd., 23 February, 2018, aeon.co/ideas/we-need-the-singular-they-and-it-wont-seem-wrong-for-long Accessed 24 September, 2018

“Though Singular ‘They’ Is Old, ‘They’ as a Nonbinary Pronoun Is New -- and Useful.” *Communication: Journalism Education Today*, vol. 52, no. 1, Fall 2018, p. 16. *EBSCOhost*, ezproxy.cobleskill.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eue&AN=131674682&site=eds-live&scope=site.