

To: The University Senate
From: Educational Policy Committee
Subject: Revising Academic Regulations for Stylistic Consistency
Reference: [Academic Regulations](#)
Disposition: University Senate for Discussion and Adoption

Rationale: The current Academic Regulations tend to refer to “students,” or “a student,” or “the student,” or “the instructor,” or “the Registrar,” which appears to signify the preferred construction of subjects.

There are a few spots, however, which rely on singular personal pronouns and which tend to use the “he/she” construction. These places stick out because of their infrequency.

On the topic of gendered pronouns, the American Psychological Association recommends writing in the plural, negating the need for singular third person pronouns. [1] Where pluralizing the subject changes the meaning of a sentence, APA recognizes the use of the singular “they” as more inclusive for referring to an individual of unknown gender, and with long historical precedent. [1] Other citation styles do similarly, such as the Associated Press and Chicago Manual of Style. [2]

Using “they” as a singular personal pronoun rather than “he/she” is more inclusive (i.e. beyond binarized gender), less grammatically cumbersome, and shorter in both letters and speech. Some people find its use as a singular pronoun ungrammatical; however, singular use for they has been common in English since at least the 14th century. The word “you” used to have a similar plural usage, and now is used uncontroversially as a singular. [3]

Proposal: The University Senate modifies the complete Academic Regulations to replace “he/she” pronouns throughout by pluralizing sentences where accurate and appropriate, and where an individual subject is necessary, by using the generic singular third person pronoun of “they.”

For example (but not limited to these examples):

<p>If a student on trial in a dependent course completes the course with a passing grade, his/her achievement may, by prior agreement, be construed as satisfying the requirements for changing an E grade in any prerequisite course in the same department, provided the department head approves and reports the change of grade properly to the registrar.</p>	<p>Students on trial in a dependent course who complete the course with a passing grade, may, by prior agreement, be construed as satisfying the requirements for changing an E grade in any prerequisite course in the same department, provided the department head approves and reports the change of grade properly to the registrar.</p>
<p>A person who is already enrolled as a student in the University and who wishes to attend a course in the University without credit shall obtain from the Office of the Registrar an Audit Permission form stating his/her name, their PUID, the subject, course, and CRN number, the number of credits, and the term.</p>	<p>A person who is already enrolled as a student in the University and who wishes to attend a course in the University without credit shall obtain from the Office of the Registrar an Audit Permission form stating that person's name, their PUID, the subject, course, and CRN number, the number of credits, and the term.</p>

As with other changes to the academic regulations, these changes will be made by the Office of the Registrar, and reviewed for completeness by the Educational Policy Committee of the University Senate.

Works cited:

1. Lee, Chelsea. (Oct 31, 2019). "Welcome, singular "they," APA Style Blog. Accessed October 6, 2022. <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/singular-they>
2. Purdue Online Writing Lab. "Gendered Pronouns and Singular 'They'." Accessed October 6, 2022. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/grammar/pronouns/gendered_pronouns_and_singular_they.html
3. Words We're Watching (Sept 2019), "Singular They." Accessed October 12, 2022. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/singular-nonbinary-they>

Committee Votes:

For:

Advisors

Jeff Elliott
Keith Gehres
Jenna Rickus
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Students

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Against:

None

Abstained:

None

Absent:

Advisors

None

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