

**TO:** SUNY University Faculty Senate  
**FROM:** UFS Equity, Inclusion & Diversity Committee  
**RE:** Resolution on Gender Neutral Language in All SUNY Correspondence  
**DATE:** 180<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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/](http://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](http://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](http://ezproxy.cobleskill.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eue&AN=131674682&site=eds-live&scope=site).