“To be the most sought-after place to be a part of we must commit to the most thought-diverse and inclusive environment. Our range of disciplines helps and zero tolerance must be part of our DNA. But it’s not the ‘why’ or the ‘what’ we’ll have problems with; even with the best intentions, we don’t always know ‘how.’ CALS’ Diversity Committee is dedicated to delivering tangible strategies so we can meet our goal.” – Dean Shane Burgess

Here are some strategies to ensure that peoples’ gender identities and pronouns are respected:

**University of Arizona Policy (HR-200E):** The University of Arizona is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of discrimination. In support of this commitment, the University prohibits discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, based on a protected classification, including race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or genetic information.

Have you ever asked your students what pronouns they use? If not, now is the time to start!

Our students, community members, staff, faculty are more diverse than ever before in terms of the gender identities and related pronouns (e.g., she/her, he/him, they/them) that use to refer to themselves. The University of Arizona strives for inclusion and diversity by allowing students and employees to indicate their chosen names in the UAccess system ([http://lgbtq.arizona.edu/use-chosen-or-preferred-names](http://lgbtq.arizona.edu/use-chosen-or-preferred-names)). However, there is not currently a place for students and employees – or for community members engaged with Extension - to indicate their desired pronouns, leaving faculty, supervisors, Extension agents, and peers often waiting for the person to clarify their gender identity and pronouns used or we might make mistakes and misgender someone or use incorrect pronouns. Pronouns are frequently used in our everyday language to refer to one another multiple times per day (we encourage each of you to count how many times you use a gendered pronoun to refer to others during just a four hour period of your day!). When someone uses incorrect pronouns to refer to another person, this may cause emotional distress for the receiver.
So, how can faculty, administrators, staff, and students be more supportive? The following website (posted by Bryn Mawr College) has great information on how to ask for and use correct pronouns in order to make spaces (e.g., classrooms, workplaces) more affirmative and supportive: http://www.brynmawr.edu/pensby/documents/AskingforNameandPronouns.pdf.

One simple strategy to foster more inclusive environments for gender diverse people: Ask people to tell you about themselves by filling out a notecard, online form, etc... On this form, in addition to asking about their name, major, why they are taking the class, you can also ask them for the pronouns that they used (e.g., What pronouns do you use [for example, he/him, she/her, they/them]?). By simply asking, you are opening up the line of communication in the classroom and convey a message of inclusion to your students. Also, share your pronouns with the class and include as a line on your email signature (e.g., “My pronouns are him/his/he”).

Want more information? Enroll in a Safe Zone training through LGBTQ Affairs at the UA. Safe Zone trainings offer information about lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and asexual people to students, staff, faculty, and community members. This semester, there are dedicated sessions for faculty and staff that will focus on making classrooms more inclusive. The schedule for Safe Zone trainings can be found here: http://lgbtq.arizona.edu/2015-2016-safe-zone-training-schedule. Currently, these trainings are being made into webinars (projected to be available in the academic year 2016/17).