

A RESOLUTION TO ENCOURAGE THE USE OF GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

WHEREAS, the use of gender-neutral language validates that gender or gender identity do not determine whether a student belongs at Michigan; **AND**

WHEREAS, the use of gender-neutral language is encouraged by the APA Style Guidelines¹; **AND**

WHEREAS, the traditional term “freshman” to refer to certain undergraduate students at the University implies a gender label; **AND**

WHEREAS, other schools have made an official change in policy, including the University of Virginia², Elon University³, and Yale University⁴; **AND**

WHEREAS, the College of Engineering⁵ and the Medical School⁶ use (different) gender-neutral language to refer to first-year students; **AND**

WHEREAS, the College of LS&A has made these changes in their official communications, with the support of the Dean⁷; **AND**

WHEREAS, the use of gender-neutral language has been recognized⁸ by campus leaders⁹ as important to the inclusiveness of this campus; **AND**

WHEREAS, the use of gender-neutral language is consistent with goals of the DEI Strategic Plan¹⁰ to “ensur[e] that our campus is a place where differences of all kinds [...] are welcomed” and “create an environment [...] where every individual experiences a deep sense of belonging and inclusion”; **AND**

¹ APA Publication Manual, 6th ed., p.73

² https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/25/unc-freshman-first-year-sexist_n_2016645.html

³ <https://www.thecollegefix.com/post/20172/>

⁴ <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/09/18/yale-strikes-freshman-upperclassman-official-publications>

⁵ <https://www.engin.umich.edu/admissions/undergrad/admitted-students/first-year/>

⁶ <https://medicine.umich.edu/medschool/education/md-program/curriculum/year-1>

⁷ <https://www.chronicle.com/blogs/linguafranca/2018/03/08/changing-house-style/>

⁸ <https://www.michigandaily.com/section/editorials/op-ed-letter-mvision>

⁹ Including the Provost of the University (personal correspondence)

¹⁰ <https://diversity.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/strategic-plan.pdf> (p20)

20 **WHEREAS,** University units including Undergraduate Admissions¹¹, the Office of
22 New Student Programs¹², and Housing¹³ use the gendered term
“freshman”; **THEREFORE BE IT**

24 **RESOLVED,** that the Assembly encourages the University and its constituent units to
use gender-neutral language in referring to students and groups of
26 students; in particular by eliminating use of the term “freshman” from
official University documents and communications; **AND BE IT**
FINALLY

28 **RESOLVED,** that this resolution shall be distributed to the University President,
Provost, Chief Diversity Officer, and DEI Implementation leads¹⁴ for
30 each unit; as well as to the Michigan Daily.

Authors

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Attest

Alex Contis, LSA
Speaker of the Assembly

Isabel Baer, LSA
Vice Speaker of the Assembly

President's Approval

Anushka Sarkar

Presented to the Assembly for *First Reads* on _____

Presented to the Assembly for *Second Reads* on _____

Yes: _____ No: _____ Abs: _____ Date: _____

Signature Necessary: _____ Signature Received By _____: _____

¹¹ <https://admissions.umich.edu/apply/freshmen-applicants>

¹² <http://onsp.umich.edu/orientation/incoming-freshman>

¹³ <http://housing.umich.edu/freshmen>

¹⁴ <http://diversity.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/160408-DEI-implementation-leads-062717.pdf>