**Name:** Michael Anthony Goodman (he, him, his)  
**Date:** June 13, 2018  
**Title of Proposal:** A Recommendation to Evaluate Gendered Language  
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**Unit/Department/College:** Higher Education, Student Affairs, International Education Policy (College of Education)  
**Constituency (faculty, staff, undergraduate, graduate):** Graduate Student  

**Description of issue/concern/policy in question:** Over the past year, I have observed multiple places where gendered language has hindered the opportunity for inclusion of individuals who identify as non-binary or another category outside of the rigid “male/female” gender identifiers. For example, website content and Graduate Assistantship offer letters often contain “he/she” and “his/hers” language when referencing students (see Appendix A). Further, onboarding documents are often written directly to “he/she” or “male/female” expectations, as illustrated in the incident that occurred earlier this year with the Computer Science handbook.

These are just a few examples, which initially led me to engage deeper with students and faculty on campus to understand if these were isolated incidents. Now knowing that they are not, I write this proposal to the University Senate to address a need for inclusion regarding how the University of Maryland perpetuates a gendered expectation in undergraduate, graduate, and faculty/staff capacities. This language sets a standard that students, faculty, staff, and alumni who do not identify as “male/female” or “his/hers” are not welcome or included in various university operations.

After an initial email to The Graduate School, it was recommended that this concern be considered at a higher level, which has ultimately led to this University Senate proposal.
| Description of action/changes you would like to see implemented and why: | I would like to see the University Senate address this concern campus-wide, which will ideally lead to a campus-wide review of documents, websites, resources, and communication. First, it should be mandated that all colleges lead a review of their documents, websites, resources, and correspondence. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:  
• Admissions advertisements and materials  
• Orientation materials  
• College, department, program handbooks  
• Job descriptions  
• Official Human Resources applications  
• Syllabi  
• Curriculum (PowerPoint presentations, handouts)  
• Website and online/social media content  
Departments and Colleges should remove any language exclusively citing, “he/his,” or “she/her,” and replace that language with, “the student,” or, “their/theirs,” framing. |
| Suggestions for how your proposal could be put into practice: | To review and address the categories listed above, Deans of the Colleges should appoint a Task Force within each college to oversee and manage the Department and College review. Each Task Force should be inclusive of individuals who are committed to equity and justice work, and involve students, staff, and faculty. Ultimately, each Task Force will operate as the accountability body for each College. |
| Additional Information: | The Graduate Student Government has taken steps to address this concern within our own body, and we would like the University to follow suit. For example, during the Spring 2018 semester, we passed legislation to edit our Bylaws in full, and to be reflective of “they/them/theirs” pronouns, removing all gendered pronouns. Additionally, we passed a resolution urging The Graduate School to recommend correspondence to Departments to evaluate gendered language within GA/TA/RA offer letters, handbooks, and in-College onboarding websites and documents. |
Appendix A

Graduate Assistants are, first and foremost, graduate students pursuing an education. The opportunity to work closely with faculty, staff, and students in teaching, research, or administrative environments is an integral part of that education. The University and the Adele H. Stamp Student Union – Center for Campus Life are committed to ensuring that GA assignments are productive, enhance student qualifications, merit funding support, and workload goals, and are consistent with the educational objectives of the student and his or her program.

The University of Maryland and the Adele H. Stamp Student Union – Center for Campus Life are academic and collegial communities. Regular and clear communication between Graduate Assistants and their advisors and supervisors is essential to maintaining an effective educational environment. Occasionally, problems may occur. A GA who experiences workload-related problems is encouraged to consult with his or her advisor or supervisor. Should the need arise, a Grievance Procedure is detailed in the Policies for Graduate Assistantships linked above.