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DOC 1985-02 Guidelines for Inclusive Language Usage

University of Dayton. Academic Senate. Women's Studies Committee

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PROPOSAL TO THE ACADEMIC SENATE

April 16, 1986
October 2, 1986

TITLE: Guidelines for Inclusive Language Usage

SUBMITTED BY: Women's Studies Committee

DATE: February 14, 1986

Indicate the action required: Legislative, Concurrence, or Consultative, and refer to the appropriate reference in the Senate Constitution.

ACTION IS: Consultation REFERENCE IS: Article II, B.3.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL: State objectives, rationale, and how proposal is to be implemented.

The following document contains guidelines for the University community to use in facilitating use of inclusive language. The Women's Studies Committee recognizes that the University has already begun using inclusive language in many areas and that questions arise as to appropriate inclusive terms and ways of reworking language structures. These guidelines address such needs. The guidelines are put forward in the interest of students who will be expected to be able to use inclusive language in their various careers. The guidelines will help to heighten awareness of language usage on campus and will provide an easy reference for those who are developing more inclusive language usage. The Senate is asked to distribute the document to all faculty and administrators.

NOTE: This final revised document supersedes the original Academic Senate Document #85-2 and Document #86-2.

Document as revised Oct. 2, 1986

The University of Dayton attempts to provide an environment for its students, faculty, and staff that facilitates equal opportunity and that overcomes and eliminates discrimination. Because language is central to the activity of the University, the University community should be attentive to the patterns of language used in the classrooms, in internal communications, and in external communications. The Office of the President and the Office of the Provost are both careful to use inclusive language.

The use of inclusive language by the University community helps the University to accomplish its role of preparing young people to be professional and moral leaders in their communities. Students who are accustomed to hearing, speaking, and writing inclusive language are prepared for business positions where such language usage is expected. They are able to meet the writing expectations of professional journals and publications. They are prepared to help society conceptualize itself in ways that are more just.

These guidelines are not comprehensive. They identify areas where language usage is often exclusive. The guidelines will help to heighten awareness of language usage on campus and will provide an easy reference for those who are developing more inclusive language usage.

I. LANGUAGE USAGE RELATED TO GENDER

Exclusive Usage

alumnus, alumni
best man for the job
businessman/woman

cameraman

chairman

cleaning lady/maintenance man

coed
common man

Congressman/woman

fireman
foreman
freshman

gentlemen's agreement
girls; boys (to refer to adults)

housewife/husband
ladies (when it demeans status)
layman

man a project

man hours

Inclusive Usage

alumnus and alumnae
alumni and alumnae
best person or candidate
business executive
business manager
business leader
entrepreneur
business person
business community
photographer
camera operator
chair, chairperson
presiding officer
committee head
chairer
custodial worker
cleaner
student
ordinary person
typical person
average person
representative
member of Congress
Congressional
representative
fire fighter
supervisor
first year student
(since no single
word is available, the
exclusive term is still
used in many places)
informal agreement
young women, women;
young men, men
homemaker
women
lay person
nonspecialist
staff a project
hire personnel
worker hours
labor hours
personnel hours

man/mankind	humanity human beings human race people, persons men and women individuals humankind human species
man made	manufactured handmade machine made constructed
man on the street manpower	average person human energy workers workforce labor
mailman	mail carrier letter carrier
newspaperman	journalist reporter
office girls policeman/woman real estate man repairman	office workers police officer real estate agent repairer technician
salesman	repair person salesperson sales representative seller
spokesman/woman	spokesperson official representative
waiter/waitress	server
workman	worker

II. PRONOUN USAGE

English does not have a gender neutral pronoun in the third person singular. Use of masculine pronouns as gender neutral results in exclusion and confusion. There are many ways of overcoming this problem:

1. Add the feminine pronoun (he and she, hers or his)
2. Recast in the plural or the first person
3. Reword to eliminate excessive use of pronouns
4. Make use of "one," "you," "anyone"

III. PARALLEL USAGE

Skewed Construction

man and wife
men and girls

men and ladies

woman lawyer, doctor, etc.
male nurse, secretary, etc.

Prof. John Smith and
Jane Doe

Mr. John Smith and
Mrs. John Doe
Smith and Ms. Doe

Parallel Construction

husband and wife
men and women
girls and boys
men and women
ladies and gentlemen
lawyer doctor, etc.
nurse, secretary, etc.
Prof. John Smith and
Prof. Jane Doe
John Smith and
Jane Doe
Mr. Smith and Ms. Doe
Smith and Doe

IV. LETTER SALUTATIONS

Dear Madam or Sir

Dear Correspondent

Dear Credit Manager

Dear Friend

To Whom It May Concern

Dear (department name)

Dear (organization name)

Dear Mr. or Ms.

V. LANGUAGE USAGE RELATED TO DISABILITY

Terms that Stereotype

victim, suffers from
the deaf, the blind

deaf and dumb, deaf mute

afflicted, crippled, maimed

dummy, dull-witted

fits, spells, attacks

confined to a wheelchair

Alternative Terms

a person who has (had)
persons who are deaf
persons who are blind
hearing impaired
visually impaired
a person who has a speech
and hearing impairment
a person with a disability
be specific, e.g., a
person with paraplegia
developmentally disabled
mentally retarded
seizures, with/who has
cerebral palsy, seizure
disorder, etc.
uses a wheelchair

VI. CONSIDERATIONS FOR CLASSROOM TEACHING

1. Avoid stereotyping men and women. Recast examples that assign career options, life styles, social roles, or personal attributes on the basis of traditional sex role stereotypes. Portray men and women as capable of having a wide variety of human attributes and as capable of filling a wide variety of occupations.
2. Select books and texts for classroom usage which make use of inclusive language and which emphasize the equality of all persons. When this is not possible, draw exclusive usage and stereotyping examples to the attention of students.
3. Include materials by both women and men. Include materials by people of a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds.
4. Consider possible implications of what you are teaching. What is the impact on minorities, women, men, and persons with disabilities?

VII. SOURCES OF FURTHER CONSULTATION

*used in preparing this document

*Guide to Nonsexist Language, a publication of the Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1986.

Guidelines for Bias-Free Publishing. McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Guidelines for Creating Positive Sexual and Racial Images in Educational Materials. NY: McMillan Publishing Company.

*Guidelines of Equal Treatment of the Sexes in McGraw-Hill Book Company Publications. McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974.

*Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language in NCTE Publications. Urbana, IL: NCTE Publication, 1975.

*Miller, Casey, and Kate Swift. The Handbook of Nonsexist Writing. New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1980.

*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 3rd edition. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1983.

*Shear, Marie. "Solving the Great Pronoun Debate," Ms., October 1985.

Without Bias: A Guide for Non-Discriminatory Communications, 2nd edition. Wiley, NY: International Association of Business Communications, 1982.

*Wright State University Administrative Memorandum, No. 85-2, April 30, 1985.

Zola, Irving Kenneth. "Does It Matter What You Call Us?", Disability and Chronic Disease Quarterly, Vol. 4, no. 3, July 1984.