University Annual Giving

FY22 Inclusive Language Guide

OVERVIEW

This Inclusive Language Guide helps University Annual Giving's become as intentionally inclusive as possible in both projects and processes. It is not an exhaustive resource. We expect this guide will remain malleable to respond to new considerations and opportunities to create more meaningful connections through our conversations and projects. This guide covers external and internal communications and represents UAG's guide for FY22. At a minimum, it will guide our language usage for internal and external communications this year and, at best, may serve as a starting point for developing a more robust Inclusive Language Toolkit that can be shared more broadly with all of University Advancement.

GOALS

- Communicate with as much intentional inclusivity as possible, both internally and externally.
- Establish a process/framework for our team to hold our marketing pieces up against to determine if our projects are as inclusive as possible in all aspects of project specifications (segmentation, testing, imagery, featured content and signatories, etc.)
- Identify and recommend opportunities to create more meaningful content for constituents from historically marginalized populations, while still honoring our individual partner units' fundraising initiatives.
- Apply more inclusive processes to our team operations, honoring colleagues' individual preferences for collaboration and being celebrated.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

External communications, as defined by this guide, will include the following:

- Direct mail pieces (print pieces) coordinated by our team

- Digital details (email, text messages and social media) coordinated by our team

- Formal communications with our partners and other units across University Advancement (reports, memorandums, strategy documents, etc.)

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Internal communications, as defined by this guide, will include the following:

- Informal notes sent to colleagues during the regular course of collaboration and project workflow. To include, but not limited to: emails, handwritten notes, instant messages, conversations on our project management platform, etc.

- 1:1 conversations, team meetings and casual gatherings (both in-person or online).

ACTION PLAN

- Refine and add to inclusive language definitions as our understanding of terms and ideas broadens through a shared commitment to inclusive learning.

- Work with HR partners to implement the toolkit in performance management, feedback sessions, one-on-one, and team meetings, and recognition and reward systems.

- Enact desired change through implementation.

Contents

FY21 Inclusive Language Guide

Reference to Individuals

BEST PRACTICE

Whenever possible, try to use people's preferred names. Gender-neutral language such as *folks, people, you all, y'all*, and *teammates* are more inclusive and less presumptuous of socially perceived forms of gender expression. A great overview of gender identity terms can be found here: [**LINK**]

Pronouns

"Pronouns are integral to who we are, and we share pronouns because we want to avoid assuming someone's pronouns based on factors like appearance. By sharing our own pronouns routinely, we encourage others to do the same and demonstrate that we understand the importance of sharing pronouns. Using someone's correct pronouns is an important way of affirming someone's identity and is a fundamental step in being an ally.

Common pronouns include she/her/hers, he/him/his, and they/them/theirs. There are other nonbinary pronouns. It is important to ask people what their pronouns are. If you have questions, politely ask the person to give examples of how to use the pronouns.

"Justice is my friend. They are a great colleague and identify as nonbinary. I really like them. My office is next to theirs."
[source] (LGBTQIA Resource Center, UC Davis)

Salutations

For the working purposes of this guide, "salutations" are most applicable to formal communications/correspondence (usually external-facing communications like direct marketing pieces).

Personalize language with first or preferred names where possible, reserving the use of professional titles (e.g., *Dr., Rev., Hon.)* in conjunction with a last name for addressing purposes on outer envelopes on more formal written communication.

e.g. **THE OPENING OF A LETTER:**
Dear Elisabeth and Denver, as opposed to ***Dear Mr. and Mrs. Denver Johnson,***

AVOID
"Guys" to address all people, which is gendered language that may insinuate that men are the preferred gender. **"Ladies and gentlemen"**—which places emphasis on division based on traditionally perceived gender identification. It also excludes and may alienate individuals who identify as nonbinary/trans. **"Donor(s)"** Focuses more on the fiscal act of giving rather than an individual's feeling of connection to the University. Applies mostly to external-facing communications like direct marketing pieces.

Terms and Phrases

The UAG Direct Marketing team is committed to celebrating differences and respect. We support each other to create an environment where everyone is able to reach their full potential.

The way that we write about and represent people in our direct marketing pieces can help to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion. The terms and phrases below are reflections on how historically, the language we have used to talk about people has been marked with bias (however unconsciously), and how we might move past those biases to be more inclusive in our communications and representations. **While we have put together this resource, it is important to reflect on the necessity of including specific terms and phrases when we speaking of and for individuals we feature. Is mentioning a featured person's disability or age, for example, vital to communicating the impact of a fiscal gift? Similarly, does comment on race, ethnicity, or gender of signatories/featured individuals have anything to do with the story we are trying to tell?**

SITUATION	BEST PRACTICE	AVOID
Organizing a gathering of people	"Conduct a meeting" or "Get together" or "Meet in person/via video call."	"Powwow" which is culturally insensitive.
Describing when someone has been defrauded, swindled or cheated	"scammed" or "conned"	"Gypped," which is a racial slur. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term is "probably an abbreviation of 'gypsy,' a word commonly used to describe the Romani people."
Describing the amount of time spent on an activity, or the necessity for a person to participate in an activity	"Work" as a verb instead of "man" such as "work hours" or "work the conference booth."	"Man" as a synonym for work. For example, "man hours," "man the inbox," or "man the conference booth." This is an unnecessarily gendered language.
Addressing clerical issues and establishing basic etiquette, usually at the start of a meeting	Use the terms "maintenance," "cleanup," or "record-keeping."	"Housekeeping," which equates administrative tasks with the

	action plan main plan comprehensive schedule long-range plan fiscal year plan	supposition of traditional housekeeping work as being a woman's realm. Avoid "master plan" or "master schedule" – the term "master" is deemed offensive by some African-Americans because of how the adjective evokes the painful history of slavery. The term itself can also be problematic in how it connotes a sense of individual components being inflexible/set in sto
Describing a situation that did not require much effort or that was enjoyable	Use phrases like "that was easy" or "that was the best" (depending on context).	Avoid "Cake Walk/Takes the cake." or "piece of cake." Enslaved people would covertly mock white enslavers through exaggerated dance to mimic white aristocrats. Perhaps unaware of the subversive origin of the dancing, enslavers began holding "balls" for entertainment, where enslaved people would perform these dances to win a cake. Cakewalks became popular through the racism of 19th-century minstrel shows, which portrayed Black people as clumsily aspiring to be and dance like white people.
Describing individuals who are exempt from a new policy due to conditions that existed before the change	"Legacy user" or "Legacy system"	Avoid "Grandfathering" or "grandfather clause." These terms originated in the American South in the 1890s to prevent Black Americans from voting.

Describing people or situations that are confusing, overwhelming, or unpredictable	Use kindness when describing others and words such as "frustrated," "confused/ing," "not fun," "difficult."	Terms that stem from the context of mental health like "schizo," "paranoid," "psycho," "lame," "insane," or "crazy."
Describing people or behaviors that, when taken to an extreme, are indicative of underlying mental health issues	Be specific to the reality of everyday situations or behavior. Use terms such as extreme, tedious, or particular.	Avoid "Bipolar," "PTSD," "OCD" and "ADD" "retarded" to describe everyday behaviors. These are real mental health diagnoses that people possess, and using them casually may underplay the impact of someone's experiences with a mental disorder.
Describing a person with disabilities	Consider if it is essential to describe the disability in relation to the context. Ask their preference. Use person first language when referring to those with disabilities. "A person with a disability," "A person who uses a wheelchair." **NOTE:** While using person-first language may seem like the most inclusive way to communicate with/about persons with disabilities, not everyone who identifies as having a disability, or not every care-giver of a person with a disability has the same opinion. Asking what is their preference is even more key. More information on nuanced perspectives can be found here: [[LINK]]	Avoid :disabled person," "wheelchair-bound", "handicapped," "disabled," "crippled," "invalid," "lame" "Normal" to describe people without disabilities.
Describing persons living with a mental illness	Use person-first phrases such as "someone living with …" For example, "someone living	Do not use "stricken" or "victim." Avoid words with negative connotations such

	with depression" or "someone who has cerebral palsy."	as "suffers from," "afflicted with," or "victim of." [LINK]
Describing persons living with physical illnesses or conditions (i.e., limited vision or loss of vision, limited or no hearing)	If necessary, describe a person's specific condition. Ask their preference. People with complete or nearly complete vision loss are blind or legally blind. Those with partial sight may use the terms low-vision, limited vision or visually impaired. Ask for their preference. People with total hearing loss are "deaf." Those with partial hearing loss are hard of hearing. Ask their preference, and confirm if they use a capital D.	Avoid "birth defect." It generalizes the population and minimizes personhood. The word "defect" implies a person is sub-par or somehow incomplete.
Describing a person's sexual preference or identity	Ask the individual how they identify, and how they prefer to be referenced.	Homosexual
Describing a person's race or ethnicity	It is best to learn where someone is from: **Latino/a or LatinX:** Refers to someone of Latin American origin. Latinx (pronounced "La-teen-ex"). **Spanish:** Refers to someone who is from Spain. **Hispanic:** Refers to someone of Spanish-speaking origin. (Though this term seems to be on its way out.) When in doubt, as their preference.	
	Ask for a person's preference and identify someone as specifically as possible. Rather than "She is Native American," say, "She is a member of the Nez Perce Tribe." Rather	Do not use a capital letter when describing the people who are white.

	than "He is Asian," say, "He is from Beijing, China." Use a capital letter when referring to non-white races such as "Black" [[LINK](#)]	
When describing unwanted disturbances that occur during the course of social interactions	Use "heckling" to refer to "heckling" as an action in itself. Kindess and respect being paramount in all our communications, there should be no need to specifically associate the act of "heckling" with how intellectually engaged we perceive an individual to be.	"Peanut Gallery" This term for heckling or unwanted disturbance originates in the 1920s when the peanut gallery referred to the back section of theaters, which were the only places that people of color were allowed to sit at the time. The phrase was meant to poke fun at the idea of people of color engaging in intellectualism.
Describing parking spaces for individuals with certain conditions	Accessible parking	Handicapped parking
Describing a group historically perceived as other than the "majority" in a given locale	"Historically underrepresented groups people of color marginalized communities	minority minorities
Describing an unnatural substance or material	artificial	"man-made," which is not inclusive of gender expression nuances
Naming a profession or position	chairperson humanity mail carrier flight attendant	chairman mankind mailman stewardess

Referencing a group of individuals who graduated from the same institution	Alumni/Alumnx (more than one person of any gender) Alumnx or alum (a single person of any gender)	Alumna Alumnae Alumnus These terms may make assumptions about gender and should be avoided unless clarification has been provided by the individual or group.
When referencing an overview of a plan or schedule	Use: action plan main plan comprehensive schedule long-range plan fiscal year plan	Avoid "master plan" or "master schedule" – the term "master" is deemed offensive by some African-Americans because of how the adjective evokes the painful history of slavery. The term itself can also be problematic in how it connotes a sense of individual components being inflexible/set in stone. [LINK]

Practical Application

UNEDITED SAMPLE LETTER – <mark>EDITS ON NEXT PAGE</mark>

Fall 2020

Dear Donors,

I joined the UVA School of Finance as its dean just six months ago, and in that time, I have been blown away by the passion and creativity of our students, faculty, and staff. Here in Finance, we are working to tackle the economic problems of the world, exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, while testing and improving financial best practices in every industry.

In the short time I've been here, Finance men and women have accomplished a great deal:
- The average student has been able to reduce his or her cost of attendance by 2 percent, thanks to fiscal stewardship and cutting unnecessary expenses.
- As part of our effort to make a Finance degree more accessible, we've asked our facilities men to install handicapped ramps to make it easier for our disabled students to enter the building where we hold all classes.
- Our students have started an afterschool budget mentoring program for boys and girls in the local school system. Allan Hindleman, a black fourth-year student, has even created an app for students to use to help their moms manage household budgets better.

This semester brings much promise, as we adapt our techniques and facilities to meet the crazy demand for degrees at the School of Finance. Applications are up 10 percent over last semester, thanks to the sterling reputation of our faculty. We couldn't do it without you. Your generous contributions support our students, faculty, and staff, and all their efforts.

As you prepare your household budget this year, I ask you to add a line item for the School of Finance this year. Your investment in our community will pay dividends. Please make a gift today.

Fiscally yours,

Anna F. Banker
Dean, School of Finance
Distinguished Professor of Numbers and Society

SAMPLE LETTER EDITED TO BE MORE INCLUSIVE

Fall 2020

Dear Janice and Steve,

I joined the UVA School of Finance as its dean just six months ago, and in that time, I have been blown away by the passion and creativity of our students, faculty, and staff. Here in Finance, we are working to tackle the economic problems of the world, exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, while testing and improving financial best practices in every industry.

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Areas for Expansion

- **Alt text / image description best practices**
- **Pronoun usage best practices/rationale behind (more in-depth considerations)**
- **Body positive language**

References

"What an inclusive language toolkit should cover." Clark, Kim. Ragan. Dec. 28, 2020. [**LINK**]

The Diversity Style Guide. [**LINK**]

Disability Language Style Guide. [**LINK**]

The Association of LGBTQ Journalists Stylebook. [**LINK**]

National Association of Black Journalists Style Guide [**LINK**]

Asian American Journalists Association Guide [**LINK**]

RespectAbility Using Appropriate Lexicon Tips [**LINK**]

Autistic Self Advocacy Network [**LINK**]