

2022 Technology Fee Full Proposal

Title: Namecoach at UF: Creating a More Inclusive Campus through Technology

Proposers: Allyson Haskell, ahaskell@ufl.edu & Chris Pinkoson, cpink@ufl.edu - Sr. Instructional Designers, UFIT

Sponsoring Organization: Academic Technology

Purpose and Specific Objectives:

Two of [UF's core values](#) are [inclusion](#) and [community](#), and implementing Namecoach will make the UF community safer, more welcoming, and more inclusive. This tool will help faculty, staff, and students strengthen the sense of belonging and togetherness in the digital learning environment. Namecoach allows students (and faculty and staff) to share the pronunciation of their name and pronouns so that others can listen to the pronunciation. This will make our learning management system (Canvas) more inclusive by encouraging faculty, staff, and students to respect and honor differences in identities by providing name pronunciations and pronouns, which will increase equitable access to opportunity for many students.

The purpose of this proposal is to fund the implementation of the Namecoach LTI at UF and to determine resources necessary to implement the Namecoach in additional systems such as the SIS or One.UF or for use during events such as Commencement.

The objectives for this project will be:

- Create a communication initiative to make students, faculty, and staff aware of Namecoach via various channels, list serves, etc.
- Review analytics to see how many students, faculty, and staff have utilized Namecoach (both recorded and listened) during the pilot semesters.
- Collect information from students about their experience with Namecoach (through Gator evals or CITT survey)

This innovative technology will remove a barrier to inclusivity and will strengthen the exceptional academic environment we strive to provide for students, allowing students a more equitable opportunity to succeed.

Impact/Benefit:

Implementing the Namecoach LTI in Canvas will ensure the appropriate name pronunciation for all students, faculty, and staff at UF, while prioritizing the [15,000+](#) underrepresented minority students and [nearly 6,000](#) international students enrolled at UF. This will contribute to a sense of belonging on campus that will help “shape our climate and culture to foster the success of all Gators” (pulled from CDO’s [list of initiatives](#)).

There are several benefits to implementing Namecoach at UF:

- The UF community, particularly students, can record the pronunciation of their names or select from prerecorded options
- Instructors can listen to recordings
- Namecoach can also be integrated with SIS and other systems
- Could also aid staff who work with students (admissions, financial aid, advising, etc.)
- Increased safety for trans students (if implemented in other systems that don’t currently allow pronouns)

When students feel welcomed, included, and valued, they are more likely to engage with content, contributing to their overall success at UF ([source](#)).

Interest across UF

Leadership across UF campus are supportive and excited about bringing Namecoach to our students:

- I really like this tool. It does a lot to not only promote inclusivity but to empower people to be inclusive. I think the faculty I work with would definitely appreciate this tool and would use it. As you know, we have a large population of international students and TAs who could truly benefit from this. Most of them are Chinese and Indian and have names that most English speakers do not know how to pronounce. We are also implementing class activities in which UF students interact virtually with students from all over the

world. This tool would also be useful for the students participating in these virtual exchanges. – **Paloma Rodriguez, Director, Office of Global Learning, UF International Center**

- I think this would be fantastic. I'm including Stephanie McBride here, as I believe Namecoach would be beneficial for Commencement name readers. I, for one, would love to hear the graduating students pronouncing their own name when I prepare to as a reader. – **Dr. Angela Lindner – Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs**
- I know that just in my own work with faculty, I am embarrassed to ask people how to pronounce their names. I can't imagine how difficult it is for faculty with a new batch of students every semester. – **Jennifer Smith, Director, Center for Teaching and Learning**
- A primary mission of the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer is to foster a sense of belonging on campus. Names often represent one's culture, heritage, and overall identity and Namecoach will give people the ability to correctly pronounce the names of students and colleagues. This, we believe, is a vital step in making people feel welcome and accepted as part of our campus community. **Dr. Marsha McGriff, Chief Diversity Officer and Senior Advisor to the President**

Feedback from Emily Oakes, Principle Unizin IT Consultant, University Data Steward for Learning Management & Learning Analytics Data, Indiana University

- At IU, we've implemented NameCoach in a number of systems in support of our faculty, staff, and student communities. Name recordings are available from our directory website (directory.iu.edu) and our News at IU "Faculty & Staff experts" page ([example](#)), enabling our colleagues and representatives from the media to successfully pronounce our names. We've also added NameCoach [to our advising system](#), providing our advisors the ability to learn their advisees' names before they walk through the door. Our NameCoach offerings for new student orientation and for commencement services allow us to promote inclusion for all students throughout their tenure at the university.
- At a time when many people have been feeling increasingly disconnected, NameCoach has helped many of us feel more confident entering meetings with colleagues we may not see as often as we had before. Whether through the IU Directory or the badge in our colleagues' email signatures, NameCoach gives us an opportunity to practice correctly and confidently greeting our peers, strengthening our relationships with each other.

Research and Case Studies:

NameCoach is being used in institutions like Stanford, Ohio State, and Florida State University, and meets ADA requirements ([VPAT](#)). We are including the information in this section as evidence that this type of implementation has been successful at other institutions and has led to a more equitable environment for students, faculty, and staff.

[NameCoach and Stanford at AACRAO 2017: Respect and Belonging \(Part 1\)](#)

- "Respect is one of the most critical words... It's not just the experience of individuals and groups on a campus; it's also the quality and extent of the interaction between those various groups and individuals that determines a healthy campus climate." - [University of California \(UC\) Campus Climate survey](#)
- "[Feeling] embraced by a warm and welcoming campus culture. [Feeling] immediately at home. That's what inclusion is all about. It's about feeling like you belong and that your life, your voice, and your contributions truly matter through the mutual civility and respect that we show one another." - [Office of Diversity and Inclusion at the University of South Carolina](#)
- "There is much more to college achievement gaps than differences in preparation or motivation or ability. When individuals are repeatedly asking themselves whether they belong or not, it... diminishes motivation

to engage and persist in school. Students ask fewer questions in class, study less often with others, and avoid office hours. As a result, their grades suffer.” —“[How Worries about Belonging can Inhibit Achievement](#)” – Natalie Orenstein

[University of San Francisco: Preventing the Last Memory of College Being Someone Pronouncing Your Name Wrong](#)

- College campuses are home to a global community. To make the students feel valued, it’s important to pronounce their names correctly. At graduation, in front of family and friends, this value is amplified. **Peggy Takahashi, Associate Professor and Undergraduate Programs Associate Dean, University of San Francisco**, says “NameCoach makes [graduation] much less stressful because I will have heard the name and practiced it before I and the student take the commencement stage.” Furthermore, she elaborated, “Parents and students come up after graduation and say ‘You said my name so well you’re a natural at it.’” The last impression will have a profound impact, and **Stephanie McBride, UF Director of Commencements**, has expressed interest in learning more about the tool.

Gender Equity

UF is committed through its [Gender Equity Policy](#) to providing an equitable experience for all UF students, faculty, and staff, "enabling all individuals to start on equal footing to compete for benefits, resources, and opportunities." Similarly, UF recognizes and supports the use of chosen names throughout "all university documents and systems where possible, except where use of the legal name is required by university business or there is a legal need"([Chosen and Legal Name and Gender Change policy](#)). Namecoach will serve to strengthen and support these commitments, allowing us to meet students with respect by using the correct pronunciation of their chosen names and their preferred pronouns.

- Making the effort to use preferred pronouns and pronunciations is critical, but singling students out during roll call can make them uncomfortable. A more respectful solution is to empower students to educate faculty and staff on their preferred pronouns and correct name pronunciation privately or ahead of their first interactions. NameCoach’s suite of tools helps schools proactively address the challenge before the first day of class and beyond. ([NameCoach and Stanford at AACRAO 2017: Respect and Belonging \(Part 2\)](#))

Student Retention

Building students’ sense of belonging has been identified as a critical component for student success. (O’Keeffe, Patrick. [A sense of belonging: improving student retention](#). *College Student Journal*, vol. 47, no. 4, Dec. 2013) and utilizing Namecoach at UF will help build students sense of belonging in the online learning environment.

- Correctly pronouncing students’ names and using preferred pronouns impacts nearly every aspect of a student’s college experience—from what’s posted on their dorm room door to how they’re greeted or called upon in class.
- Failing to get names and pronouns right makes students question whether or not they belong on campus, which, according to a Stanford research study, can affect a student’s academic performance and stress levels.
- There is no single blueprint that leads to the creation of an inclusive environment, but NameCoach’s partners in higher education are proving that small steps in the right direction can build the momentum needed for large-scale change.

Bullets above pulled from [NameCoach and Stanford at AACRAO 2017: Respect and Belonging \(Part 2\)](#)

Respecting Cultural Identity/Avoiding Microaggressions

Recognizing and deciding how to respond to a microaggression “can take time and cognitive effort away from other tasks in which this person needs to engage in academic environments” and can feed into stereotype threat as well as increased stress, anxiety, and isolation. Implementing NameCoach will make it possible to address the often unintentional microaggression of name pronunciation, enabling instructors, advisors, and other staff to build stronger connections with students. ([Language Matters: Considering Microaggressions in Science](#))

Further reading:

- [Why Pronouncing Students' Names Correctly is So Important](#)
- Kohli, R. & Solórzano, D. (2012) [Teachers, please learn our names!: Racial Microaggressions and the K-12 Classroom](#). Race, Ethnicity and Education.
- [What is your name story? My name My identity initiative](#)

Sustainability:

The contract would include implementation of the Namecoach software in Canvas and Microsoft Outlook, as well as access to the Namecoach APIs. We estimate that it will take approximately one year to design and implement a communications campaign to roll out the tool to UF campus, and an additional semester to review and report on adoption of the tool. We estimate that this could take up to 0.5 FTE spread across two instructional designers (0.25 FTE each) during the first year of implementation but would take minimal effort to continue to support Namecoach once the communications/adoption campaign is complete.

In terms of cost sustainability, we are requesting funds for the first 3 years for this project so that we can evaluate whether the tool is worthy of being funded continually. If the University of Florida is satisfied with adoption of the tool after 3 years, we would request that UFIT consider funding the tool going forward.

Timeline:

Stage 1 Implementation (up to 4 months) (meets Benchmark 1)

- Contract negotiation
- Security review
- Concurrent testing in Canvas
- Documentation/website creation
- Drafting of communications plan

Stage 2: Launch product and implement communication plan (2 years)

Stage 3: Analytics and Feedback (1 year) (meets Benchmarks 2 and 3)

- Collecting use statistics, interest in implementations in other systems, and student feedback.
- Annual reports.

Budget and Budget Narrative:

As a Unizin institution, UF qualifies for a reduced rate of \$0.72 per student per year. For a one-year contract, the cost would be approximately \$36,000. Namecoach offers a 15% for a three-year contract.

We are requesting a three-year contract to take advantage of the reduced rate, for a total request of \$91,800.

The quote from Namecoach is attached.

Technology Fee Full Proposal Template Sponsor Signature Form

Title: Namecoach at UF: Creating a More Inclusive Campus through Technology

Proposer's Name:

Allyson Haskell, ahaskell@ufl.edu & Chris Pinkoson, cpink@ufl.edu - Sr. Instructional Designers, UFIT

Note: By signing this form the sponsor is making a commitment to support the project. This may include providing startup, recurring or equipment replacement resources as presented in the attached budget.

Signature of sponsor: College Dean, or Unit Director, or VP for Student Affairs.

Mark McCallister

4/1/2022 | 4:02 PM EDT

Name and Title

Date

Note: By signing this form the UF IT unit is making a commitment to manage the project if selected for submission of a full proposal. This may include providing startup, recurring or equipment replacement resources as presented in the attached budget.

Signature of managing unit administrator:

Ryan Yang

4/1/2022 | 1:55 PM EDT

Name and Title

Date