

Displaying a Graduate's Name on the Diploma

The Southwestern College diploma is a ceremonial document and does not, in itself, constitute proof of degree completion. However, in recognition that diplomas serve an official function and may be used for official purposes by other entities, Southwestern College ascribes to certain expectations of decorum on how it allows names of graduates to appear. Those expectations are as follows:

1. Southwestern College recommends that students list their full legal name on the diploma.
2. **Last Name:** Must match the legal last name recorded in the Registrar's records. The student must file an official name change with the Office of the Registrar to have a different last name reflected on the diploma, except in the cases below.
 - Hispanic maternal surnames may be added regardless of whether they are included in the student's official record.
 - A maiden name may be used if we have documented evidence (birth certificate, high school transcript) that reflects it was ever the student's last name.
 - Hyphenated maiden-married last names may be used, provided we have documented evidence (birth certificate, high school transcript, marriage certificate) that reflects the maiden name was ever the student's last name.
3. **First Name:** Legal first name as reflected in the Registrar's records is recommended; however, the following variations are acceptable:
 - May be omitted or replaced with an initial (if middle name is listed).
 - First name may be replaced with a generally recognized or easily correlated diminutive or nickname (e.g., "Beth" or "Libby" for "Elizabeth")
 - Nicknames that are not clearly related to the first name on record are not generally permitted and will be replaced with the student's legal first name on record. Any nickname published will be added as a preferred name (nickname) in the student information system (PowerCampus).
4. **Middle Name(s):** Legal middle name(s) or initial(s) as recorded in the Registrar's records is recommended; omissions are permitted (if first name is listed). Additions are permitted if we have documented evidence (birth certificate, other school transcript) that reflect it was ever part the student's name.
5. **Suffixes and Titles:**
 - Standard suffixes (Sr., Jr., or III) may be added regardless of whether they are included in the student's official record.
 - Prefixes, titles and designations from degrees previously earned (e.g., JD, Dr., Rabbi) are permitted.
6. **Accents:** We will attempt to accommodate special accent marks indicated on the Application form; however, students should be aware that some accents may not print on the diploma.
7. **Punctuation:** The following punctuation standard will be used.

John A. Smith III
Robert T. Jones Jr.
8. **New name expected:** A diploma may be ordered with a new name in expectation of a name change. If this is done, the diploma will NOT be delivered until an official Request for Name Change is provided to the Registrar's Office with required supporting documentation.

NOTE: If any questions arise and we are unable to contact the student, we will use the full legal name as recorded in the Registrar's records. Students may submit a letter requesting exceptions outside these guidelines for review and ruling by the Registrar. We will strive to meet student's requests.
