Dear Colleagues,

For over two decades, I have sent and received dozens of emails every workday. I have never agonized over, rewritten, and edited an email as much as this one, so please bear with me here.

With that disclaimer out of the way, I will start by being direct: I am not who you probably think I am, at least not in some ways. You see, I am a transgender woman. My professional life is the last remaining sphere of my life where I present myself as a man. Outside of work, I live and interact with society as a woman. In fact, I have legally changed my name and gender.

I am <feminine name here>.

It is now time for me to be <first name> at work as well. With this email, I will be <first name> in all aspects of my life. “<male name>” no longer exists.

As part of my workplace transition plan, I will be working from home tomorrow (<date>) and Monday (<date>). I will return to the <office location> office on Tuesday, <date>. While I expect you will be able to recognize me, you will notice some changes to my appearance, particularly how I groom and dress.

You may be familiar with reality TV shows where transgender people seemingly undergo an immediate and dramatic change. Reality (the non-TV kind) is usually far slower and less dramatic. Please keep this in mind when you see me in <office location> Tuesday!

I am asking you to use my true, legal, and correct name: <first name> (pronounced <pronunciation>, rhythming with <word it rhythms with>). If you have any questions about the pronunciation, please feel free to ask! I am also asking you to use pronouns appropriate for my gender, as you would for any other woman. For me, the correct pronouns are “she,” “her,” and “hers.”

I realize that some people may find this change difficult. It is challenging to change any habit, such as the name and pronouns you use for me. I do not expect perfection, and I will not think poorly of anyone making an effort when they occasionally slip up on the name or pronouns. However, I may correct someone when they use the wrong name or pronoun. Please do not take offense if this happens to you! The best way to handle such a mistake is to say, “I am sorry, <first name>,” and to move on in the conversation.

I desire to minimize any disruption at work. I enjoy my role in <work group>, and I want to continue to work alongside all of you. I am excited to come to work fully as myself, fully able to focus on my role on our team. I am appreciative of the help of that HR and my manager, <manager name>, have provided throughout this process, and I believe that thanks to their support, this transition will be a smooth one.

In line with this, my old email address will remain active as an alias, although my primary address will be updated to match my name. Likewise, my Skype name and information will also be updated, but my phone number will remain the same (<phone>). It may take a few days for IT to update their records.

While I think this email will be sufficient to understand what is most essential, I know that you may have a natural curiosity about this process. I have prepared a longer document that has more details about my transition:

<Link to longer document [attached]>

I also know that you may have some questions - I am happy to answer most questions. While I will not answer questions about specific medical procedures, I am otherwise very open about the process and journey that I am on. I am also unlikely to be offended by your questions, so please don’t feel you have to avoid this topic with me! In fact, I am excited to be myself in all areas of my life, finally! Please feel free to stop by my cube when I am back in the office if you want to say hi – I am at <office location> (my cube is alongside <description of my cube location>).

Sincerely,

<feminine name> – formerly (and no more) <male first name>.