

Statement on the importance of international higher education and research

Preamble

The main stated purpose of the Network of International Education Associations, NIEA, a non-profit, non-government association is “*to advance international higher education to improve the quality of higher education and research*”. The Network advances the global learning of post-secondary education organizations through the exchange of information and dialog, advocacy for international education, professional development, and the discovery of new approaches to international education.¹

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an enormous impact on Higher Education and on Internationalization of Higher Education in particular, causing a significant decrease in scheduled internationalization conferences, meetings and activities. Associations, quick to adapt, have increased online engagement and activities during this period.

We, the members of the NIEA, recognise that some measures implemented by national governments and Higher Education Institutions, limiting international higher education, were absolutely necessary to respond to the pandemic and appropriately implemented. At the same time, we believe that the solutions to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic require international collaboration and that limiting measures should be time bound. We reaffirm the importance of international higher education to our mutually beneficial and sustainable future, as international collaboration is essential to finding solutions to global problems, which manifest differently in our local contexts. Therefore, we call for:

A. National governments to:

- **Ensure higher education entities are considered key stakeholders in achieving sustainable development:** adopt a holistic approach to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the associated Sustainable Development Goals and to recognise the importance of international higher education in helping to achieve these goals.
- **Support international higher education and research:** ensure that higher education and research entities are appropriately funded and that regulatory frameworks enable international cooperation, avoid unnecessary obstacles to progress, while simultaneously assuring quality.
- **Increase access to international higher education opportunities globally:** adopt a holistic approach including all education levels and all disciplines and a coordinated effort by national governments.
- **Ensure equality:** adopt inclusive national strategies for internationalization of higher education, eliminating discrimination against students, teachers and researchers based on their nationality, race, ethnicity, socio-economic background, gender, sexual orientation, political or religious beliefs or any other aspect of their identity. Furthermore, ensure there is no discrimination among different types of higher education institutions.
- **Increase openness to and promote innovation in cooperation in research and internationalization of higher education,** especially in the immediate post-COVID-19 pandemic period, with the aim of mitigating the effects of the crisis on students and higher education institutions.

¹ The full list of NIEA members is provided in Annex 1

B. Higher Education Institutions to:

- **Promote and participate in cross-sectoral collaboration:** increase partnerships between a range of different types of higher education institutions and other stakeholders working in higher education, taking advantage of new forms of cooperation, including collaborative online learning programmes (COIL). Partnerships should promote and facilitate research on global issues, promote and offer training in global citizenship skills, and involve local and global communities;
- **Improve knowledge development and dissemination:** increase international collaboration and openness in the development and dissemination of new knowledge to serve all of humanity, especially the worlds' poorest individuals and communities;
- **Increase diversity and eliminate discrimination:** ensure that diverse multi-faceted and newly voiced perspectives on problems and solutions inform our approach to the development of (new) knowledge, in our respective contexts. Actively work to discover, uncover and dismantle implicit systems of oppression within institutions. By eliminating discrimination, ensure the benefits and opportunities offered by international higher education are more equitably shared.
- **Develop co-curricular programmes and implement Internationalization at Home:** foster responsible, caring and compassionate graduates by increasing intentional programmes in inter-cultural competency, global citizenry and anti-racism.
- **Make an Institutional commitment to society:** increase the institutional commitment to a purposeful internationalisation of higher education; a process improving the quality of all aspects of higher education in each institution, each society and ultimately, contributing to the creation of a better world for all.

Network of International Education Associations, NIEA, 24 July 2020

Annex 1: List of NIEA members

- Asociación Mexicana para la Educación Internacional (AMPEI) <https://www.ampei.org.mx/>
- Brazilian Association for International Education (FAUBAI) <http://faubai.org.br/en-us/>
- Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) <https://www.aieaworld.org/>
- Asia Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE)
<https://www.apaie2019.org/about/apaie>
- Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) <https://cbie.ca/>
- Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC)
<https://conahec.org/>
- International Education Association of Australia (IEAA) <https://www.ieaa.org.au/>
- International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) <https://www.ieasa.studysa.org/>
- Institute of International Education (IIE) <https://www.iie.org/>
- Japan Network for International Education (JAFSA) <https://www.jafsa.org/>
- Korean Association of Foreign Student Administrators (KAFSA) <http://www.kafsa.kr/>
- NAFSA: Association of International Educators <https://www.nafsa.org/>
- Red de Cooperación Internacional de las Universidades Nacionales (RedCIUN) del Consejo Interuniversitario Nacional (CIN) <https://www.cin.edu.ar/>
- European Association for International Education (EAIE) <https://www.eaie.org/>
- Inter-american Organization for Higher Education (OUI-IOHE) <https://oui-iohe.org/en/>

Coordinator NIEA:

- International Association of Universities (IAU) <https://iau-aiu.net/>