

Guiding Principles on Taking a Public Stance

Last Revised and approved by the Board of Directors March 10, 2024

Background

In 2017 the Ad-Hoc Committee on Social and Policy Engagement forwarded a draft of Guiding Principles on Taking a Public Stance, and the text was reviewed and discussed by the Executive Committee at its November 16th, 2017 meeting. The reviewed draft was discussed at an open meeting of the Ad-Hoc Committee during the CIES conference in Mexico City March 25-29, 2018. The amended text was made available to the full membership for a vote and a 30-day comment period. The Society members voted with 81.8% of the vote approving the policy, and their comments assisted in drafting a revised version. On September 3, 2020 the Board of Directors discussed and amended the draft principles. The Board of Directors voted on October 9, 2020 to accept the following policy as governing the Society on taking a public stance. These principles were revised and the attached FAQ approved by the Board of Directors on March 10, 2024.

<p style="text-align: center;">Comparative and International Education Society Guiding Principles on Taking a Public Stance</p>

The Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) was established in 1956 for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes. The current CIES constitution recognizes that the purpose of the Society is to contribute to an understanding of education through the encouragement and promotion of comparative education and related areas of inquiry and activity. These goals are enacted through (a) promoting teaching and research in comparative and international education in institutions of higher learning in both national and international contexts; (b) fostering the application of comparative theories and research in applied settings; (c) facilitating the publication and dissemination of comparative, cross-cultural, interdisciplinary, and international studies contributing to interpretation of developments in the field of education in their broad and interrelated political, economic, and social context; (d) encouraging educational and cultural exchanges; and (e) promoting and fostering understanding of how educational policies and programs can improve social and economic development.

The enactment of these purposes has at times inspired CIES to take an official, public stance on social and policy issues. This document is intended to specify guiding principles on taking a public stance, recognizing a range of situations and issues may prompt the Society to do so.

These include but are not limited to obstacles to the free movement of scholars and students within and into the United States for work and/or academic exchange, and barriers to opportunities for scholars and students to work internationally and collaborate with international colleagues. The Society may choose to address issues that affect our members, including policies affecting the exchange of information and equal opportunities to conduct research, study, or teach. Violations and affirmations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant rights, inclusion and international agreements may also prompt the Society to take a public stance.

As a United States-based organization, CIES recognizes a special responsibility to consider U.S. policy and legislation as it affects the advancement of the CIES mission. At the same time, the Society recognizes that

a significant percentage of its membership are international members. On occasion, when the Board deems that conditions warrant such a stance, CIES may make statements regarding issues outside the U.S.

Positions taken by the Society and approved by the Board of Directors should not be taken as representing the positions of individual members of the society.

As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, CIES does not participate in, intervene in and publish or distribute statements in support of or in opposition to any political campaigns for any candidates for public office. Though not a substantial part of its operations, CIES may occasionally decide to engage in advocating a position with respect to a specific legislative proposal that is pending before a legislative body in the United States. In addition to educating its members about pending legislation, CIES may, on occasion, directly encourage its U.S.-based members to influence legislation within the limits for such activities designated by the Internal Revenue Service.

Committees and Special Interest Groups, as well as individual members, are prohibited from taking public stances representing the Society unless such positions have been approved by the Board of Directors. The Social and Policy Engagement Committee will draft and/or review public statements and make recommendations to the Board in a timely manner.

All CIES members and SIGs are welcome to forward issues and statements to the Board members or the Social and Policy Engagement Committee chair(s) for consideration, including the following materials: (1) a draft statement, (2) a summary of the issue, and (3) a brief history of any previous, relevant CIES positions or advocacy statements, and a (4) justification of why it is appropriate for CIES to comment on the issue.

Official CIES positions on social and policy issues will be voted upon by a quorum of the Board of Directors before being made public in the name of the Society. Public statements or actions that are less time sensitive will be referred to the CIES membership for vote. Proposals will carry only if they receive a 2/3 affirmative majority of those who vote.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The purpose of this FAQ is to provide explanatory information and clarity on the purpose, reasons, and circumstances in which CIES releases public statements in support of certain educational causes. As such, this FAQ is intended to accompany CIES's *Guiding Principles on Taking a Public Stance*.

1. Who can draft CIES stances/statements?

CIES members at large, and regular members or elected officers of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are eligible to draft initial statements in support of or in solidarity with educational causes that align with the mission and purpose stated in the CIES Constitution and the *Guiding Principles on Taking a Public Stance*. These initial statements must then be shared with the co-chairs of the SPEC for further discussion with the CIES Board.

2. When is it appropriate for CIES to release statements?

CIES focuses on issues that support its purpose and mission as stated in its Constitution. That is, it embraces causes that protect individual or group rights to education around the world and it speaks out

against policies or efforts that encroach on the freedom of individuals or groups to seek access to or move for educational services in various global locales. Whether a particular issue meets the criteria of connection to the CIES purpose and mission for a public statement is up to the discretion of the CIES Board as the elected governing body of the Society.

3. What is the purpose and mission of CIES?

According to Article I, Section 3, of the CIES Constitution, “The Society is organized exclusively for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes, to contribute to an understanding of education through encouragement and promotion of comparative education and related areas of inquiry and activity.” Consequently, CIES is primarily concerned with supporting comparative education initiatives, programs, and curricula around the world that approach the teaching of educational systems from cross-cultural perspectives and illuminate the understanding of how educational policies influence socio-economic development in various global contexts.

4. Is CIES required to release public statements?

No. CIES has no express obligation to release public statements, and in general CIES does not issue a public stance. As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, the central focus of CIES concerns dedicating space, time, and energy in our scholarly forums for the exchange of informed perspectives that brings our community members together in facilitating a deeper understanding of related issues. Additionally, CIES has to cautiously balance any form of advocacy with its responsibilities as a non-political organization; otherwise, its nonprofit status could be in jeopardy.

5. Where should draft statements be sent?

Initial draft statements should be submitted to the chair(s) of the Social and Policy Engagement Committee (SPEC) by copying to the Office of the Executive Director. Contact information is available on the CIES web site:

6. What materials are required in support of a statement?

CIES members interested in proposing a public statement should forward the following materials to the SPEC and BoD for consideration:

- A. a draft statement;
- B. a summary of the issue;
- C. a brief history of any previous, relevant CIES positions or advocacy statements, and;
- D. a justification for why it is appropriate for CIES to comment on the issue.

7. What are some general criteria for the composition of public statements?

Generally speaking, draft statements should concisely identify the issue(s) being addressed and explain in clear terms the circumstances and conditions of that issue, and the position taken related to the matter. Ensure that statements:

- A. promote civic engagement, scholarly discourse on the issue, and foster solidarity around issues that are aligned with the mission and vision of CIES;

- B. refrain from making unsubstantiated allegations and accusations or frivolous assertions about the issues presented;
- C. engage with the issue(s) in an appropriate tone;
- D. include appropriate references to verifiable sources of information that are credible and impactful;
- E. include, when possible, links to opportunities to learn more about and get involved with the issue being addressed;
- F. not exceed 1,000 words.

8. What is the role of the SPEC in drafting CIES statements?

The SPEC works with the CIES members proposing a public statement to ensure that the draft statements align with the scope, purpose, and criteria related to the release of public statements on behalf of CIES. Therefore, the SPEC members will suggest edits and revisions to the initiators of the statements and then conduct a final review before these are forwarded to the BoD for consideration. Note that the SPEC members themselves will refrain from contributing to the text of the statements, as their role is one of review and guidance for the proponents of the statements. Once a final version of the statement has been agreed upon, the SPEC members will issue a final recommendation to the BoD regarding the statement.

9. What is the role of the BoD in drafting CIES statements?

The BoD generally refrains from drafting the text of the public statements and, as noted above, invites CIES members to forward statements for consideration by the Board members. Once a recommendation has been made by the SPEC regarding a public statement coming from a CIES member or group, the BoD will meet to discuss and deliberate on the merits of the statement(s). Depending on the unique aspects of each statement and pending the discussion around it, the BoD may refer the statement back to its initiators for further revisions. In this case, the initiators may solicit the SPEC's guidance to conduct the requested revisions. However, the BoD may also reserve the right to make adjustments to the statements without referring them back to the initiators or the SPEC.

10. How are CIES's public stances/statements approved?

Once the BoD has come to an agreement on the course of action to be followed regarding the statement, a final decision is put to a vote at the next available meeting of the entire Board. A decision to approve or disapprove the statement requires a $\frac{2}{3}$ affirmative vote of the Board members present at the meeting. If the statement is approved, the statement is publicly released on behalf of the Society.

11. Does the SPEC or BoD draft a public statement?

No. Generally speaking, the initiators of the public statement are individual CIES general members or SIG elected officials and members. The BoD and the SPEC do not have dedicated professional staff tasked with drafting statements on demand. Individuals in these bodies work on a voluntary basis and have many other responsibilities to balance on behalf of the entire Society. Thus, they have limited resources and time to devote to drafting statements and rely on the contribution of CIES members closer to the

issue necessitating a public stance to write such statements.

12. How long does it take to draft a public statement?

There is no set time for drafting a statement. Considering the many consultation sessions necessary between the initiators of the statement, the SPEC and the Board, the timeline can vary from statement to statement. Depending on the nature of the issue being addressed, the interests of the stakeholders around the issue and the interests of the Society as a whole, it can take from several days to several weeks for all parties to come to a consensus on the contents and message of a public statement.