

Engagement: Defining and protecting core values

ASPA PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARLY ENGAGEMENT

19 MARCH 2022

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The problem

- ▶ Engagement with scholars in other jurisdictions is essential
- ▶ Requires open-mindedness, respect for self-determination
- ▶ But governments in other jurisdictions often disrespect democracy, human rights and academic freedom
- ▶ Engagement might:
 - ▶ Seem like an endorsement of objectionable practices
 - ▶ Support the continuation of objectionable practices
 - ▶ Result in the dissemination of flawed and biased research
 - ▶ Put individuals at risk of retribution
- ▶ This problem appears to be growing, not shrinking
- ▶ Presently, we
 - ▶ React to controversies rather than anticipating
 - ▶ Fail to treat cases consistently

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Some current illustrations

- ▶ Should ASPA make a statement about the Russian invasion of Ukraine?
- ▶ Suppose ASPA was scheduled to hold a joint online conference with Russian scholars – should it cancel?
- ▶ Suppose a US school was training Russian officials in a field unrelated to conflict – should it continue?
- ▶ Suppose PAR received a manuscript about the administration of occupied territories – should it review?
- ▶ Suppose an international accrediting body received an application from a Russian program – should it proceed with accreditation process?

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The committee and its aims

- ▶ An international committee of scholars in public affairs
- ▶ Premise -- we will do better if we:
 - ▶ Anticipate challenges in engagement
 - ▶ Develop a framework for identifying & weighing core values
 - ▶ Develop routines for deciding consistently and transparently about cases
- ▶ Aim: to frame and advance conversation
- ▶ The aim is not to set rules about engagement
- ▶ We are not interested only in US engagement abroad
- ▶ We do not assume that any country is above criticism
- ▶ Our work may be relevant within countries too

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Work plan

- ▶ Committee established February 2022
- ▶ Terms of reference available
- ▶ Plan to hold discussions throughout 2022
 - ▶ Webinar April 20
- ▶ Committee will prepare and circulate discussion document
- ▶ Final report January 2023

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Today's session

- ▶ Breakout groups
- ▶ Each group has a different scenario
- ▶ Each group has a Committee member as rapporteur
- ▶ Take 20 minutes to consider the scenario:
 - ▶ What values/considerations influence your decision?
 - ▶ Who should be involved in the decision?
 - ▶ What's the right thing to do and why?
- ▶ Report back and discussion

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April 20 webinar

- ▶ Details will be circulated
- ▶ Wednesday April 20 10AM-11AM EDT
- ▶ Panelists:
- ▶ **Professor Corinne Lennox**, Co-Director, Human Rights Consortium, University of London; Member, UK Academic Freedom and Internationalisation Working Group
- ▶ **Chelsea Blackburn Cohen**, Acting Director, Membership & University Relations, Scholars at Risk, New York