

President's Committee on International Scholarly Engagement

Terms of Reference

International engagement is an essential part of scholarly work in public administration. Only by reaching across national borders can we build reliable knowledge about the role, practices and performance of government. International engagement happens in many ways, such as:

- Informal dialogue and collaboration among scholars;
- Conferences and other activities of scholarly associations;
- Publication in internationally oriented journals;
- Accreditation processes; and
- University partnerships.

However, international engagement also poses distinctive challenges. For example:

- Scholars in some countries may not have freedom to speak or write as they wish;
- Governments may establish rules that impede research and prevent scholars from participating in conferences, associations or other activities;
- Scholars may refrain from articulating their own views about human rights to preserve international partnerships; and
- Scholarly engagement may confer legitimacy on governments or institutions that fail to respect academic freedom and human rights.

These challenges are not new. However, they have intensified over the last two decades. Optimism about the global diffusion of liberal democratic values has waned. Many countries have witnessed a resurgence of authoritarianism and new assaults on human rights. For scholars and institutions committed to human rights, this shift in conditions requires clear thinking about the aims and forms of international engagement.

The aim of this committee is not to propose rules or policies about international engagement. Our work is more foundational. Current conditions require that we think more deliberately about international engagement. With this in mind our aims are threefold:

- To create forums for conversation about this subject over the coming year;
- To suggest a framework for thinking about engagement, which identifies the values at stake and ways in which these values may collide in practice; and

- To suggest ways in which academic organizations can integrate human rights concerns into their decision-making processes, as they pertain to international engagement.

The committee will host a series of conversations at conferences, and on the web, throughout 2022. As we do this, we will aim for inclusion of scholars and institutions from all parts of the world. The committee produce a report that will be published in January 2023.