

DECLARATION OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE UNITED NATIONS ACADEMIC IMPACT

Preamble

The students convened at the United Nations Academic Impact Launch represent the future participants in the program. The ultimate success of the UNAI initiative depends on the participation of—and collaboration between UNAI officials, university administrations and faculties, and the student bodies of each institution through ASPIRE, UNAI's student component. In broad strokes, this initial document outlines our responsibilities, obligations, limitations, and proposes guidelines for UNAI officials.

Responsibilities

As stakeholders in this program, it is our duty to clearly articulate our goals and their respective strategies. Stakeholders must focus on developing workable, sustainable solutions to pressing issues facing our world, in particular, those highlighted in the ten principles of the UNAI/ASPIRE initiative. Fundamentally, this hinges on an open, respectful, academically and intellectually honest forum which facilitates collaboration amongst UNAI/ASPIRE stakeholders.

Obligations & Limitations

While we cannot devote expertise, we will put forth our time, energy, and innovative spirit to making the principles of UNAI/ASPIRE a part of our outreach strategies. It is incumbent upon us as stakeholders to unite across borders and between academic disciplines to work collaboratively to solve the difficult but ultimately solvable problems stemming from endemic poverty. However, our primary responsibility is our studies; although we are devoted to making the UNAI/ASPIRE a success, we request sensitivity to our obligations. Similarly, we promise recognition of university administrators, UNAI/ASPIRE officials, and their collective experience and insight.

Specific Requests of UNAI Officials

We request of UNAI officials formal recognition of students as stakeholders in the program's success. Furthermore, we propose an annual meeting between UNAI officials and student representatives from affiliated universities. Students need an equity stake in the decision-making process.

Conclusion

We hope that this document serves as a stepping-stone to a more comprehensive program, one that inspires action on behalf of us students to achieve commonly-held goals with our administrations and the UNAI. Going forward, the program will evolve and will be stronger for a dialogue between students, university administrators, teaching faculties, and the United Nations Academic Impact.

AMENDMENTS TO THE STUDENT DECLARATION

Amendment I: A Response to the Students of UNAI/ASPIRE's Will to Host a Summit of UNAI/ASPIRE Student Leaders

Passed December 16, 2010

Although UNAI and ASPIRE will provide numerous opportunities and avenues to collaborate through the internet on efforts founded on the ten principles outlined in Appendix I. ASPIRE will host an annual conference, a meeting of student leaders from around the world, to foster further cross-border cooperation on projects upholding the ten principles of the United Nations Academic Impact initiative and, more broadly, seek to build on past, successful efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

ASPIRE understands the financial strain such gatherings impose. Accordingly, attendance at such an event or events is not mandatory. The Student Leadership of ASPIRE will work closely with the United Nations, university administrators from UNAI-member institutions, and ASPIRE's partners in the not-for-profit and corporate sectors to mitigate these costs to the greatest extent possible for those in greatest need of financial assistance.

APPENDIX I

THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF THE UNAI & ASPIRE INITIATIVES

Academic Impact is informed by a commitment to support and advance ten basic principles:

1. A commitment to the principles inherent in the United Nations Charter as values that education seeks to promote and help fulfill;
2. A commitment to human rights, among them freedom of inquiry, opinion, and speech;
3. A commitment to educational opportunity for all people regardless of gender, race, religion or ethnicity;
4. A commitment to the opportunity for every interested individual to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for the pursuit of higher education;
5. A commitment to building capacity in higher education systems across the world;
6. A commitment to encouraging global citizenship through education;
7. A commitment to advancing peace and conflict resolution through education;
8. A commitment to addressing issues of poverty through education;
9. A commitment to promoting sustainability through education;
10. A commitment to promoting inter-cultural dialogue and understanding, and the “unlearning” of intolerance, through education.