



Statement on Academic Freedom in Educational Leadership

Approved by the ICPEL Board on 12/4/2023

The Executive Board of the International Council of Professors of Educational Leadership (ICPEL) recognizes the current political and social dynamics created by recent state legislative proposals, policies, and enacted laws across the US intended to silence open, equitable, and inclusive instruction and dialogue at Institutions of Higher Education. We are concerned about and disagree with the aim and trajectory of these legislative decisions that implicitly and explicitly target academic freedom. The following serves as the Board's position on academic freedom in educational leadership:

As professors of educational leadership, it is our responsibility to disseminate ideas that respect the dignity of others, acknowledge the rights of others to express differing opinions and foster and defend intellectual honesty, freedom of inquiry and instruction, and freedom of speech and association. This is a universal and fundamental value that our field holds and has traditionally championed. We believe educational leaders are charged with supporting, advocating for, and empowering the historically underserved, underrepresented, and the most vulnerable of our communities. We are committed to providing a safe and open environment to discuss issues fundamental to preparing school, district, university, and other educational leaders for these challenging roles.

Open, equitable, and inclusive instruction and dialogue are essential to creating an educational environment that encourages and supports students of all backgrounds, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, ability, and age. We fully support the acceptance of different cultures, beliefs, and values and advocate for open, equitable, and inclusive instruction and dialogue to create a safe learning environment for everyone. Therefore, educational leadership faculty and programs must develop and nurture our students as change agents to improve our present and future society so that it is open, equitable, and inclusive.

To further this work, we encourage ICPEL members to actively engage in continued scholarship, instruction, and service to reinforce diversity, equity, inclusivity, belonging, and justice; to stimulate campus-wide conversations on issues of leadership and social justice; and to support colleagues, students, and community partners in leadership for a fairer society.

We look forward to continually working with our members to navigate these challenging times and welcome dialogue and collaboration opportunities supporting this vital work.