

Guide to Institutional Position Statements

MIPC, June 21, 2024

Why we need a guide

- Statements have been issued in the past.
- Not clear what guided the thinking or scope.
- Without a guide, students may feel forgotten and/or erased if statement not made.
- Growing expectation and need (e.g. Nov election)

Who issues statement?

Position statements that speak on behalf of the institution are the purview and responsibility of the President, with advisory input from the Mission Informed Planning Council.

Starting fall 2024, the following serves as a guide for position statement issued on behalf of the College.

General Framework for Position Statements

Not an Institutional Neutrality Statement

- It is recognized by the colleges and the district that statements reflecting the viewpoint of the institution may inhibit dialogue and a sense of inclusivity. As such, Foothill College will issue statements judiciously, relying on the campus stakeholders to support teaching and learning on the subject.
- Foothill College recognizes and supports the ability of campus stakeholders to host educational and political forums on timely topics. Where scholarly debate exists on an issue, Foothill College will support, when resources are available, campus constituents' efforts to further an understanding of the issues through educational forums.
- Moreover, Foothill College values the right of its campus members to engage in peaceful activism and peaceful political action.

Institutional Position Statements

- Statements should primarily convey support for our student body, guiding relevant resources to affected student populations.
- Statements should reflect a deep understanding of the current events; relying on discipline experts when needed; the statement will be devoid of divisive language and not diminish or disrespect members of our community.

Institutional Position Statements

- Institutional support statements must be carefully researched and worded. They can require intense institutional resources. If the college and district are unable to exercise those resources, the lack of a statement should not be construed as an endorsement for any particular position or demonstrate a lack of care.
- Statements will generally follow the lead of the Chancellor and the elected officials that govern the Foothill – De Anza Community College District.

Political Statements

- Statements may be issued when there is broad campus consensus; understanding that some political statements question assumptions and systems of oppression and may make some members of our campus community uncomfortable.
- Statements may be issued when there is consensus of expert opinion among reputable scholars and community thought leaders that a political statement is necessary and actionable.

Compassion statements

- Statements regarding natural disasters or other emergencies may be made. Drawing on the general principles above, compassion statements are made when the event has an impact on our community.