

ATLANTA DECLARATION

Core Principles for Higher Education and At-Scale Learning Platform Relationships

We, undersigned, are practitioners of non-profit global higher education, operating at-scale online academic and professional education courses and programs. We gathered in Atlanta, Georgia, USA on November 2nd, 2021, to reaffirm our commitment to our educational mission, our collaborative work, and declare our core principles in any partnerships, platform or otherwise, in designing, producing, and delivering our high quality, accessible, and meaningful educational opportunities.

Our focus is on improving and broadening the impact of education and serving more people in meaningful and life-changing ways, while being fiscally responsible for the resources entrusted to us to sustain our institutions, generating a surplus to reinvest to further expand access. We are not driven by market valuations, corporate profits, or the destruction of the university as we know it. We are motivated by progressively serving learners via innovative educational opportunities. We aim to preserve our mission-focused commitment to furthering democratic practices around the world by democratizing and expanding access to high-quality, equitable, and rigorous education.

The following are the characteristics of our community and our work that we deem crucial to achieving these ambitions.

We are:

Committed to Access, Affordability, and Equity

We advocate for all at-scale content to be low or no cost to the learner, openly licensed, easily discoverable, created with universal design in mind, and fully accessible. We serve learners of all ages, genders, races, ethnicities, sexual orientation, abilities, background, and expertise anytime and anywhere. We aim to promote equity to improve the human condition.

Committed to Quality

We determine and uphold standards for quality at-scale from the perspective of course design and delivery; learner engagement and support; program sustainability; and faculty competencies to create and deliver at-scale courses and programs. We own the curricular control and academic rigor of our courses and programs, and the responsibility to define and manage academic integrity. We maintain and update course content and activities based on the information we collect about learners' performance and the data provided by the system. We

relentlessly seek continuous improvement by incorporating new knowledge, insights, and technologies.

Committed to the Protection of our Learners and Faculty

We respect and defend the data and privacy of our learners and instructors. We make the decisions on faculty compensation. We own the intellectual property of our educational products in their original and derivative forms. We own the relationship with the course instructors. We treat the learners who enroll in programs offered by our instructors on at-scale platforms as ours and care about them as such from a learner services, data collection, and marketing approach. At-scale platforms serve the purpose of increasing access, not abdicating our responsibilities to learner care and wellbeing.

Committed to the Production of New Knowledge

We own the data and insights generated from course and program activity to advance our understanding of how people learn and how we can help them learn. We commit to the ethical use of data. We allocate resources to conducting learning efficacy research and continuous improvement of learner services and reinvesting in expanding access. We demand a corresponding level of resource commitment to the creation of new knowledge and improvement of services from any entity with whom we partner.

Committed to Each Other and Collegiality

We drive at-scale innovation to enhance the higher education ecosystem by: connecting and collaborating with institutions actively offering at-scale courses and programs; promoting collaboration, research, and discovery; advancing policy, equity and quality; informing development of platforms and analytics, and engaging with vendors and service providers. We support higher education practitioners with an exchange of lessons learned, best practices, and tips for building successful programs as appropriate. Upholding transparency and trust among higher education entities is of utmost importance to us.

We understand that this endeavor does not end with this declaration. We will continue our commitment and engagement with this community and revisit these core principles as needed.

<<Signed>>

The Affordable Degrees at Scale Symposium
November 2, 2021

To continue the conversation and collaboration, join the [Affordable Degrees at Scale Network](#).