

Jyoti – Statement

Hailing from a small town in Nepal and having come to the U.S. in 2016 to get my undergraduate degree, I understand the first-hand challenges faced by international students in navigating the difference in academic approach to forming social connections. Looking back at my experience so far, what helped me in my journey was the people and support system I was surrounded by. Those experiences have influenced my passion for working with fellow international students and helping them in their journey. And what better way to do so than by being a part of a recognized student body that represents the whole international student body on campus? My name is Jyoti, and I am currently a graduate student at EIU majoring in clinical psychology. As a student of psychology, I am driven by curiosity and genuine eagerness to learn about different cultures, values, and things that make them so unique.

International students are some of the most resilient people in higher education. However, the challenges faced by international students and their well-being are often overlooked. Therefore, if elected president of the AIS, it will be my goal to mitigate those challenges by creating a strong network and using the AIS platform to amplify the voices and needs of our international students.

Although international students make up a huge population on campus, there seems to be a gap between international students and domestic students. I propose that AIS creates opportunities for interaction between international and domestic students through social events that cater to a wide range of interests, not just nationality. I propose that AIS initiate an international student spotlight series on social media and EIU marketing platforms where we highlight the experiences of international students from diverse backgrounds. I would also like to see if we can partner with university administration to establish a mentoring program or buddy system based on comprehensive academic interests, hobbies, and personality traits. Matching international students with experienced domestic peers can provide invaluable guidance, cultural understanding, and a sense of belonging. As a strong advocate for mental health, I propose that we partner with the EIU Counseling Clinic to host workshops and training that specifically address the unique challenges for international students that often go unnoticed.

Having held a similar position before, I am confident that, as president, I can make a significant contribution to the Association of International Students. I am eager to work with the AIS team to create a supportive and enriching experience for all international students at EIU while also fostering stronger connections between all members of our diverse campus community.