

Interest in Association of International Students Vice President Position

I am writing to express my interest in serving as the Vice President for the Association of International Students upcoming academic year, 2024/2025. My name is Harriet Swanzy-Baffoe, and I am a first-year student in the Clinical Psychology Master's Program.

Throughout my life, I have embraced leadership roles as avenues for creating positive change. Roy T. Bennett's words, "It's only after you've stepped outside your comfort zone that you begin to change, grow, and transform," deeply resonate with me. This philosophy has guided me in seeking opportunities to challenge myself and contribute meaningfully to my community.

Having recently immigrated from Ghana, I understand firsthand the challenges that international students encounter during the process of acculturation. Thankfully with my background in psychology **and with the help of the** counseling center, **I was able to** go through the acculturation process seamlessly. Not many people can do this, and it is my hope to support others in this journey.

If elected as Vice President, my primary goal will be to enhance engagement among international students. I intend to achieve this by launching a comprehensive social media campaign that showcases student success stories and organizing cultural events that celebrate diversity with the help of my co-executives. Additionally, I plan to collaborate with the EIU marketing department to promote existing resources such as the counseling center, career services, and pantry, with the aim of increasing their utilization by international students.

Furthermore, I believe in fostering stronger relationships between domestic and international students through collaborative initiatives. My observation so far shows that there seems to be a wide gap between international students and domestic students. I propose organizing events like international game nights and cultural exchange programs to encourage interaction and mutual understanding. Although these events are being organized, the change will include domestic students too. Leveraging my background in clinical psychology, I will serve as a bridge between international students and counseling/career services, ensuring that these vital resources are easily accessible to those who need them.

I am confident that my skills, passion, and dedication will enable me to positively impact the international student community at Eastern Illinois University.