

# ASUW Officer Candidate Statements on International Students

## President

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**Candidate: Camille Hattwig**

**Candidate: Cooper Robertson**

***Q: How do you plan on collaborating with existing international student organizations, like FIUTS & Unite UW?***

**Camille Hattwig**

I plan to collaborate extensively with international student organizations. Countless issues on campus impact international students in unique and significant ways, and it is critical that relevant entities on campus are always informed of such issues and are able to represent themselves and the needs of international students in those discussions. I will start by building strong ongoing relationships with all of these relevant entities and their leaders, as well as implementing regular check in meetings to ensure clear and consistent communication on all relevant campus issues. I also plan to collaborate with these entities to host town halls and other public discussion, specifically to hear international students' feedback and experiences, both within UW as a whole and within ASUW.

I also am strongly in favor of recent and proposed changes in representation from these groups in ASUW and other entities, such as a designated seat on the Provost Advisory Committee for Students and proposed protected seats in ASUW Student Senate. We need broad representation and engagement from these groups, beyond just any individual relationships I will cultivate.

**Cooper Robertson**

One of the first steps in collaboration is building relationships. This past year I have had the opportunity to work with members of the UniteUW Student Association, the FIUTS Student Advisory board, and the UW CIRCLE Student advisory board first as part of the international student working group, and now in my role as the Co-chair of the International Student Engagement Task force. Building these foundational relationships is key to be able to support international students.

Next year I would like to engage with International students from day one. To me this looks like specific and intentional outreach to existing international student organizations so that when FIUTS, for example is hosting international student orientation sessions, my team and I are engaged and offering partnership and resources to students. One of the perpetual challenges with ASUW is connecting with students, and building knowledge about what resources ASUW can provide to them. If the first point of contact for students is during orientation, we should be leveraging that opportunity.

Additionally programs like UniteUW that foster positive interactions between domestic and international students, need to be collaborated with in order to not only raise awareness in the student body of these programs, but to also foster meaningful connections. I believe that the ASUW MUST spotlight programs such as UniteUW, FIUTS, and CIRCLE and work to develop further programming that aligns our

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organisations in supporting international students. To do this I would like to build on the work of the GPSS President this year and continue the International Student Stakeholders check ins so that the efforts of different entities can work in concert with each other!

***Q: What are the barriers for the lack of international student representation in ASUW?  
How do you plan on eliminating those barriers?***

### **Camille Hattwig**

There are significant barriers to international student representation in ASUW. Currently there are no protected seats for international students in the ASUW Senate, nor are there any entities currently in place that would help ensure ASUW accessibility for international students. The ASUW diversity commissions committee (JCC) also has no protected representation for international students, despite most international students also being a part of one or more of the current constituencies of JCC. Additionally, ASUW already has difficulties with transparency and clarity within our external marketing, and the lack of intentional outreach to and protected representation of international students in the association only compounds these issues. Additionally, at a fundamental level, translation services that sometimes bridge a gap in communication and display a desire to reach out to international students are woefully unavailable to student organizations who wish to make their materials multi-lingual.

As the external face of ASUW, my focus is less on internal ASUW policy and more focused on campus wide discussions with administration, transparency, and community building. So within my role specifically, I see direct reach out to international students, accessible marketing, trust building, and direct representation all critical to handling these barriers. Fundamentally I am here to get student stories at the table with administration, and to make sure all students have their rights protected on campus.

As a general board member as well, I will also advocate for the implementation of the findings from the Office of Inclusive Design taskforce, which would work to ensure broader accessibility for all ASUW programming, including making all events accessible for international students. Additionally I will strongly support the incoming findings of the Spring 2020 task force investigating a potential international student entity within or outside of ASUW.

### **Cooper Robertson**

The first, and most problematic barrier is proving that international students are in need of support, and deserve to have a seat at the table. To a large extent that has been the focus of my work this year within the international student advocacy group, and as part of the ASUW board of directors, where I fought to establish the International Student Engagement Task force alongside the International Student Working Group. While not yet finished, we have proven that international students deserve advocacy. The second barrier to international student engagement with the ASUW is a lack of targeted outreach. The ASUW is not intentional with its outreach and connection to students, especially international students. The common theme discussed is that "International students are too diverse to represent". This is flawed on a few levels, but even if true, international students make up 16.8% of our student body, so not making efforts to engage is akin to cutting off nearly a fifth of our student body because it is "too hard" to represent and include them.

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As ASUW President next year I will continue the work that the international student advocacy group and international student task force has started, by working to establish an ASUW entity that is solely focused on providing support and outreach to international students. I also will work with the Vice President, the Director of Diversity Efforts and the Joint Commissions Committee to ensure that each commission creates and maintains a dedicated international student liaison role, so that the perspectives of international students are included within each commission of the ASUW, recognising the intersectionality of identities that international students may identify with.

In order to increase the specificity and targeting of our outreach, I will work with my team to engage with the leadership of many different student associations and RSOs. I believe that for many students their organisation becomes almost like a second family. By connecting these families together, we can build a community at UW where all stories can be shared, and have value! The ASUW has a responsibility to be the initiator of this contact. A student government MUST work for its students and the first step is to build a bridge to connect student stories with those in the UW Faculty and Administration that make decisions that impact students every day!

### **Vice President**

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**Candidate: Dalton Owens**

**Candidate: Rae Lo**

***Q: How will you use the findings of the Spring 2020 International Student Task Force in this position?***

**Dalton Owens**

As ASUW Vice President it would be my responsibility to routinely check in with all board members, supporting them in their task of achieving position related goals. In order to effectively address and implement necessary changes within ASUW related to International students, I would first establish an understanding of the data collected by the task force. This understanding would be developed through conversations and data sharing with those chairing the task force currently. I plan to implement this information through the establishment of goals with each respective board position, goals that respond to the needs identified by the International Student Task Force. I believe that this information is valuable and necessary for a number of other ASUW entities outside of board, I plan to take the necessary steps to ensure all ASUW Directors are aware and proactively ensuring the needs addressed by the International Student Task Force are heard and met. While information is still being collected by the International Student Task Force, I have already planned to establish goals with positions such as the Director of Outreach and Involvement, Director of Community Relations, and the Director of Communications focused around the use of multiple languages when publicizing information and opportunities. Taking the steps to present information in a format that is easily accessible to everyone is an important step in ensuring that ASUW is welcome and accessible to all students.

**Rae Lo**

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The Spring 2020 International Student Task Force is charged with analyzing internal and external options for supporting the international student community, which makes up roughly seventeen percent of the student population.

Should the International Student Task Force recommend the creation of an internal ASUW entity, as the internal-facing role of the association, I will convene an entity creation task force, and include representatives from the Foundation for International Understanding Through Students (FIUTS); the Center for International Relations & Cultural Leadership Exchange (CIRCLE); the Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity (OMA&D) Student Advisory Board; Unite UW; Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS); as well as open selection seats. This entity creation task force will graciously welcome any member of the Spring 2020 International Student Task Force to continue their valued and respected endeavours. As Vice-President, I will work with this task force to establish an international student support entity to better represent and serve international students.

Should the International Student Task Force recommend against the creation of an international student support entity, I will still ensure that international students are advocated for, and that they have a platform to tell their unique and cherished stories. An international student advisory committee will be created within ASUW to ensure that the association is internalizing the diverse opinions, and that when we are advocating on the behalf of international students, we are including these voices themselves.

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***Q: What volunteer opportunities in ASUW exist already for international students and what opportunities do you hope to create?***

### **Dalton Owens**

There are a number of different opportunities for International students to volunteer within ASUW. These include ASUW Senate, the ASUW Ambassadors program within the Office of Outreach and Involvement, and the International Student Task Force. While I believe that all ASUW volunteer opportunities are open to International students, I do believe changes can be made within ASUW to ensure all volunteer positions are accessible. With this quarter being shifted online, I have learned a great deal about the power of technology. Our society has sought out methods to connect and share information with each other despite limitations on human interaction. I believe that this virtual infrastructure can be applied to the hiring process and job description of many ASUW opportunities. Increasing the use of virtual infrastructure for ASUW volunteer positions will allow for greater accessibility to students who don't always have the freedom of being on campus at any time.

### **Rae Lo**

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Volunteer opportunities within ASUW are not exclusive to a particular group of students, and thus, currently exist for international students. However, efficient outreach to improve engagement between the international student community and ASUW is severely lacking. Specific targeted outreach should be implemented so that international students' voices can be represented, and so that international students have the opportunity to gain valuable experience to learn the power of voice and storytelling. Additional outreach methods should be tailored to fit the comforts and convenience of international students. Working alongside the Office of Outreach and Involvement and the Director of Diversity Efforts, I will support the Director of Communication in adapting material (through translations of various languages by native speakers) to fit platforms that international students are more familiar and comfortable with (WeChat, Whatsapp or Line). Through engaging directly with international students in an accommodating manner, the applicant pool from which I will appoint liaisons to the Hub Board of Representatives, the Student Activity Fee committee and the Student Technology Fee committee will be expanded to include candidates with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Regardless of the findings of the Spring 2020 International Student Task Force findings, we need to include international students in decision making. As previously referenced, I will create an advisory committee for international students that includes voices and perspectives from various stakeholders, especially open selection seats to better enrich conversation.

## Director of Campus Partnerships

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**Candidate: Wesley Bahng**

**Candidate: Mohammad Waleed Khan**

***Q: What organizations do you plan to partner with on international student issues?***

**Wesley Bahng**

I plan on working with the University of Washington Police Department in person to create infographic resources for international students that detail the purpose of college campus police officers as opposed to regular cops, which they may have never encountered before. This would help them to understand the role UWPD is supposed to play in their college experience: to keep the students safe, to uphold law, and to make the students feel welcomed on campus.

Additionally, I want to work side-by-side with the International Student Services and relevant RSO's to address any and all information and knowledge gaps that international students may have while adjusting to a new state, school, and culture.

**Mohammad Waleed Khan**

At the top of my priorities is to serve the husky community and ensure that all student populations are being heard across campus. One of the largest populations within our community is international students

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and in order to ensure that I am creating awareness about the issues of the International population, I will work with organizations across campus to ensure that we are creating equitable and accessible services and resources to international students. One organization I plan to partner with is UWPD; working with UWPD is essential because the safety of our students is crucial. Throughout various countries, the role and engagement of police officers is different as each country has its own guidelines and principles. International students might not be familiar about the services of UWPD. In order to increase transparency and address issues of international students, it is essential to work with UWPD and make sure that international students are comfortable with engaging with UWPD. Along with UWPD, another organization I plan to work with is the Student Health Consortium. Moving to another country can be very challenging as one has to leave their home country and adjust to another environment and culture. Personally, I can relate to this as I moved to the United States at the age of two with my family. With these changes, it is highly important to address topics of mental health, stress, and anxiety. Through the Student Health Consortium, I want to make all health organizations on campus accessible to international students and also create a stronger foundation for international students. Additionally, I plan to work with Circle and promote the services and resources of Circle to international students. At a large institution, finding a community can be difficult and I want to make sure that international students are aware of organizations such as Circle and other organizations across campus that increase student engagement and involvement.

***Q: Do you anticipate any challenges in collaborating with these organizations? What are the main challenges in working with international student organizations vs. other partners?***

### **Wesley Bahng**

I do anticipate challenges in collaborating with these organizations. One such challenge would be working with UWPD to collaborate and collectively determine what differences exist between campus police, municipal police, and police from other countries, that would be important to highlight and address in the infographics.

Regarding international student organizations, among the bigger challenges would be really working to understand the differences in culture and cultural norms in order to really accommodate for and work with international students. Furthermore I aim to find out what unique challenges international students face, and collaborate to remedy and solve them. I'll work with the communications director to get the most relevant information and input regarding my position by using different platforms such as WeChat, Instagram, and Facebook.

### **Mohammad Waleed Khan**

Through my previous leadership experiences across campus, I have communicated with UWPD and Circle, yet I have not engaged with the Student Health Consortium as much. In order to improve my relationship with all three organizations, I will continue to communicate with the organization mentioned to ensure that all international students are informed and connected to services and resources of these organizations. One of the main challenges of working with international student organizations is promoting events, resources, and services of various organizations across campus. As many international students come from diverse backgrounds, the concept of language barriers and culture shock creates a lack of representation across campus. In order to increase representation and involvement of international

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students, I will work to increase communication, advocate for issues that impact our community, and elevate the perspectives and experiences of marginalized and international students.

## Director of Community Relations

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**Candidate: Alex Schroeder**

**Candidate: Kaitlyn Carter**

***Q: What experience do you have working with international student communities and how can you bring those skills to this position?***

**Alex Schroeder**

As a student senator this year, I've listened closely to the needs of the international student community as they worked to create an International Student Task Force. I understand the dire need for international student advocacy. While I may not have experience working with international students directly, I do have experience working with leaders in other communities, and bringing the leader's voices together to create collaborative programming and events. I would like to continue this work with international student communities to bridge the gap that exists between our campus communities. Regardless of this, I recognize the importance of including these communities in any and all conversations that are being had in ASUW. This also highlights the need to increase representation of international students on our campus in ASUW roles. In this position, I plan to use the opportunity presented to me to get to know the members of these communities and more importantly learn from them. I am looking forward to learning about the findings of the international student task force, and ensuring that they are implemented into the structure of ASUW. I am prepared to listen to the lived experiences of the international students, as well as hear their wants and needs, and with this knowledge I will convey this information to relevant admin and the other directors to ensure that the students voices are heard and considered.

**Kaitlyn Carter**

Though I have not had an overwhelming amount of experience with directly working with international students, I have always had an affinity with working with people from across cultural backgrounds. I have dedicated my first year of UW to studying Chinese and now plan to minor in it to gain fluency in the language. I also worked side by side with several international students as I walked on to the UW rowing team. Running for this position has also given me amazing exposure to our incredibly diverse population of international students.

The skills I would hope to bring to this position are primarily threefold: Amplification, Sympathy, and Dedication. I hope to amplify the voices of international students by working to provide them a significant platform that reaches broad audiences throughout campus. The platforms that work to educate a UW campus about their communal values and educational needs already exist though they are just often not seen. As Community Relations Director, I will not be afraid to speak up and enable the voices of international students to be heard. Sympathy is something I have learned interacting with international

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students, I alone cannot fully be able to comprehend international students' problems. However, I can try to do so in a way where I can aid in any way possible to be the catalyst to enact the changes they need. Finally, I have never been one to give up once I set my mind to something. Thus, I dedicate a large portion of my role to actively seeking out innovative ways to make all international student's 2020-21 school year better.

***Q: UW closes the dorms over winter break and during the summer, disproportionately affecting international students. How do you plan to remedy that issue?***

### **Alex Schroeder**

Currently, our UW housing and food system is not built with international student needs in mind. As it stands, there is no guarantee that international students will be placed in dorm rooms that will remain open to residents over winter break, and currently these rooms are limited. Those international students who are unable to return home for break face immediate housing instability in a season when their domestic student peers have the privilege of quality time with loved ones. Additionally, summer housing for students is only offered in some HFS apartments which have more flexible contracts than traditional residence halls. This fundamental lack of accommodation for international student housing needs is something that will take a comprehensive structural change within HFS to remedy. I will work with international students to convey the reality of these barriers to HFS administration. I will also advocate for increased hiring of international students as RAs and RDs, who may feel more inclined to stay in the halls during the breaks, guaranteeing HFS reliable employees to meet the demand by fellow international students for school break housing. Additionally, I will work with HFS and other entities to provide more resources and help guiding international students through the housing application process, working on the promotion of off-campus housing that is both affordable and accommodating to the needs of international students.

### **Kaitlyn Carter**

Unfortunately, I do not have much final say in the policy the university makes on the dorms. However, I do think that it would be fair to put forth legislation that opens some dorms during summer as classes are held during that time. Therefore, the university should be accountable for offering student housing. As for winter break, after assessing the fluctuation of demand at which international students need housing during this time and see how we could efficiently allocate our resources. I would want to take the initiative to learn more logistical factors that play into dorm closure. Like staffing options and maintenance that takes place when students are off-campus and how to accommodate for that so as to allocate our resources efficiently.

## **Director of Diversity Efforts**

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**Candidate: Vanessa Lam**

**Candidate: Rachel Smithers**



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***Q: What does diversity mean to you?***

**Vanessa Lam**

Diversity means recognizing that everyone is different and these variations add depth, value, and strength to our collective experiences as people. Each person holds various intersectional identities that transform their individual lived experiences and this makes everyone unique. There are a range of identities that include, but are not limited to, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, and mental/physical ability. Moreover, diversity means being willing to listen and learn from one another because everyone adds a distinct perspective that enriches our shared areas of knowledge, problem solving abilities, and ways of thinking. Subsequently, it is important to ensure that diversity is rooted in norms of inclusivity and respect, so that everyone, especially those who have been historically marginalized, feel safe and comfortable raising their voices and entering spaces that have traditionally excluded them. This means breaking down systemic and institutional barriers so that each person has an equitable and accessible platform where they are empowered to speak their truth, share their stories, and be their best own advocates. Moreover, this means preserving spaces where marginalized communities feel safe and those spaces are prioritized. Diversity is more than mere representation. Rather, it is recognizing, embracing and celebrating our differences which makes us stronger, together.

**Rachel Smithers**

Diversity can exist within and across racial, ethnic, national origin, gender identity, cultural, sexual identity, ideological, religious, ability status and socioeconomic lines. For me, diversity means that different voices are represented in leadership and decision-making to ensure more equitable outcomes that correct systemic and institutional barriers for marginalized groups. Diversity requires people to recognize, learn from, and celebrate the unique experiences that everyone brings. Differences are perceived as an asset rather than a deficit. Diversity isn't just presence, but rather representation with power to influence. Diversity also means inclusion where institutionally dominant voices divest power and recognize positionality in order to ensure equity. Diversity offers creativity and innovation. Diverse spaces should facilitate a culture of respect and inclusion where everyone feels like they belong.

***Q: How do you plan to advocate for international students when you might not share their experiences?***

**Vanessa Lam**

Firstly, it is important to recognize the diverse communities and experiences among those who identify as an international student. International students is a very complex category which encompasses students from all over the world who have different values, cultures, ideologies, languages, religions, and more. Thus, I believe it is my responsibility, as the Director of Diversity Efforts, to be aware and informed of the issues that each student and community in the international student body faces by being an effective ally. This means building and maintaining relationships with international students from all different backgrounds by actively listening and empathizing. As a Chinese-Vietnamese Asian American woman and a first-generation, I understand the experiences that come with intersectional and underrepresented identities. I will foster connections with the international student community to understand the different

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circumstances they face. More importantly, I hope to give international students a platform where they are empowered to use their voices to share their own stories and advocate on behalf of themselves through inclusive hiring. Specifically, I will ensure that ASUW is accessible and representative of the voices of international students by engaging, designing and advertising promotional materials that are accessible and cater towards international students so they are involved in ASUW. For the past two years, I have been a mentor and vice president of the International Student Mentorship Program (ISMP), where I have been able to hone my abilities of active listening, building relationships, connecting, and supporting international students on campus. I am determined to further support and empower international student voices on a larger scale.

### **Rachel Smithers**

I believe advocacy involves reciprocal confidentiality, authenticity, accessibility, empowerment, and awareness. Although I am not an international student, I do have experience advocating for diverse intersectional identities, including international students, in my time as an Orientation Leader and OMA&D Mentor. I believe in the power of storytelling and connecting complex, structural issues with the personal lived experiences of their effects. In my role as an advocate, I plan to facilitate open and accessible dialogue, where international students are comfortable sharing their voice and ensuring that they feel respected and validated. This includes reaching out to the diverse population of international students and sharing perhaps my own story or connections. I believe in not taking more than what is given, so I will respect any response that international students graciously provide. When I am advocating in spaces where I'm one of the only student voices, I think it's critical that I'm informed of international student experiences, logistical requirements, and accessible resources from a variety of perspectives. This includes actively listening to various stories as well as doing my own research; it is not just to expect international students to educate me. Another important aspect of advocacy is ensuring that international students have access to platforms to share their own stories in advocating for themselves through leadership positions inside and outside of ASUW. Regardless of my own experiences, I will passionately advocate for the diverse international student needs because they are extremely underrepresented yet contribute so much to our student body.

## **Director of Internal Policy**

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### **Candidate: Antonio Gonzalez**

***Q: How will you make sure that the Senate addresses the needs of international students appropriately?***

I love this question, so thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to answer. I first want to say that I wish we could be meeting on different circumstances. Calling for this forum to be a questionnaire has its valid and fair points and reasons, but I wish we could all be together now. I first want to say that I have briefly lived abroad for three months. I recognize that this short time in no way computes to the experiences, cultures, and backgrounds that you all bring to the University of Washington, and Senate. That being said, I will offer my humility in that I may not know everything international students want and need; but it will be one of my missions to ask and advocate for them in the Senate, Judicial Committee,

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Board of Directors, and Graduate Student and Professional Senate. Even though my job description revolves around an internal focus for policy and rules, I will make sure that I look at how things are worded and conducted to encompass your needs. I will recommend change where it needs to be changed to allow for every student to be heard. By bringing together a vast array of student backgrounds, like ones of the International Students, I will make sure that I do what I can, inside the scope of my office, to ensure that you feel valued.

***Q: FIUTS has an elected representative to the Senate. How will you provide a platform for them in this position?***

This is another great question. I believe that all elected representatives of the Senate, and other bodies of ASUW should have a platform that is free of influence from outside actors. It will be my personal mission to help the people who enforce the rules set in place in the Senate, to ensure that all officials have an equal chance to advocate for their platforms independently. Even though I am not directly in control, I will work closely with the ASUW Senate Speaker, Vice Speaker, Director of Community Relations and Director of Personnel to make sure that everyone is in the loop of recognizing the platforms and needs of the International Students.

### Director of Programming

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#### **Candidate: Rahul Prasad**

***Q: What do your programs contribute to the international student experience? How will ASUW programming offer something different from other RSOs?***

I think ASUW programming has a lot to offer international students, and has the potential to significantly enhance their quality of life on campus. To me, RSOs provide students the opportunity to explore an area of interest or connect with a cultural community. They allow us to gain experiential knowledge beyond what we can learn in a classroom. ASUW programming, on the other hand, should focus on connecting all students, and building our collective identity as Huskies. For international students, transitioning to college life in an unfamiliar environment presents a unique set of challenges. As Director of Programming, I will make it my responsibility to create ASUW programming that reassures students from all backgrounds that they are valued, respected, and most importantly, that they belong.

***Q: A lot of international student organizations already have extensive programming, like FIUTS, Unite UW, CIRCLE, etc. How will you build upon the programming that already exists through your role at ASUW?***

As Director of Programming, two of my main responsibilities include coordinating all ASUW programming and acting as the ASUW Board liaison to RSOs. Many of these RSOs have extensive programming as well, and it is my job to coordinate with and support them while also promoting the different events ASUW puts on. I believe that the approach I take when working with RSOs can be effectively translated when collaborating with entities such as FIUTS, Unite UW, CIRCLE, etc. All of our organizations share the goal

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of creating a campus environment that promotes equity for students across all cultural backgrounds. Once in office, my focus would be to reach out to these international student organizations and discuss ways ASUW programming can complement their own events and plans. Together, I hope we can function cohesively to provide international students with a robust support system, allowing them to make the most of their college experience.

### **Director of University Affairs**

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**Candidate: Maha Sohail AlHomoud**

**Candidate: Clara Coyote**

***Q: How will you communicate the needs of international students to the University administration? How will you ensure that these needs are reflective of the opinions of the international student community?***

**Maha Sohail AlHomoud**

Truth to be told, ASUW is inaccessible to many students, particularly international students. For many, the formalities and procedural structures associated with student government are unfamiliar and difficult to understand. There have been very few examples of vocal advocates of international students on the ASUW Board of Directors (BoD) throughout the years, and the time has come for a change. Further, we have seen very little ASUW outreach to international students. As an international student myself, I share mutual experiences with many students like me who have had to claim their own space in student government through fierce, resilient, and continuous advocacy; often advocacy that involves persuading individuals of the validity of my identity and why my community is worth fighting for. To say this work took a mental, physical, and emotional toll on myself and members of my community would be an understatement.

Many international students come from cultures that stigmatize mental health, with no experience in student government or democratic participation, and an extremely different educational system. Passive learning that focuses on memorization and recitation is often emphasized in their home countries, yet in the US, a more active style of learning is prevalent, posing challenges for students in the classroom. Further, students who come from non-Western cultures face a cultural disconnect, especially in humanities classes which often present Western literature and American and European history, while many international students have studied completely different historical narratives growing up.

I came to this country from Saudi Arabia in pursuit of a better education. I was diagnosed with blood cancer on my first day of freshman year and decided to undergo chemotherapy in the States, away from my support system, while resuming college classes. I came to a country where I understood the language but did not understand the nuances of the culture surrounding me, and this made it exponentially harder. I have been to advising at the International Students Services (ISS) office many times, but received little to no support, instilling in me a feeling of isolation and invalidation. Many of the professors I was taught by did not understand and simply did not try to understand my unique situation.

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Being the President of the International Student Advocacy Group, I combine my personal experiences, as well as the experiences of international students that my team and I have collected through surveys, interviews, and intensive research. I have spent the last seven months working with my team in collaboration with the ASUW Student Senate, the ASUW Board of Directors, the Joint Commissions Committee, Foundation for International Understanding Through Students (FIUTS), Center for International Relations and Cultural Leadership Exchange (CIRCLE), International Student Mentorship Program (ISMP), and Unite UW working on a bill to establish an international student taskforce. This taskforce aims to: define and understand international student identities and experiences relying on primary and secondary research; specify which ASUW entity would best support international students; determine obstacles and issues of international students and how they can be overcome utilizing education, advocacy, and programming. As a voting member of this task force, I have worked with and relied on an expert team.

I have come to develop meaningful relationships through the entirety of this year with different RSOs, international students, and in the ASUW Senate and Office of Government Relations as part of my work, and here is how I plan on representing, advocating, and including international students as the Director of University Affairs. Communicating the needs of international students needs both bold and broad strides as well as specific targeted goals. Considering that the majority of my job is to tell and advocate for student stories, I will work with the different faculty councils and the Director of Diversity Efforts, who sits on the Diversity Council, to build a coalition amongst faculty around international students, so that together, students and faculty can lobby the administration for increased resources for both. In my platform, I stress on the importance of ensuring equitable and diverse learning environments, and it starts with developing training programs in partnership with the ASUW, the Faculty Councils on Teaching and Learning as well as Academic Standards, and international student groups in order for TAs and faculty to better understand and connect with their own international students in classrooms. A more specific approach would be to also communicate with the respective major departments in every college. Each dean as a chief officer oversees an advisory board, but as of right now, we do not know whether student involvement is prioritized or whether student opinion is valued in such contexts. What is necessary is an audit of the situation, as suggested by the current Director of University Affairs, as well as implementing change to ensure that all students and especially international students are involved in these decision-making entities. Additionally, a communication process between these advisory boards and ASUW can be established.

In my role as the next Director of University Affairs, I sit on the Legislative Steering Committee and work with the Office of Government Relations (OGR) to set the legislative agenda. Involving student feedback and surveys of relevant stakeholders is important in every step, especially from international student groups, CIRCLE, FIUTS, and other relevant stakeholders, is important to ensure that international student issues are also reflected in the ASUW Legislative Agenda. By collaborating with GPSS, we can coordinate our efforts to better serve the international student population (16.8% of all students on campus).

Finally, as an international student myself, I will ensure that a part of my job is to liaison to these international student communities, whom I have developed meaningful, engaged, and active relationships with, and together, we have created safe spaces for them to communicate their issues in manners where they feel heard, validated, and represented. This is a historical election for ASUW because of increased engagement with international students this year. I believe I am ready to take on this challenge, as I have

## **ASUW Officer Candidate Statements on International Students**

withstood intense opposition, invalidation, and resistance by stakeholders in positions of power, and it is time that international students themselves are given the opportunity to claim their seats at the table.

### **Clara Coyote**

As Director of University Affairs I will be asked to represent EVERY student on campus, but most especially students holding marginalized identities that still suffer from institutionalized barriers to success. As a queer woman, I live and understand certain marginalized perspectives, but will never fully know the experiences of identities that are not my own. Thus, it is imperative to my job that I sit down with and listen to students of communities most overlooked by current university policies. International students are undoubtedly one of these communities. I will meet with leaders within the international student community to learn about the specific intersection between international student identity and academic and administrative policies at UW. This process, however, would actually begin with collaboration with Student Senate as a member of Student Senate Steering to ensure reach out to RSOs traditionally comprised of international students so these clubs understand the process of applying for new designated seats. If an RSO applies for a designated seat they may appoint a senator to speak directly on their club's behalf. This new innovation will be executed for the first time next year and will provide a more simplified outlet for international student self-representation in ASUW. Once appropriate reach out and application is complete, I will have one on one meetings with these international student RSO representatives to better understand the university policies most impactful upon them and their communities. I want to learn specific stories from real students to share with faculty when challenging the status quo. I believe storytelling is one of the most impactful ways to convey the tangible suffering of inequitable policies because student stories insist the effects of policies are given a face and a name. If students are comfortable, I would ideally invite them to certain faculty council meetings (if/when students are allowed) so they are able to tell their own stories better than I ever could. I will ensure the needs I'm communicating to administration are reflective of the opinions of the international community because they will be the real stories of the international community themselves.