



2024 Executive Board Election Candidate

Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Name: Ala Shaban

Title: Managing Director

Institution: American Excellence Schools

Location/Region: Jordan/Middle East & North Africa

Member Group: Secondary (High School)

All Applicant Questions

Discuss your involvement with International ACAC, highlighting specific roles (with dates) and contributions made during your volunteer or leadership tenure.

Unfortunately, I do not possess past experience volunteering with International ACAC. I have applied for the position of Vice President for Membership. However, I wasn't successful in securing the position. This, however, did not discourage me to try again. I decided to apply for The current role; Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for two major reasons, I find myself more in this position, and I do believe that I can be a non-biased objective eye to provide critical positive change.

Identify and articulate a critical issue in college admissions for international students that you would like to or have championed, emphasizing its importance and potential impact on the community.

A critical issue in international college admissions that I champion is the lack of recognition and standardization of diverse educational credentials. International

students hail from varied educational systems, making it challenging for admissions officers to accurately assess their academic achievements.

This issue disproportionately affects applicants from regions with less-known education systems. This lack of standardization not only undermines the fairness of the admissions process but also compromises the diversity and richness of perspectives within academic institutions.

There is a need for a framework to assess and compare academic and professional credentials from different countries to help institutions and employers understand the value of qualifications earned abroad by providing a standardized method for evaluating them against local standards. This will also help admission offices to align the demographics of current students and students they seek to recruit, in addition to expanding institutions' pipelines based on a unified standard/framework.

By advocating for the implementation of a standardized international credential evaluation system, we can ensure a more equitable evaluation of applicants and foster a globalized, inclusive educational community. Addressing this challenge involves collaboration between educational institutions, policymakers, and accreditation bodies to establish a framework that facilitates a comprehensive and fair assessment of international academic qualifications. The potential impact is profound – a more inclusive admissions process that values the diverse educational experiences of international students, contributing to a richer tapestry of perspectives within our academic communities. It is anticipated that the framework will leverage partnerships with schools internationally, which will reflect on a more diverse range of student recruitment.

Detail additional experiences that have equipped you with skills and insights applicable to the position you're applying for, emphasizing transferable accomplishments.

I have always honed valuable skills and insights applicable to the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion position. In my role as a managing director for several high schools lead the development and implementation of a comprehensive diversity and inclusion strategy. This includes designing and delivering training programs that raised awareness about unconscious bias and promoted cultural competence. I successfully collaborate with stakeholders, HR, and principals to align diversity goals with broader organizational objectives, resulting in a 20% increase in employee satisfaction. In addition, my experience in

metrics and evaluation involved implementing systems to assess the effectiveness of diversity initiatives, providing actionable insights for continuous improvement. I've been a vocal advocate for diversity in recruitment processes, actively contributing to blind recruitment strategies to minimize unconscious bias. My community outreach initiatives, such as establishing partnerships with local organizations and schools, showcase my commitment to expanding diversity in talent pipelines. I've also been instrumental in promoting diversity through participation in industry conferences and thought leadership publications. Overall, my multifaceted experience equips me with the strategic mindset, leadership skills, and practical insights needed to make a significant impact in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Outline your comprehension of the role you are applying for, specifying changes you'd like to implement while acknowledging current practices or programs you feel are effective.

As Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, my role is pivotal in shaping a more inclusive organizational culture. I acknowledge current effective practices such as Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and training programs, leveraging their success. To enhance inclusivity, I propose refining training programs to address intersectionality and microaggressions, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of diversity issues.

Enhancing inclusivity requires a demographically and professionally diverse group of professionals, who are able to dedicate “an objective non-biased balcony time” to investigate how aligned or misaligned admission policies and recruitment with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This will be my first step in identifying the challenges, and then addressing them.

Acknowledging leadership commitment, I aim to amplify the organization's international brand. This involves global recognition campaigns, consistent messaging, and showcasing member success stories, spotlighting the positive impact of International ACAC globally. Optimizing internal operations is crucial. Streamlining data management, technology integration, and ongoing training for staff and volunteers will enhance collaboration and ensure the seamless implementation of diversity and inclusion strategies. In summary, my vision is to build upon effective practices, introducing targeted changes that align with International ACAC's pillars.

Describe your leadership philosophy and strategies for effectively managing and leading a volunteer committee, emphasizing communication, collaboration, and recognition.

My leadership philosophy centers around fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment where every team member feels valued, motivated, and empowered to contribute their best. I believe in leading by example, demonstrating integrity, and cultivating a positive culture that encourages innovation, open communication, and continuous growth. In the context of managing a volunteer committee, my philosophy extends to recognizing and leveraging the unique strengths and perspectives of each member to achieve shared goals.

Explain how you would leverage the position to contribute to International ACAC's strategic plan, aligning your goals with the organization's three pillars: enhancing member experience globally, clarifying the international brand, and optimizing internal operations.

In the role of Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at International ACAC, I would strategically align with the organization's pillars. To enhance member experience, I'd focus on fostering a more inclusive community through targeted communication, diverse programming, and mentorship opportunities. This ensures that members globally feel connected, supported, and valued. For clarifying the international brand, I propose global recognition campaigns, consistent messaging, and showcasing success stories to highlight International ACAC's positive impact. By amplifying the organization's reach through strategic partnerships and online presence, we can enhance brand clarity and attract a more diverse membership. To optimize internal operations, I advocate for streamlined data management, leveraging technology for efficient communication, and ongoing training programs. These changes will enhance collaboration, effectiveness, and the overall impact of the organization's initiatives. In summary, my approach aligns with International ACAC's pillars by prioritizing member experience, clarifying the international brand, and optimizing internal operations. These strategies aim to foster a more connected, diverse, and impactful global community within International ACAC.

Share details about a notable contribution you have made in the field, underscoring its impact on the profession and industry. Highlight specific initiatives, programs, or leadership roles that showcase your commitment and expertise.

In 2019, I embarked on the mission to pioneer Iraq's inaugural international school. In the aftermath of four wars, Iraq's educational sector lay in ruin, beset by devastation and neglect. The task of instituting a school adhering to the Common Core State Standards proved daunting, particularly given the absence of regulatory frameworks and established procedures. Compounding the challenge was Iraq's prolonged absence from hosting any "international" curriculum schools since the 1950s.

Initially, I believed that establishing the school would be the primary challenge. However, as we progressed, it became clear that post-secondary education posed the real obstacle. The absence of counselors in schools and the lack of policies and procedures for university admissions presented significant hurdles.

In response, I took the lead and founded a nonprofit community of dedicated educators passionate about education. Together, we began to develop a framework for university admissions. Through a series of meetings with government officials, educators, and K-12 schools, we laid the groundwork for change.

Although still in its early stages, this initiative has become a pivotal force in reshaping university admissions. More and more K-12 schools and universities are joining our cause, marking a significant shift in the landscape of education.

Share why you want to volunteer for a leadership role for International ACAC and why this particular position.

I am eager to volunteer for a leadership role with International ACAC because of my unwavering commitment to the transformative power of international education. Having personally experienced the profound impact of cross-cultural interactions, I am passionate about fostering global connections within the education community. This particular position as Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion resonates deeply with me. I recognize the critical role diversity plays in enriching educational experiences and believe in its power to shape more inclusive, equitable, and interconnected communities. By spearheading initiatives that enhance diversity and inclusion, I aim to contribute to International ACAC's mission of facilitating connections, sharing best practices, and shaping the future of international education. My diverse professional background, encompassing strategic planning, communication, and team leadership, positions me well to drive impactful change in this role. I am excited about the prospect of leveraging these

skills to enhance member experiences globally, clarify the international brand, and optimize internal operations, aligning with the organization's pillars.