

## My Manifesto: Kristine Vu for International Officer

Having been born in the United States and then raised in Canada by Vietnamese parents, my upbringing and background could be defined as almost one hundred percent multicultural. Growing up with a different heritage initially felt like a burden as it set me apart from other children, but now I see that having two cultures has done nothing but to enrich my worldview and enhance my ability to connect to people from various cultures. I am confident that both my Western and Asian roots will enable me to connect to and speak on behalf of the vast majority of international students at Keele.

During university, I studied abroad for one semester in the Netherlands, and after graduation, I worked in northern France as an English teacher for two years. Additionally, I worked in the U.K. over the last two years before starting my Masters in Counselling and Psychotherapy at Keele this September. I have also spent weeks backpacking through Spain and Italy. With utmost gratitude, I can truthfully say that all these experiences working and traveling abroad have irrevocably shaped me into the person I am today and have further expanded my identity as a person and global citizen. As I have spent a significant amount of time working and living in Europe, I believe I will be able to relate to and understand the diverse array of interests and concerns among Keele's European students.

Moreover, I have a passion for learning languages. I speak French and English fluently and I also speak some Vietnamese, Italian, and Spanish. I personally believe that languages are the true keys for understanding another culture and I feel my skills in various European languages and my native Vietnamese tongue will additionally allow me to connect to and understand more students from Keele's international body.

Most importantly, I have experience leading and organizing language clubs and meet ups through Couchsurfing (an online network for travelers across the globe). Through out the last five years, I have made an effort to meet other people from around the world through Couchsurfing and I have genuinely enjoyed bringing individuals together and helping them connect to and take advantage of whichever city they are living in. I believe my experience, as an events organizer with Couchsurfing, has helped me develop leadership and intercultural skills that will enhance my ability to establish a sense of community and alliance among international students at Keele.

Together, I believe all my experiences and interests will assist me in being a voice and advocate for the international student body. I promise to help all international students in their transition as new students at Keele and I promise to promote a better-connected and vibrant international community at the university that represents students' needs and interests. Please vote for me!

