

## **Reasons why I am interested in running for selected GPSG position(s)**

**Nanle Joseph Gusen**

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My name is Nanle Joseph Gusen, a Ph.D. student with the College of Nursing, a delegate of the Association of Graduate Nursing Students Graduate & Professional Student Government (GPSG), and a member of the mental health committee and Physical health and safety. I am writing to express my interest in joining the Graduate Professional Student Government director positions such as the Director of Mental Health, Director of International Affairs, or the Director of Physical Health and Safety.

The role of Graduate Professional Student Government at any university is essential to the well-being of the graduate student community. As a graduate student, I understand that someone must meet students' specific needs to ensure their academic success and personal development. That is why I am interested in these positions.

Firstly, as a graduate student who values mental and emotional well-being, the Director of Mental Health position would allow me to impact the graduate student community significantly. Graduate students often need help with research, coursework, work-life balance demands, and cultural differences. Compared to the general population, graduate students are six times more likely to experience sadness and anxiety (Li, 2021). As a Director of Mental Health, I aim to collaborate with various mental health resources on and off campus. For example, the University Counselling Services, Student Health, and Crises Center, and mental health promoting agencies, among others, in creating awareness about mental health issues, conduct campaigns to normalize conversations around it and collaborate with various wellness resources to provide accessible counseling services to graduate students who need them. For example, ensuring that students seek mental well-being as a preventive measure and, when overwhelmed, seek curative services. The preventive steps will begin before arrival and continue post-arrival.

As the director of mental health, I also intend to better transition international students towards stable mental health after arrival and through their program of study by networking with departments to ensure that mental health resources are at their doorsteps. I plan to create a training program that facilitates safe storytelling, active listening, and self-care, where students can feel free and confident to discuss mental health concerns, as encouraged by older students, to help improve coping mechanisms among students. I also intend to provide incentives and recognition for students who participate. Finally, I plan to participate in university committees and work with the administration to develop policies and programs that cater to the specific needs of graduate and professional students and conduct surveys and focus groups to gather feedback from students and use this information to inform university policy.

Secondly, as an international student, given my international educational experiences across Africa, Europe, and currently here in the United States, I am intrigued by the Director of International Affairs position. As a global citizen, I appreciate the importance of cultural exchange, and I acknowledge that international students face unique challenges due to cultural barriers, visa restrictions, and language barriers. As a Director of International Affairs, I would promote inclusivity, diversity, and community among international students. Finally, the director of

international affairs position offers me an opportunity to work with university administration to improve the policies and regulations that impact international students. I also intend to organize events promoting intercultural adjustments and collaborate with friendship networks like Friends of International Students, Friends without Borders, and various student groups on campus.

Finally, given the current health crisis, I find the Director of Physical Health and Safety role fascinating as it is more pertinent now than ever. As a Director of Physical Health and Safety, I work closely with health authorities to guide and educate graduate students about the best practices that promote healthy living. I would also work closely with the university administration to ensure that the facilities, classrooms, and library meet the highest hygiene standards. I would also work with the office of the threat assessment to ensure the efficiency of actions against threats to students' lives. For example, programs targeted at curbing vices such as gun violence and sexual harassment on campus.

In conclusion, I am interested in the Graduate Professional Student Government director positions of Director of Mental Health, Director of International Affairs, and Director of Physical Health and Safety due to my passion for the overall well-being of graduate students. These positions will allow me to make a meaningful contribution to the graduate student community and enhance my leadership skills.

Sincerely,

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