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I am currently applying for two positions, so I will briefly discuss my interests in both

### **International Affairs**

I am an international student and my main field of interest in research is the experiences of international students in higher education in the US. I am particularly interested on understanding the experiences and struggles of those who come from emergent and low-income countries and that deal with financial hardship because of currency depreciation and other factors. I had the opportunity to recently conduct a study with such individuals and, during my master's degree, I was also not only an international student from an emergent country, but I was experiencing financial hardship and consequent emotional struggles.

My findings on my study, my experience and the extensive literature review of several other studies all seem to point towards the direction that such individuals are extremely underrepresented in the US and their issues are ignored, as college staff and researchers typically portray international students as a consistent and non-diverse group, therefore, assuming that the issues experienced by them are all similar to the most commonly reported types of students: those from higher income countries that struggle mostly with acculturation and language expertise.

I believe that, possibly, by being in a position that goes beyond merely being a student at this university, I can help to highlight these issues and advocate for a more careful eye on observing and supporting international students, particularly graduate students who may be experiencing financial struggles.

### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

Diversity now is a big trending topic in higher education in the US, however, the perception on addressing diversity and providing equity through opportunities is, in my opinion, a bit biased. In the last few years, strong attention has been given to racial and gender inclusion, however, the US continues to ignore ethnic-related diversity in that discussion and fails to perceive such diversity as an asset. The US is home to around 60 million immigrants, more than any country in the world, in addition to 950 thousand international students, all of those being individuals who also struggle with being a divergent person in this society. Many of those, such as international students, undocumented individuals and others labeled as non-immigrants, experience severe limitations in their access to opportunities to reach their goals and quality of life in the United States.

Therefore, my perception is that all and any discussion on diversity that aims for providing opportunities to disfavored groups of individuals should, at least, include a reflection on how many international individuals (including international students) may also be excluded, unrepresented and experiencing unequal access to rights and opportunities in comparison to their peers. I hope that, through joining you, I can help to

bring a mindset that such individuals frequently should and need to be advocated and represented.

Adolfo C F Mendonca Jr