



Application for Vice President of Global Affairs

Name: San Lee

Professional Title: Associate Director, International Admissions & Recruitment

Institution/Organization: University of California, Davis

Institution/Organization Location: United States

Membership Type: Post-Secondary (College & University)

[Candidate Video](#)

International ACAC Volunteer Experience:

Explain your motivation for pursuing a leadership role with International ACAC as well as why this position in particular. Highlight how your leadership experience and involvement with the organization make you a strong fit for the role.

Being an international student changed my life, and this transformative experience first inspired my passion for international education. Pursuing a leadership role with International ACAC represents a meaningful next step in my professional journey.

Since joining the organization in 2015, I have benefited immensely from the community's support and the many opportunities for growth it has provided. I am eager to give back to the organization that has played such a pivotal role in shaping my career. My involvement began at the inaugural East Asia Regional Institute at YK Pao School in Shanghai, and since then, I have contributed in various capacities across the East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania Regional Institutes—including as Faculty at the 2016 Incheon Regional, Faculty Co-Chair in Jeju 2024, and Co-Project Manager for Hanoi 2026. These experiences have deepened my commitment to fostering collaboration and sharing regional expertise.

The position of Vice President for Global Affairs is particularly appealing because it would allow me to draw on my regional experience to support the GA committee, Regional Council and Regional Institutes, while collaborating with colleagues around the world to further International ACAC's mission on a global scale.

My longstanding involvement with International ACAC has not only positively impacted my own career,

but has also enabled me to mentor and support others in their professional development. Having benefited from the International ACAC mentorship community myself, I am especially motivated to help foster the next generation of leaders in our field. I believe these experiences, combined with my demonstrated leadership across multiple regional initiatives, make me well suited for this role and position me to contribute meaningfully to the organization's continued success.

Previous Experience in Leadership:

Please describe your leadership experience, including your leadership philosophy, strategies for managing and supporting a committee, and the approaches you use to foster communication, collaboration, accountability, and recognition. Highlight any accomplishments that demonstrate your leadership effectiveness.

Since 2022, I have served as the team lead for International Admissions at UC Davis, working remotely from Hong Kong (where I have been based for UC Davis Undergraduate Admissions since 2011). In this role, I guide a nearly fully remote team spanning four locations and three time zones. Leading such a diverse group requires adaptability, intentional communication, and a collaborative mindset. My leadership philosophy is rooted in servant leadership: I prioritize the needs of the team, empower each member, and consistently recognize individual strengths. I take pride in fostering an environment where everyone feels supported, valued, and motivated to contribute their best work.

Throughout my time at UC Davis, I have been fortunate to learn from leaders who are both supportive and empowering, allowing me the autonomy to excel and grow beyond my formal responsibilities. This experience has underscored the importance of leveraging each team member's unique skills and perspectives to achieve collective success.

As chair of the Golden Gate Counselor Tour committee since 2023, I have collaborated with admissions teams from four universities to plan and execute our bi-annual counselor bus tour. In this capacity, I initiate regular communication within the planning committee, facilitate effective decision-making, and serve as the primary point of contact for participating counselors. My approach emphasizes transparency, accountability, and recognition of contributions, all of which have been essential to the tour's ongoing success.

Previous Experience in Volunteering:

Please outline your previous volunteer involvement and the skills, insights, or perspectives you have gained through service. Explain how these experiences have prepared you to contribute meaningfully to the work of this organization.

Volunteering and sharing knowledge have always felt like a natural part of my professional journey. My first formal experience was with Global University Counselor Connect (GUCC) Singapore, where I supported counselors in their professional development - a truly rewarding way to give back to our community. More recently, serving as co-chair of the Mentor Year Program (MYP), guided by the social change model, has been both transformative and inspiring. Now entering my third year with MYP, I've

seen firsthand the profound impact that mentorship can have - an insight sparked by my own college mentor. This role deepened my passion for education, and after 15 years in college admissions and counseling, I remain committed to helping others and encouraging professional growth throughout our field.

Through these experiences, I have developed skills in program leadership, facilitation, and relationship-building, while gaining new perspectives on the unique challenges and opportunities in our profession. Sharing knowledge and experience has truly become a cornerstone of my work. Additionally, as a volunteer tour director with Wren Tours since 2023, I will soon lead my fourth tour. This role has allowed me to support admissions professionals - many just starting out on recruitment trips - by offering practical advice and insights to help them navigate the complexities of our field. Altogether, these experiences have equipped me to contribute meaningfully to International ACAC by building community, supporting colleagues, and advancing our shared mission through mentorship and collaboration.

Understanding of the Role & Sharing Innovations & Vision:

Please outline your understanding of this role by identifying your top three priorities, why they matter, and how you would address them. Include any innovative ideas, how you would measure success, and current practices you feel are effective.

1. Activating and leveraging the Global Affairs Committee:

My first priority is to engage the Global Affairs Committee by identifying needs, setting goals and harnessing committee members' expertise to monitor governmental policies and develop targeted advocacy plans. I would encourage proactive policy tracking, consistent information sharing, and collaborative solution building. I hope to empower the committee to collectively support our goals, utilizing each committee's member's strengths and expertise. Success would be measured by the implementation of effective advocacy initiatives and increased committee participation.

2. Strengthening support for the Regional Council:

Supporting the Regional Council is essential to ensure all regions are heard and represented. I would foster strong relationships with regional representatives, promote open communication, and establish structured feedback channels. Facilitating cross-regional collaboration through shared projects would further enhance engagement. Success would be reflected in higher participation, clear articulation of regional priorities to the Executive Board, and the creation of resources that directly address regional needs. I would continue and expand on effective practices such as regular updates and collaborative meetings.

3. Standardizing and enhancing Regional Institutes:

Ensuring consistency and quality across Regional Institutes is vital, while also honoring the unique character of each host region. I would develop standardized planning timelines, resource guides, and

adaptable program frameworks, allowing flexibility for local context. This approach would streamline planning, uphold high standards, and encourage knowledge-sharing among project managers and hosts. Success would be measured through participant feedback, increased attendance, and the successful completion of institutes across all regions. Innovative practices could include a best-practices repository and mentorship for new institute leaders.

Advocacy Priorities in College Admissions or International Education:

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.

One critical issue I have been working on is how to support students in navigating the increasingly complex, uncertain, and ever-changing world. Whether about admissions policies, political tensions, shifting immigration policies, or campus safety, advising them on making the decision to study abroad, students and families often have real concerns and often they want answer, but it is usually working progress. I believe it's essential for admissions professionals to address these questions with honesty, empathy, and clarity, making sure families truly feel heard and supported while also representing our institutions with integrity. I'm equally committed to ensuring high school counselors have the resources and guidance they need to confidently support their students. By focusing on open, transparent communication, we can build trust and help international students feel more confident and welcomed in our communities.

Supporting International ACAC's Strategic Plan:

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.

Enhancing Member Experience Globally:

As VP of Global Affairs, I would focus on building strong relationships with regional representatives to make sure member needs are genuinely heard and addressed. By streamlining Regional Institute planning and supporting creative Gathering Grants, I'd help foster inclusive networking and professional development opportunities that reflect the diversity of our global community.

Clarifying the International Brand:

I would work to ensure our messaging is clear and consistent across all regions, and actively represent International ACAC in global forums to highlight our leadership in international admissions. By celebrating member achievements and regional initiatives, I aim to strengthen our identity and reinforce our reputation as the leading professional community for international admissions and counseling.

Optimizing Internal Operations:

I'm committed to creating a culture of transparency, collaboration, and efficiency. By nurturing strong connections between the Global Affairs Committee, Regional Council, and Executive Board, streamlining appointments, and using data and surveys to guide decisions. Most importantly, I want every member to feel their voice counts and our processes truly support impactful work across the organization.