



## 2025 Regional Council Election Candidate

### Region 1

**Name:** Abdul Oladipo

**Professional Title:** Careers Lead

**Institution/Organization:** Alice Smith School

**Country of Residence:** Malaysia

**Member Group:** Secondary (High School)

### Applicant Questions

**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..**

My motivation for a leadership role with International ACAC stems from a deep gratitude for the professional community it has given me and a genuine desire to contribute to its continued growth. Over the years, my involvement has evolved from a participant to a dedicated volunteer, and I am now ready to leverage my diverse experiences to help guide the organization's future. This position is a natural next step, as it aligns with my passion for mentorship, strategic planning, and fostering an inclusive global community.

My history with International ACAC has prepared me to lead through various roles. As a member of the DEI Committee, I gained invaluable insight into creating an equitable and welcoming environment for all members. This experience taught me the necessity of proactive, intentional work to ensure our organization reflects the diversity of the students and counselors we serve. Additionally, my involvement with the Mentor Years Program and serving as a faculty member for new counselors at last year's conference has allowed me to directly support new professionals. This mentorship has given me a front-row seat to the challenges and opportunities our newest members face, reinforcing my commitment to building a strong leadership pipeline.

Beyond mentorship, my experience includes the strategic and logistical work that powers our organization. Serving on the planning committee for the conference provided me with a comprehensive understanding of the effort required for a successful, engaging event. This collaborative role sharpened my skills in project management and problem-solving. Furthermore, my various roles in China (Beijing fairs) gave me an on-the-ground perspective in a vital region, highlighting the importance of cultural competence and adaptability in connecting people across vast geographical distances.

These varied experiences represent a cohesive journey of commitment and growth, not isolated achievements. I am a strong fit for this leadership role because I have a holistic view of International ACAC—from the needs of a new member to the strategic imperatives of a large-scale international event. I believe my combination of experience in professional development, DEI, conference logistics, and regional outreach makes me uniquely positioned to serve our membership and help lead International ACAC into its next chapter of success.

**Drawing from your previous experience in volunteering and leadership, how have these roles equipped you with the skills and insights necessary for the Founding Regional Representative position? Please highlight your leadership philosophy and strategies for effectively managing and leading a volunteer committee, with a focus on communication, collaboration, and recognition. Additionally, share specific accomplishments that demonstrate your ability to build professional communities, mentor emerging leaders, and promote inclusive and culturally responsive practices—key responsibilities of this role.**

My extensive involvement with International ACAC has equipped me with the skills and insights essential for the Founding Regional Representative role. Through diverse experiences, I've cultivated a leadership philosophy centered on empowerment, transparent communication, and collaborative governance. I believe a volunteer committee thrives when members feel a strong sense of ownership and purpose. My strategy is to foster an environment where every voice is heard, ideas are openly shared, and contributions are celebrated. This involves establishing clear communication channels, delegating responsibilities based on individual strengths, and providing frequent, meaningful recognition for their dedication.

My experience on the planning committee for the conference is a prime example of this philosophy in action. We successfully collaborated to produce a high-impact event, but more importantly, we built a strong team by valuing each member's expertise and ensuring every logistical detail was a shared victory. This collaborative approach, along with my work on the China Fairs committee, has taught me how to effectively manage complex projects across cultures and geographies, a critical skill for this regional role.

Furthermore, my dedication to building professional communities and mentoring emerging leaders is evident in my work with the Mentor Years Program and as a faculty member for new counselors. These roles have allowed me to directly guide new professionals, helping them navigate our field and find their voice. These experiences have shown me that a strong community is built on a foundation of support and a commitment to professional growth. Finally, my time on the DEI Committee has been crucial in shaping my approach to leadership. It is here that I have actively worked to promote inclusive and culturally responsive

practices, learning to identify and address barriers to access and belonging. As a Founding Regional Representative, I will champion these principles by ensuring our regional initiatives are tailored to the unique needs of our diverse membership, creating an equitable space for all to participate and lead.

**As a Founding Regional Representative for International ACAC, how would you outline your understanding of the role, including the priority areas you would focus on, your overall vision for the region, and the challenges you anticipate addressing? Additionally, what innovative solutions would you propose to strengthen all regional networks, enhance member engagement, and improve communication between members, the Council, and the Board, while acknowledging current practices or programs you find effective?**

My understanding of the Founding Regional Representative role is to act as a crucial bridge between our regional members and the Board, fostering a vibrant, interconnected community. My overall vision for the region is a network where every member feels supported, empowered, and truly engaged with the organization's mission. I anticipate the primary challenges will be navigating the vast geographic distances and ensuring that our initiatives are culturally responsive and relevant to our diverse membership.

Leadership Priorities and Innovative Solutions

Drawing from my experience with the China Fairs committee, where I learned the importance of collaboration across a large region, my first priority will be to build a strong, collaborative regional network. I will launch a "Regional Ambassador" program, empowering seasoned members to act as local connectors and mentors for new counselors in their areas. This directly addresses the need for localized support and mirrors my success in training and empowering new counselors at last year's conference.

My second priority is to enhance communication and engagement. I will propose a "Regional Pulse" newsletter to regularly update members on initiatives and opportunities, and also to highlight the achievements of our volunteers. This creates a transparent, two-way communication channel, ensuring that member feedback is consistently shared with the Board.

Community Building and Inclusive Practices

My experience with the DEI Committee has profoundly shaped my leadership philosophy. I will apply these insights to ensure all regional activities are inclusive and accessible. I plan to establish peer-to-peer mentorship pods, drawing inspiration from the Mentor Years Program, to not only connect members but also to create a pipeline of diverse, emerging leaders. My goal is to build a professional community that doesn't just feel like a professional network, but a true partnership where every member has a role to play and every contribution is recognized.

These strategies build upon the strong foundation of our existing conference and fair committees, which are effective models of collaboration. I am confident that by focusing on empowerment, communication, and inclusivity, we can create a regional network that is a true strength of International ACAC.

**As a Founding Regional Representative, advocacy for international students is central to International ACAC's mission. Identify a critical issue in college admissions or international education that you would prioritize addressing in your region. Explain its significance, the potential impact on students and institutions, and how you would collaborate with regional and global stakeholders to drive meaningful change.**

A critical issue I would prioritize as a Founding Regional Representative is the lack of standardized and accessible information regarding visa regulations, post-graduation work opportunities, and official credential evaluations for international students. The information gap on these topics creates significant anxiety for students and can lead to misinformed decisions, as they often rely on unofficial sources or misinformation. This not only impacts a student's academic and career trajectory but can also lead to issues with compliance for institutions and tarnish the reputation of international education as a whole.

This issue has a profound impact. For students, it creates unnecessary stress and can limit their ability to plan for their futures effectively. They may choose a destination based on incorrect assumptions about their ability to stay and work, leading to disappointment and financial hardship. For institutions, a lack of clear information can lead to inefficient recruitment and a poor student experience, ultimately impacting retention and global standing.

To drive meaningful change, I would employ a multi-pronged approach rooted in collaboration:

**Regional Collaboration:** I would establish a regional task force of counselors, admissions officers, and career services professionals to create a centralized, easily accessible resource hub. This hub would be a single source of truth for our members, compiling and clarifying information on critical topics like student visa requirements and post-graduation work pathways. I would use the "Regional Pulse" newsletter to regularly share vetted updates and success stories from this task force.

**Global Collaboration:** I would advocate for this issue to the International ACAC Board, recommending the creation of a global working group. This group's mission would be to actively engage with embassies, educational ministries, and other key international bodies to streamline and standardize information dissemination. International ACAC, as a global organization, is uniquely positioned to amplify this message and influence policy on a broader scale.

**Innovative Solutions:** Building on my experience in training new counselors, I would organize regular virtual information sessions and Q&As featuring immigration lawyers and accredited professionals. This direct access to verified expertise would empower our members to provide their students with accurate advice, transforming our network from a passive info.

**Explain how you would use this position to advance International ACAC's strategic plan by aligning your top three priorities with the organization's three pillars: enhancing member experience globally, clarifying the international brand, and optimizing internal operations.**

My leadership priorities as a Founding Regional Representative are in direct alignment with International ACAC's three strategic pillars. I believe my focus on building a collaborative

network, advocating for transparency, and enhancing communication will be essential for advancing the organization's mission.

### 1. Enhancing Member Experience Globally

This pillar is central to my vision. I will prioritize creating a strong, supportive regional network, drawing from my experiences with the Mentor Years Program and as a faculty member for new counselors. My plan to launch a "Regional Ambassador" program directly enhances the member experience by providing localized mentorship and professional development opportunities. This initiative empowers members to find support within their own communities, making the International ACAC experience more accessible and personal, regardless of location.

### 2. Clarifying the International Brand

I would advance this pillar by prioritizing advocacy for greater transparency in international education. The lack of standardized information on visas and post-graduation opportunities risks damaging our brand's credibility. By establishing a regional task force to create a centralized resource hub, we solidify International ACAC's position as a definitive and reliable source of information. This proactive approach strengthens our brand by demonstrating our commitment to integrity and student advocacy.

### 3. Optimizing Internal Operations

To optimize our internal operations, I will focus on improving communication between members, the Council, and the Board. My proposed "Regional Pulse" newsletter will serve as a vital two-way communication channel, ensuring that member feedback and regional issues are efficiently communicated to the Board. This streamlined process, coupled with my experience in strategic event planning for the New Mexico conference, will help us make data-driven decisions that are responsive to our members' needs, thus ensuring our operational efforts are both effective and inclusive.