Application for the ISYY board 2027

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Position: Member of the Executive Board 2027, International Affairs
Negotiator: Mahamudun Nessa Munmun, student in the Master's Degree Programme in Early Language Education for Intercultural Communication at the University of Eastern Finland and member of ISYY. Phone: +358 417012934

1 Who I Am

I am a Master's student in the Degree Programme in Environmental Policy and Law at the University of Eastern Finland in Joensuu, originally from Nigeria. I hold a B.Sc. in International Law and Diplomacy from Babcock University.

2 Why I Am Applying

I am applying because of inclusivity. The number of international students at UEF grows every year, and many student activities are organised, but when I arrived I did not really feel included. I believe it takes someone who has lived it to know what makes students feel at home away from home, even while trying to immerse themselves in another culture. It is also important for all students to learn about cultures other than their own, through culturally tailored inclusive activities that are organised to foster unity and bridge the gap.

3 My Experience

When I arrived in Finland in the middle of the night, a fellow Nigerian who was already here collected my key for me, because going to the housing office at midnight was not realistic. My apartment was unfurnished, so I slept on the floor. The next day I searched many second-hand stores and could not find a bed, because nobody had told me that Kiertämö in Joensuu is where most people get bedding, which I only learned in my second month. I paid €150 for a mattress alone, which I may have to discard if I move. The problem was not only the cost, but that I did not know which resources were available to me.

4 My Proposal

I am developing a draft proposal called "Now That You're Here" (NOTYOH) to help new international students settle in easily and find affordable offers when they arrive, especially because many of them will not know anyone here beforehand. NOTYOH would facilitate the handover of essentials, belongings and knowledge of available resources from students to newcomers, in the spirit of Finland's re-use culture. This knowledge goes beyond second-hand shops: it includes how to use public transport, how to do grocery shopping and how to get around. It would start even before arrival, once students receive their residence permit or visa. I have contacted the University's international services about it, and the proposal is still a draft that needs fine-tuning.

5 Inclusive Social Life

Besides NOTYOH, I care about an inclusive social life for immigrant students. Most of the events I have attended are built around local traditions, which is natural, but it also shows in small things. The music is mostly Finnish and English-language, and I rarely heard music from other cultures, such as Afrobeats, Spanish-language, Asian or Eastern music. Music is an important part of life and of each person's culture, so it matters whose music is heard. At one student housing event, I asked the guests for their favourite songs, added them to the playlist and played them, and people had a good time. Small steps like this make every student feel that the event is also theirs.

6 What I Bring

I was Sergeant-at-Arms of the International Law and Diplomacy Student Association (ILDSA) at Babcock University in 2019/2020, keeping order at council meetings and making sure discussions followed the agenda. I was also in ILDSA's welfare committee from 2018 to 2022, helping to organise student activities, seminars and conferences, and I was President of the Graduating Class of Redemption Chapel at Babcock in 2022. At UEF, I was part of the organising team of the GLOW Project Autumn Zen programme on 28 October 2026. I have also worked for several years as a project manager in technology and in a non-profit.

7 Sector

I would be willing to work in International Affairs.

Thank you for considering my application.