

## **Director of Diversity Efforts**

**Candidate:** Vanessa Lam

### **Questions:**

1. For the communities that you are not a part of and that you do not personally identify with, how will you make sure you serve their needs as a Director of Diversity Efforts?

I will serve the needs of communities that I do not identify with by proactively fostering interpersonal relationships with them to be an effective ally who understands the issues they face to be advocated for and addressed at ASUW. To me, allyship means practicing active listening and empathy to build connections based on trust, accountability, and consistency in order to stand in solidarity with the needs of each community. I recognize that I can never fully understand the experiences of communities that I am not a part of. Hence, it is essential that I use my platform to give opportunities for these communities to uplift and empower their own voices to speak on behalf of themselves. Since each community consists of multifaceted identities that personalize each individual experience, it is important to address intersectionality through the inter-collaboration of event programming and advocacy amongst JCC, RSOs, and UW departments to engage the larger campus about issues and successes within each community. For that reason, I am passionate about engaging student leaders from these communities to positions in ASUW through inclusive hiring that reflects the entire student population, especially for underrepresented groups so they can best represent themselves, peers, and community members

2. What is your current involvement with the ECC and diverse communities? (Q Center, D Center, different commissions, etc etc.) What is your biggest weakness in that relationship? What do you hope to do more of if elected?

My current involvement is being the Vice President of the International Student Mentorship Program which is affiliated with the ECC and as a residential advisor. I've had the opportunity to connect, build relationships and communities with a cohort of international students who represent over 35 countries and 54 residents who come from different backgrounds. My biggest weakness is how I cannot fully understand the experiences of individuals and communities that I am not a part of. This is why I hope to address the institutional barriers that have made it difficult for minority students to be heard by creating another table for these communities to advocate on behalf of themselves based on their own visions and values. Specifically, I hope to create more safe spaces on campus for RSOs affiliated with the ECC, ASUW diversity commissions, and other diverse students to support them in fostering more spaces of student leadership where they are empowered to raise their voices. Lastly, I hope to unite these new spaces with the JCC and ASUW board by

implementing direct channels of communications so marginalized students have an increased platform to be strong leaders and advocates not only in their communities but all across campus.