Alice Dien – GSA Secretary Candidacy Statement

My name is Alice Dien. I’m a 3rd-year Ph.D. Student in Biological Systems Engineering, and I’m honored to accept the nomination for Secretary of the Graduate Student Association (GSA) for the 2022-23 academic year. Since the beginning of my studies at UC Davis, I have been exposed to a very multidisciplinary environment. Partly because I’m an international student, but also because I’m an engineer interested in community-based and human-centered approaches to science. Thus, although I belong to the Biological and Agricultural Engineering (BAE) department, I minor in International Agricultural Development (IAD) which is in the Department of Plant Sciences and I work in a lab located within the Energy and Efficiency Institute. In addition, I’m a Public Scholars for the Future fellow, a program that focuses on advancing community-based approaches in all areas of research. My inherent interest in community work and the need to always keep a human-centered mindset is what first motivated me to become more involved with on-campus student initiatives.

For the past year, I have served as the Secretary for the Biological and Agricultural Engineering (BAE) GSA, and, two years ago, I was the BAE-GSA Alumni relations. Being a GSA officer in my department was a gratifying experience that mostly involved organizing fun departmental activities and keeping track of our meetings. However, this didn’t make me oblivious of the many challenges students face in their everyday life. By becoming a member of the GSA executive council, I would have the opportunity to represent and advocate for students’ needs and desires within the UC system and outside. Specifically, as the secretary, I would be in charge of doing one of the things I enjoy the most, communication.

Communication is at the core of my professional and personal ethics. I strongly advocate for better science communication strategies and I recently pitched my Ph.D. research at the UC Davis Grad Slam competition. However, my communication skills transcend the scientific and professional boundaries, and I’m good at maintaining open communication channels and creating safe sharing spaces for people around me in general. I have the facility to navigate new networks and connect people and resources together. Thus, if elected secretary, I will be a reliable point of contact and trusted resource for graduate students across campus. I will also make sure to connect students with adequate assets and communicate their concerns to the right people in a timely manner. It would be an honor for me to contribute to and facilitate graduate students’ success at UC Davis.