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Motivation Letter

Dear Students, Professors and Staff of RSU,

I am writing this motivation letter to formally apply for the position of International Collaboration and Human Rights officer on the International Student Association board. Firstly, to introduce myself: some of you might know me from classes, others from trivia nights but most probably from my involvement in social and academic societies. Throughout my years in RSU I have been an active and passive member in many events, participated in Riga Run Club and was newly appointed research coordinator of ASAIEC. Beyond my involvement in groups, I am committed to supporting student involvement in social settings and improving the study process at RSU. For this reason, I am petitioning myself for HR.

As an international student myself, coming from Portugal, South Africa, and Angola, and having grown up in Germany, I understand the struggles as an international student all too well. It is through dissecting cadavers, having a good laugh about the stench of formaldehyde and teaching others to intubate that I was able to cultivate a

community at RSU. My passion for community building started in high school, where I led extracurricular activities like Model United Nations (MUN), met people from various backgrounds and learned how to work efficiently as a team. Of course, teams do not always work as intended. During my MUN presidency there was a clash between a teacher and student in which I had to manage the situation by speaking to both parties separately, and then together, to reach a common ground on which to continue the session. Settling disputes is a key job of the head of HR, and my ability to remain calm and settle conflict while maintaining good morale will be beneficial to the board.

Recently, I was able to speak to the previous HR, Beatriz Coelho and attend an ISA meeting to gain insight into the role. What I learned is that ISA has a fundamental role in elevating the voices of individual students as well as the whole student body. As a new member of the board, I would aim to increase activist participation by incentivising students with free food or gift cards when possible, and by changing the name from “activist” to volunteer. I believe further incentive for activists will boost the numbers and make it simpler to find participants in the future. Additionally, when speaking to students, I found that most did not know about current activist benefits. Constant communication between ISA and students would remedy a lack in participation and knowledge about the current happenings greatly.

Hence, looking forward I seek to improve communication between the ISA and SP, more specifically bridging the gap between latvian and international students. Everytime I meet local students they remark the disconnect between locals and

international students when it comes to social groupings, sports, events, etc. This was additionally confirmed when I spoke to students on the SP board. To remedy the disconnect I aim to make the ISA board room more accessible by keeping the door open for talks, increase visibility from the hallway and creating an inviting environment. Long-term I want to assess any opportunities to increase integration of all RSU students.

Given these points, I believe my community building skills, experience in leadership roles and commitment towards supporting international students and student-led bodies are qualifications that make me an exceptional candidate for HR. Thank you for considering my application and I look forward to the opportunity to work with the ISA.

Sincerely,

Annika-Marie Strauss