

Shiddat Sharma International Rep Candidate

Kia ora everyone! I'm Shiddat, an international student from India who thought I was immune to homesickness because I survived boarding school in the mountains. Turns out that is totally not the case. Not in a small "oh the food is different" way, but in a full "everything is different" way, I was struggling with the definition of what people call "normal."

My first few months here felt like someone had picked me up from one universe and dropped me into another and somehow suddenly I was surrounded by people from China, Japan, Norway, America, and of course Aotearoa. It was overwhelming not to lie but also ridiculously fun. As time passed, I turned out to love this diversity, and now the biggest plot twist is I'm literally best friends with a kiwi and Chinese.

Because of this journey, I've become the person people come to when they're struggling with academic confusion, financial doubts, or just needing someone to say, "Hey, I've been exactly where you are. You're not alone." And that's exactly why I'm running for International Representative.

From what I've learned, this role alongside hosting cultural events is also about advocacy, representation, and making sure international voices actually shape campus decisions. The International Rep chairs the International Advisory Committee, sits on the Student Experience Board, works closely with international advisors, supports international clubs, captures student feedback, and brings real issues into governance spaces. It's a role that requires empathy, listening, and the ability to represent perspectives that often go unheard.

If I would be elected, I'll bring my multicultural chaos and my "solve-it-all" energy to ensure international students feel included, supported, and represented not just during orientation week, but throughout the entire year.