

International Students' 5 Primary Felt Needs

Here is a short list of the key felt needs of internationals and some ways that you can meet these needs. Realize that felt needs will vary somewhat among nationalities.

1. Help – International students need help in many areas that we, as Americans, can provide with a reasonable degree of effort.

- **Airport pick up**
- **Temporary housing**
- **Transportation to grocery**—especially ethnic markets.
- **Furniture**
- **Moving**

2. English - Internationals desire to practice their spoken English. Although most have good basic English skills, many struggle with their accents or their understanding of idioms and slang. Here are some approaches by which you can help.

- **One-to-one language partnering**
- **Short classes** designed to help students learn idioms/slang/cultural meaning of words
- **Coffee hours** sponsored by the university to help students interact with Americans and with each other—you can attend or help organize.

3. Friendship

- If not pressed by their academic responsibilities, **internationals love to hang out** with friends like you for hour upon hour.
- Another key to friendship with internationals is **helping in time of need**. Needs will arise with international students and they expect that if you are their friend, you will help them.
- Conversely, you can feel free to **ask your international friend for help**. By doing so, you communicate the fact that you have a real friendship with this person and that you trust him or her.
- Your friendship should not be only one-to-one. Just as you would with a fellow American, **introduce your international friend to other people** you enjoy. Better yet, introduce your international friend to a group of others.

4. Cultural understanding & recreation

- Arrange for your friend to visit an **American home**—yours or that of other friends
- Involve your friend in **celebrations of American holidays...and make yourself available to help celebrate your friend's holidays**
- Take your friend to an **American church**
- Attend **sporting events** together
- Discuss the **history of each other's nations**, but be cautious about aspects that are controversial or divisive
- Enjoy **outdoor activities** together—canoeing, camping, horseback riding, sledding, water skiing
- Join together in **playing sports** that are familiar to your friend (soccer, basketball, volleyball, badminton) or unfamiliar (baseball, touch football, ultimate Frisbee)
- Expose your friend to **unique cultural events**—square dancing, hay rides, Christmas caroling

5. Travel

- Internationals want to see America, especially the **sights that are internationally known**—Niagara Falls, Grand Canyon, Empire State Building, Times Square, White House, U.S. Capitol, Disneyland, Disneyworld.
- They also want to see **local points of interest**—State capitol, scenic lookouts, caverns, historic buildings or monuments.