


6-2015

Chinese Students' Experience at United College: Dialogue between Executives and Chinese Students

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Running Title:美国大学里的中国留学生

中国留学生在联合学院的经历：行政人员和中国学生的对话

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for
Honors in the Department of Modern Languages

UNION COLLEGE
June, 2015

ABSTRACT

PALMER, ALICIA 中国留学生在联合学院的经历：行政人员和中国学生的对话

ADVISOR: MEGAN FERRY

越来越多中国学生来美国学习。他们来美国上大学，因为美国大学的教育算世界上最好的教育之一。有的中国家庭为了给孩子最好的教育付很多钱。另外，因为美国政府的补助减少很快，美国大学有很大的经费问题。往往留学生接受不了美国的奖学金，所以得付所有学费。不过，看起来来自东方的留学生比西方的留学生在心理方面有更多困难。一个原因是东方的文化，比如中国文化，跟西方的文化不一样。结果，大部分的在美国大学的中国留学生觉得交说英文的朋友很难、跟老师聊天儿很难、适应美国大学的生活很难，等等。这个研究试图把中国留学生和行政人员对这些问题的理解介绍一下。

INTRODUCTION

中国留学生给美国大学带来的变化

越来越多中国人来美国学习。¹从 2000 年以来，来美国留学的中国国际学生增长了五倍（Redden, *University of China at Illinois*）。《纽约时报》说从 2013 年到 2014 年美国大学给 886,052 名国际学生发放了录取通知书，其中百分之六十一是中国学生 (Fischer, *Chinese Students Lead Foreign Surge at U.S Colleges*)。根据国土安全部的网站，美国接受了 235,597 名中国学生。于是从中国来的留学生比世界上其他任何一个国家来的留学生都多（Redden, *University of China at Illinois*）。另外，中国国际留学生的人数每年都增加百分之二十（Stephens, *International Students: Separate but Profitable*）。原来，大部分的老师们喜欢在他们的课堂里有中国国际学生，因为他们觉得中国学生给美国学校做出了很大的贡献，比如他们使大学的生活更有意思，还对美国学生有好的影响（Xueqin, *Risk of China's Students*; Bellware, *Forget a Perfect SAT—What Colleges really want are International Students*）。

另外，比较多本科生来美国大学学习。以前，大部分的中国国际学生是研究生。现在大部分的中国国际学生是本科生或者高中生。²今天 23,500 名中国国际学生在美国读高中。

为什么越来越多中国人来美国学习

¹ 很多文章说：“越来越多中国国际学生来美国。” (Stephens, *International Students: Separate but Profitable*; Redden, *University of China at Illinois*; Bellware, *Forget a Perfect SAT—What Colleges really want are International Students*; Pratt, *Chinese Students found Cheating to get into U.S Colleges*; Xueqin, *Risk of China's Students*; Farhang & Aker, *University Courts Chinese Students, Reaps Benefits*; Homeland Security website).

² 很多文章说中国国际学生年龄越来越小。(Stephens, *International Students: Separate but Profitable*; Redden, *University of China at Illinois*; Xueqin, *Risk of China's Students*; Pratt, *Chinese Students found Cheating to get into U.S Colleges*)

第一个原因是他们的家庭比较有钱；因为中国政府有一个规定说结婚只可能生一个孩子，结果结婚的人只生一个孩子，家庭存的钱一般比较多。孩子可以受好的教育。因为孩子算是最重要的家人，所以父母常常想让他们孩子去别的国家学习，特别是美国。现在比较多的中国家庭属于中产阶级，（Redden, *University of China at Illinois*）有的没有很多钱的家庭也努力省钱，这样他们的孩子可以去别的国家学习。

第二个原因是美国想找中国国际学生来他们的大学学习，因为美国政府补助美国大学补助得很少。很热门的大学不能让美国大学生来学校，因为学费继续涨，而政府的补助减少了（Redden, *University of China at Illinois*;和纽约时报, Illinois）。一般美国大学的补助减少了百分之十点八，别的大学像加州大学和亚利桑那大学减少了百分之三十六（Bellware, *Forget a Perfect SAT—What Colleges really want are International Students*）。根据 Stephens, 2013-2014 年美国大学的补助减少了百分之二十八（*International Students: Separate but Profitable*）。如果美国学生因为学费太贵而上不了大学，美国大学就要找别的学生。国际学生一般不能接受财政资助；大部分的奖学金是只给美国人的奖学金。所以中国国际学生付整个学费。有的时候，他们付的学费比美国人付的多（Bellware, *Forget a Perfect SAT—What Colleges really want are International Students*）。在普度大学，国际学生的“国际费”一般是一千美元到两千美元（Stephens, *Separate but Profitable*）。有的人说美国大学除了不给美国大学生钱以外，还想要越来越多的国际学生，依靠国际学生的学费。结果美国公立大学制度变成了私立大学制度（Bellware, *Forget a Perfect SAT—What College really want are International Students*）。在亚利桑那大学，国际学生人数增加了百分之三十四（Bellware, *Forget a Perfect SAT—What Colleges really want are International Students*）。2013 年，国际学生竟然给美国的经济增加了二十四亿美元的消费（Bellware, *Forget a Perfect SAT—What Colleges really want are International Students*）。百分之二十九的国际学生是中国人。

第三个原因是有的中国人不喜欢中国最有名的考试“高等学校招生考试或”(高考)(《纽约时报》)。在中国,美国高等教育被认为是最好的教育(Stephens, *International Students: Separate but Profitable*),所以有的家庭想努力省钱帮孩子去好的美国大学。中国家庭不见得担心高学费。于是大批中国学生来到了美国大学(Stephens, *International Students: Separate but Profitable*)。

太多中国国际学生带来的问题

美国文化跟中国文化不一样。另外,英文和中文是非常不同的。再说中国国际学生来美国的时候他们的第一个印象跟他们的期望也不同。一般来说,学生认为已经了解美国文化、准备好了融入美国的社会,可是他们以前只看过美国电影里的文化,而没想到真正的美国文化跟电影里的有很大的区别(Redden, *University of China at Illinois*)。

第二个问题是交朋友。有的人来美国学习的时候想交美国朋友。可是,美国学生不见得对中国文化有兴趣 (Redden, *University of China at Illinois*),美国学生和中国学生都紧张。结果有的中国留学生就决定跟别的中国留学生交朋友。他们跟别的中国人在一起感觉很舒服,学生累的时候,想在宿舍放松。如果他们有问题他们觉得美国朋友能帮他们练习英文、了解美国文化、在生活方面帮他们 (Redden, *University of China at Illinois*)。有的中国学生觉得有很多美国和中国朋友比较好。可是他们不见得了解美国文化或想练习说英文。另外,一般的中国学生比美国学生觉得功课更重要。可能是因为长大的时候他们受到中国的高考教育。高考又重要又严格。在伊利诺伊大学,有的中国人说跟美国大学生交朋友很难,因为他们需要跟美国人花很多时间,这样跟他们的中国同学就会少花时间。但是,对他们来说,中国朋友比美国朋友重要(Redden, *University of China at Illinois*)。另外,中国学生上课的时候喜欢坐在一起,都说中文,别的美国同学听不懂,于是美国学生就不想跟中国学生聊天儿。

第三个问题是美国菜。连美国的“中国菜”也不地道。有的国际学生常常觉得美国菜不好吃，美国菜没有味道。有的时候中国学生找到了一个可以做地道的菜的地方，可是在美国超市却很难找到配料。中国超市不见得到处都有，还有中国学生不见得会开车或者大学不租给他们车去这个超市。

第四个问题是语言上的问题。因为很多申请不真实大部分的大学要求中国国际学生有面试。可是有的学生说英文说得不好。因为很多中国人来美国学习，美国大学需要适应这个语言差距；大学需要说中文的老师或写作中心的人帮助中国学生。大学也要求心理医生帮助他们，特别是在学生想家、觉得功课太难、在中国的家人生病或者去世了的时候。有的大学想要多招中国国际学生，可是还没准备好，所以来美国留学的学生不知道跟谁联系，不知道去哪里找帮助，不知道去哪里找好吃的菜(Redden, *University of China at Illinois; Bellware, Forget a Perfect SAT—What Colleges really want are International Students*)。

另外一个问题是美国人对有越来越多国际学生在美国大学的现象感觉不好。美国政府不帮孩子付学费，可是因为很多大学有越来越多的中国学生，有些美国人认为美国孩子去不了大学是因为中国留学生或者国际留学生太多。他们生气了(Stephens, *International Students: Separate but Profitable*)。有的中国学生说他们喜欢在美国学习，因为美国的教育算是最好的教育，可是留学生也想利用国际学生(Stephens, *International Students: Separate but Profitable*)。

国际学生给美国大学另一个贡献；国际学生的 SAT 和 ACT 分数不算在大学的入学统计里面，所以如果美国大学接受越来越多的国际学生，大学的入学统计分数就会增加。有的人认为这个情况其实提高了美国的标准。所以为了去好的大学，美国学生需要做得更多。

美国招生的问题

不幸的是，有的中国学生伪造他们的申请书。美国的大学招生制度很复杂，为了让他们的孩子去美国学习，有的父母会找一个公司帮他们的孩子申请大学。有的公司是非法的，伪造学生的信息。另外，这种公司很贵，父母往往要付一万到两万给公司。因为公司是一个生意，他们想赚很多钱，所以不在乎伪造中国学生的信息，写他们的申请文章什么的(Pratt, *Chinese Students found Cheating to get into U.S Colleges*)。这个情况不好，因为要是有一个中国人想来美国学习，其实没准备好，再加上英文说得不好，在美国大学就不会过得很好。另外，这是浪费他们自己、父母和大学的时间(Pratt, *Chinese Students found Cheating to get into U.S Colleges*)。

出国留学的心理影响

根据研究，留美、留欧的东方人比西方人有更多的困难 (Wang & Hannes, 2014)。交朋友、个人及情绪问题多(Wang & Hannes, 2014)。中国留学生跟美国人有密切的关系的时候才感觉比较舒服 (Wang & Hannes, 2014)。另外，Hotta & Ting-Toomey (2013)、Kim & Okazaki (2005)和 (Usborne & Taylor, 2010), 都说跟别的中国留学生花太多时间不好，因为中国留学生跟别的中国国际生很舒服，跟美国学生在一起越来越不舒服；不想跟他们聊天儿、参加一样的活动，等等。中国学生花多少时间跟别的中国留学生影响他们跟美国学生的交流，建立有效的密切的关系(Hotta & Ting-Toomey, (2013)。一般来说，东方留学生需要六到十二个月才能适应美国大学生活 (Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013)。如果中国留学生只跟别的中国留学生花时间，他们也不想让其他中国留学生感觉生气或被放弃了，所以不大去交别的朋友(Usborne & Taylor, 2010)。

大部分的美国学生认为中国学生喜欢幽静，爱学习，于是美国人不大想跟中国留学生聊天儿。因为跟美国人不聊天儿，中国国际学生觉得美国人不喜欢他们，有不好的印象。

中国留学生越来越担心接近美国人，因为不知道跟美国人说什么（Kwon, 2013; Fuchs, *Film Tries to Tackle Stereotypes of Chinese Students in U.S*）。

这几年越来越多学生从中国到美国来学习。可是中国的文化跟美国的文化不一样，所以中国学生来美国大学的时候，常常遇到很多难关。他们来之前不见得准备好了美国大学生的生活；在中国，学生说他们学习英语学得很好。但是，他们没跟美国人或者说英文的人练习说话。结果，来美国以后，大部分的中国人找别的中国国际学生交朋友，不跟美国学生聊天儿。

的确，来新的国家经常会感觉陌生，可是，住新的国家应该是一个又美又有意思的经验，再说还能交最好的朋友、出去看漂亮的地方、跟不同的人聊天儿什么的。

于是，我想了解中国国际学生的经验，要问他们对美国大学的印象，特别是想知道为什么他们觉得又难又过度紧张。另外，我对别人对中国国际学生的印象有兴趣。我除了计划跟中国国际学生讨论以外，还会问大学的行政人员，想知道两方的感受。

我想明白中国学生和行政人员是否知道中国国际学生有什么样的难处。另外，为了帮助新的中国国际学生感觉安心，大学要做些什么？

Methodology

为了研究这个课题，我跟中国国际学生和大学的行政人员举行了多次面谈。我问了他们在 Union 的经验和跟别的大学生聊天儿的经验。

我面谈了四个中国国际学生和三个行政人员。跟一个行政人员和两个学生用网络聊天儿，跟八个面对面地谈谈。我给每个参加者说明我的研究目的；我想了解他们在 Union 大学的经验。如果他们是国际学生，我想了解他们在美国大学有什么困难。然后我开始提出我研究的问题。中国国际学生的问题跟行政人员的问题不一样(看 Appendix 附录 1)。

我向他们问完我研究的问题以后，感谢他们花时间参加我的研究课题。

结果

我采访中国国际学生和行政人员的时候，发现一些普遍的主题：第一个是有的中国学生和行政人员都觉得大部分的美国大学生对中国国际学生没有兴趣。一般来说，似乎美国学生跟他们的美国朋友交流很舒服，不想跟来自别的学生说话。于是，中国国际学生认为跟别的学生在一起（不是中国人）的时候，都很怕。

Administrator A:

When they arrive initially all they have for several days are the other international students. It is good in the sense that they can create a foundation but bad in the sense that it may make it harder for them to branch out later. I notice that the American students do not go out of their way to talk with the international Chinese students and I am not saying that it is right or wrong either way, that is just what seems to happen. It really relies on the Chinese student then to take that first step at interacting with the domestic students.

Many students wish that others would ask more questions, many are very interested in sharing their knowledge and their culture with others but are just not sure how to make that first step or are too nervous. Some girls will join sororities it is interesting for them because it is unlike anything they have ever experienced before. Some have said that it can be overwhelming to get to know and be friends with so many people at once. But they usually adjust to it pretty well. Just as with any other student, Greek life is not for everyone.

This is also why I think the pre-orientations that the school has each year are so important; students can use this experience as a common bond and will give them that something that they need to break the ice. I think the more we do programs like that

the more Chinese students can get involved with domestic student life and the less intimidating it might seem. "Just being human together" is one of the best ways to feel comfortable here and "sharing those things that make us happy."

Student A:

It is very hard to just walk up to someone and introduce yourself. American students don't really have anything to necessarily gain by taking that first step so you have to be that person.

Administrator B:

I think that it can be pretty difficult for the incoming international students to make English friends here. Unless they attend and participate in clubs around campus where they get to interact with other English speakers it can definitely be a challenge. It is another reason why the mini-terms are so great because it really forces peoples internal barriers to come down and it can really be a transformative experience for everyone not just the international Chinese students. But in general I think this campus will allow you not to meet people who are unlike you.

I think a lot of the time other non-Chinese students rely on stereotypes of Chinese students; they are very smart, study oriented, like to hang out only with other Chinese speakers, etc. They do not really break out of their own comfort zones to get to know these students

Student B:

感觉很新鲜，一切都和在国内的大学生活不太一样。饮食完全不一样，学校的活动也很丰富。我认为一开始想和美国学生和当地居民顺畅地交流很困难，因为英语口语和听力都不够好。

我在学校有时参加各种活动，认识了一些美国朋友，他们都很热情，他们也认为我是个友好有趣的人。

这在一开始到美国交朋友，并不容易。这还是因为自己的英语水平不好。但是随着时间的推移，英语能力的进步，和美国学生交流会容易一些，虽然有时候还是会有障碍。文化差异会有一些，但感觉也不是不能克服，比如到美国家庭吃饭，一般都是用刀叉，我开始会不习惯，但时间长了就会好些。在这边感觉美国学生很友善很开放，不会太拘泥于一些小细节，特别是男生，所以不会感到交往很难。但是毕竟还是有语言文化和观念的差异，深入地交往还是不易。

Student C:

Communicating with others was pretty difficult and that has not gotten much easier; but I am okay now with speaking with professors. To be honest I did not find really anything that was very easy when I first got here—everything was a challenge.

I am not very social with others. I had English roommates as a freshman and a sophomore but now I have a single and I prefer that. Almost all of the people I hang out with are Chinese and I only ever speak Chinese with them. I do not like to go out to events around campus, even then if I go; I have a Chinese friend with me.

- It took basically a year to get used to the academic system at Union. The social aspect, I am still not used to or comfortable with. A while ago I almost transferred back to China to study because I thought that it would be easier to find a job and I would

be able to do more with my studies and with my overall life but I decided against it. I have decided to stay at Union until I graduate but when I apply for graduate school I am definitely going to a large school in the city.

第二个主题 是中国人会说 英文可是不见得跟美国同学谈话，交朋友。比如说，中国学生来美国大学的时候，他们很想跟别的同学们聊天儿交朋友。可是，他们来 Union 的时候，美国大学生还没有到学校，所以这两三天他们只能跟别的国际学生聊天儿。另外，他们一般很累；从中国到美国的路程又慢又难。他们的飞机常常是十三、十四小时的，有的时候他们的飞机还要在别的国家停上几个小时。

于是他们最后到达 Union 大学的时候，只想睡觉、洗澡、吃饭什么的。他们不见得想用英文或者用心听大学行政人员说话。(一个行政人员也说新的国际学生太累了，所以她怕新的国际学生把很重要的信息忘了。)

Administrator B:

[Students] are pretty jetlagged when they first get to campus; and a lot of the important information that we convey to them is discussed as soon as they get here. It is maybe too much too soon for them in that sense. Not to mention that they are also during that time transitioning to the food and trying to acquaint themselves with other students. At that point, seeking comfort in other Chinese students just seems necessary. That might also be again, why they end up sticking together some of the time rather than branching out.

结果，中国国际学生因为要感觉很舒服，就跟别的中国人交朋友。另外，美国学生来 Union 大学的时候，他们想跟别的人交朋友，而且交得很快。我们中

国人常常不明白美国人说的普通话，另外，中国人和美国人都是很紧张，他们常常不想感觉不舒服，所以他们第一天不跟别的国际学生聊天儿，不交朋友。第二个星期以后，出去交朋友就越来越难。

Administrator A:

When they arrive for their government mandated orientation they want to know where all the other students are; they want to make sure that they are able to have the American experience and interact with domestic students. [However], when they arrive initially all they have for several days are the other international students. it is good in the sense that they can create a foundation but bad in the sense that it may make it harder for them to branch out later.

I always suggest that they do the outdoor pre-orientation as a way to get to know the domestic students, but it requires a lot of gear and when you are travelling from another country that can be a lot of extra preparation and items to pack. Even though I tell them that they do not need to necessarily pack all those extra items, or buy those items upon arrival (they can borrow for the outdoor club in some situations such as sleeping bags), it can be a bit of a deterrent. Although, over the past few years more and more incoming students have opted to participate in the pre-orientation.

不过，有的行政人员说 Union 大学的 pre-orientation 计划和 mini-terms 是非常好的交朋友的途径。那两个条件项目没有功课，大家在一起花时间花得很多。另外，学生人数比较少。说话感觉比较容易。还有，很多学生发现他们跟别的同学有差不多一样的爱好和兴趣。一般学生参与这些项目的时候，会觉得有好的经

验，交到了好朋友。不幸，因为中国国际学生旅行花了很长的时间，对 orientation—特别是外面的计划，对 pre-orientation—没有准备好。

Administrator A:

[In addition to pre-orientation], I also encourage participation in mini-terms; where students have more of a chance to just be themselves and there is not really as much of an academic element. But the mini-terms are not considered as part of the normal tuition and can be a bit expensive for many people, not just the international students.

Administrator B:

On mini-terms that Chinese students have attended, the group is pretty small and we are with each other 24/7 during that time. Many times Chinese students and American students will talk and realize they actually had a lot in common they had just never made the effort before to talk to one another.

I think that pre-orientation—like the mini-terms—is a great way for them to get out of their comfort zone and maybe make some English speaking friends. Pre-orientation is one of those great ways to make lasting friends pretty quickly and before school starts. I also know that for pre-orientation the outdoor activities option requires a lot of gear; that is not something that the international students can bring in addition to what they need in order to survive the term.

第三个主题是一个普遍的原因，中国国际学生跟别的中国国际学生交朋友，因为他们想念他们的家。大部分的中国国际学生说他们觉得美国的文化跟中国的文

化不一样。另外，在美国找地道的中国菜非常难，美国的中国菜不好吃，美国菜的味道很简单、没有味道、对你的身体不好，等等。同样，美国用英文上课，文科教育比较难，所以中国学生的英文水平并不高。中国国际学生下课时都觉得累坏了，一回到家，他们就想放松。参与大学校的晚会或活动说英文对他们来说太难了。

虽然在 Union 大学中国国际学生需要 T O E F L 分数，有的中国学生说英文有问题，有些学生的英文口语水平不高。每个来美国留学的学生得先考 TOEFFL: 英文口语、写作和阅读考试。如果学生听不懂老师说了什么，他们常常不想告诉他们的老师或者行政人员他们有问题。Union 没有 ESL（英文作为第二语言）的课，所以中国人想在 Union 学习需要很好的 TOEFFL 分数。所以有的时候老师看到有的中国学生有问题的时候他们要告诉大学的行政者，让大学的行政人员找到一个办法帮助中国学生。因为在中国文化里面，说你有一个问题是不好意思的事，所以学生怕丢面子。

Administrator A:

Out of the 30 international Chinese students that we get per year there are usually one or two that really struggle. A lot of that may be language proficiency; they understand mostly what is going on and being said around them but are really not able to communicate well for whatever reason. It can be general nerves, language proficiency, classroom cultural differences, etc. It really takes most of the first year to really adjust well to that type of situation. However, once they get used to how the class works and take their professors off the pedestal and are able to ask for help they do fine.

Those that really struggle are put on academic warning, if they are on academic warning for two terms we then send them home for a term with the option of returning.

Many of them do. And sometimes it is good to address homesickness or any other issues they were having while they have the opportunity to be home. A lot of the time, especially for first years, they are really not willing to open up and say what is going on with them.

Other schools have an ESL course on campus and I think that it can be a useful tool for those that are struggling. Here at Union we have a workshop run by Dean Wunderlich in which students can partake if they are having issues of any kind with language or want to work more with the language. This is an optional program and is not worth course credit. A lot of students do not want to admit that they need help or would like to go because it is almost seen as something to be ashamed of. I wish it wasn't like that. A lot of the time though, they will not come to me with any issues they are having, a lot of the time (especially in terms of academics) it is faculty that brings issues to my attention.

The writing center however, has gotten a lot better. In addition, the overall TOEFFL score for Union acceptance is 90. It varies from school to school but 90 is pretty high which in some ways is why we don't necessarily need an ESL course from a government perspective. And if the recruiters come across someone who has a borderline score like an 85 we conduct skype interviews with them and can admit them on the basis that their speaking skills are up to par based on those interviews.

Administrator B:

[There are] a couple of things [students are fearful of]: first, that their language skills weren't up to par with the other students; that either they are not being understood when they try to speak or that they have trouble understanding English speakers.

Student B:

我认为一开始想和美国学生和当地居民顺畅地交流很困难，因为英语口语和听力都不够好。这在一开始到美国交朋友，并不容易。这还是因为自己的英语水平不好。

Student C:

Communicating with others was pretty difficult and that has not gotten much easier; but I am okay now with speaking with professors. To be honest I did not find really anything that was very easy when I first got here—everything was a challenge. For example, I was always confused when people asked me “what’s up?” I never knew what that meant. When we were taught language it was much more formal than what you often see here. It is one of the things that makes me uncomfortable talking with American students.

别的有意思的话题

态度跟中国国际学生适应不适应有很大关系。大部分的中国国际学生说第一年在美国大学感觉不舒服，第一年以后，他们在美国大学适应得比较好（感觉舒服、

有朋友、可以跟他们的老师聊天儿、上课时可以说话，等等）。可是有些人说他们来美国两个星期以后，就感觉在美国大学很舒服（看附录#第七的问题）。

Administrator A:

I would say that it can be a bit hard; students really have to put themselves out there or make the first step when it comes with interacting with the domestic students. In addition, personality is huge.

中国大学没有兄弟会和联谊会，而且中国大学的晚会跟美国大学的晚会不一样。一个学生说，她不明白美国的晚会，可是她接受这个晚会是什么，可是她一般不去。有的活动似乎太奇怪，所以来自别的国家的国际学生都不去。

Administrator A:

Many students wish that others would ask more questions, many are very interested in sharing their knowledge and their culture with others but are just not sure how to make that first step or are too nervous. Some girls will join sororities it is interesting for them because it is unlike anything they have ever experienced before. Some have said that it can be overwhelming to get to know and be friends with so many people at once. But they usually adjust to it pretty well. Just as with any other student, Greek life is not for everyone. When joining and being a part of a sorority some also have said that after a while it is hard to find separateness. After living in the house with the Greek girls for example, they often leave the house. They still stay in contact with many of the sisters though, which is a good thing; that is a good experience for them.

Student A:

A lot of adjusting had to do with understanding that there were some things about American culture or American campus life that you weren't going to agree with or understand but continuing on anyway. Some things are just a matter of getting used to.

Administrator B:

I know that for a lot of students they come to campus and all they had to go on before coming here was what they saw on the campus website. Not that it isn't accurate, but the school is doing a lot to promote itself and appear welcoming online, it is difficult to then get a sense of what student life is truly like from just that once perspective. Unfortunately, due to some of the censorship in China, they do not have the option of going through social media like Facebook or Twitter to see what other students are doing or saying.

Student C:

I do not like to go out to events around campus, even then if I go; I have a Chinese friend with me.

有的中国国际学生也说他们在学校不能说英文，只有在上课的时候，才说英文（看附录 2 面试 5）。他们知道只用中文跟别的中国朋友说话，别的学生不会跟他们聊天儿。

Discussion

虽然大部分的中国留学生适应了美国生活，一部分看来在这方面没有问题。比如说，留学生 D 只是在来到 Union 以后的前两个星期感觉有一点儿不舒服，以后就感觉又舒服又安全，适应没问题。这个情况就要看中国留学生的背景和生活经验。这些会影响学生是否能适应美国大学的生活。有的来美国学习的人旅行得多，所以来新的地方不见得觉得很难。别的人，像留学生 C 在美国大学感觉很紧张。很有可能学生心里的对美国的想象跟现实美国的差距太大了，还有学生越来越难不同的照片适应成为越来越难。

另外，有的中国留学生觉得美国学生对中国的文化没有兴趣。一个原因是，因为中国留学生第一次跟美国学生聊天儿的时候，美国人问：“你在哪里出生的？”留学生告诉他们：“我是中国人，”美国学生说：“好的。”一般在中国，美国学生第一次跟中国人聊天儿，中国人会问他们很多问题。那是中国的文化习惯。所以中国留学生来美国大学以后，没有人问他们很多问题，他们会感觉有一点儿心酸。可是，美国学生没有错，也不是不客气，就是美国文化跟中国文化不一样。行政人员 C 说着这种态度就叫做“美国欢迎。”结果有的中国留学生决定跟别的中国留学生交朋友。大家想找跟他们有差不多一样的爱好的人交好朋友，跟朋友建立密切的关系，跟朋友互相联系，重视友谊。

一般的中国留学生会发现来美国以后跟美国学生说英文竟然很难。根据国际学生 C 和 D 的说法，在中国他们学习的是正式的英文，从来没有学会美国大学生说的俚语。

中国国际学生在什么情况下来美国学习？他们不见得是因为他们对美国文化有兴趣来美国。有的时候中国人的家庭决定让他们的孩子出国留学，接受最好的教

育。结果，有的中国国际学生感觉压力很大，因为他们的家庭期望孩子学习好，找到好的工作。孩子不能告诉他们的家庭他们的心事。

行政人员 A 和 C 都说中国留学生第一次来美国，要找舒话的房间、合适的菜、熟悉的人。如果这儿没有他们要的东西，他们就会感觉不舒服。留学生 C 说在美国，因为不是白种人，这是他第一次感觉是少数民族。这个感觉让他感觉很奇怪，他估计别的中国学生明白他的意思，知道他的背景。一般的美国白人学生不能理解他。

Conclusion

中国国际学生来美国留学的人数越来越多。有的中国国际学生来美国学习以前，没有想好美国大学的生活会怎么样。有的时候美国大学也没有想好中国国际学生的需要。中国留学生来美国大学的时候，大学会给他们几天的培训。那些很快适应美国大学生活的人没问题，别的留学生有很大的问题。为了了解他们的经验我访问了学生和行政人员，让他们谈了关于留学生的经验。

中国留学生跟美国学生怎么会花质量好的时间在一起

到美国来学习留学生 往往有困难，特别是在交美国朋友或者找老师问问题告诉他们听不懂的时候。参加美国活动或者跟美国学生聊天儿也会有困难。可是，也有一些办法来帮助中国国际学生。比如说，行政人员 A 和行政人员 B 都说 pre-orientation 和 mini-terms 都是好的活动，因为新的中国国际学生会在这些场合跟新

的美国学生聊天儿交流。学生在参加这些活动的时候没有功课，所以学生能花很多时间在一起；不需要在他们的卧室藏身了。

有的人说有些中国留学生不想费神跟说英文的人聊天儿。行政人员应该在中国留学生来大学的第一天告诉他们不要怕。中国国际学生说得越多 就越感觉舒服，他们的英语水平会提高越快。

有很多种活动

虽然 地道的中国产品在美国不容易找得到: 地道的中国菜、中文书、卡拉OK 等等， 学生容易想念中国文化以及家人，但是他们还可以跟别的说中文的人聊天儿、花时间。另一个答案是找中国超市或者做拿手菜，让留学生用大学的公共汽车去超市买东西。学校也可以在学生餐厅提供比较地道的中国菜。有的中国人想跟美国人分享他们的文化。有的学中文的学生对中国文化有兴趣—别的大学生也有兴趣—可是他们有担心，不知道该跟中国国际学生说什么。

另外一个问题是中国人也怕交美国朋友。一个原因是中国国际学生不自信。跟别的国家的学生聊天儿大部分的中国留学生感觉不舒服，。他们不想感觉不舒服，不想说英语时说错。行政人员 C 说大学需要跟大学的学生评议会一起工作，让百分之十的活动是国际学生会有兴趣的活动，这样他们就有可能跟别的学生交朋友。行政人员 C 也说钱很多的中国留学生不见得过得比较好；他们会多玩儿游戏、一起去吃饭、运动什么的。会所是适应大学生活的很好的地方，因为学生可以比较容易得到大学的信息。在伊利诺伊大学，中国留学生的会所有张报纸，用中文给中国留学生大学活动的信息；现在找到有意思的活动是方便的 (Illinois)。

一般来说，大学行政人员想让国际学生都拥有好的大学经验，没有各种问题。虽然中国留学生不见得时刻跟别的中国留学生聊天儿，行政人员好追逐 稳中求进，让中国国际学生感觉舒服，让他们多跟别的学生聊天儿。

帮助国际学生说英文说得更好

行政人员 A 也说 Union 大学没有 ESL 的课。到美国来学习需要高的 TOEFL 分数。但是，虽然有的中国留学生的分数高，他们的英文口语水平比较弱，这可能是为什么来大学的时候不想跟美国学生聊天儿的原因；在他们看来，美国学生说话的方式很奇怪，中国学生不明白他们，也不懂他们说的话。根据行政人员 A，中国留学生不想告诉她他们的问题。一般来说，行政人员等老师告诉行政人员他们的中国国际学生有问题，才跟中国学生见面。常常行政人员不能给中国国际学生帮助。结果，因为成绩不好，就得回家一个学期。（他们的考分提高了）。给学生提供 ESL 的课，对帮助中国国际学生提高分数似乎有用。

行政人员 C (不是 Union 的行政人员) 说每个大学都不一样：他的大学有 ESL 课，可是大部分的学生是研究生，因为大学觉得研究课比 ESL 课重要。国际学生 C 说他觉得美国大学课不太难，可是跟美国学生对话非常难或不舒服。另外，他问中国留学生对美国大学的生活是否在乎。留学生不想参加大学的活动，也没有什么可以做。只让他们去大学的活动，希望他们有一天感兴趣。

大学需要热情的行政人员

美国大学需要行政人员很热情:行政人员 C 说一个原因是美国人对他们的帮留学生的的工作不在乎。这个在有些大学，特别在小城市的比较小的大学是一个问题。如果行政人员不热情，他们就不见得想帮助新的中国留学生。中国国际学生会感觉到到行政人员不在乎，于是中国学生感觉他们不可能告诉这个行政人员他们的问题。这也是一个很大的问题，因为一般的中国留学生不喜欢告诉别人他们的心事或困难。他们连跟最好的朋友或者家庭的朋友，也不喜欢进这些。

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Appendix 1: Interview Questions

For students:

- 1) What was your first reaction upon coming to the United States?
- 2) What was it like for you when you first transitioned into campus life in the U.S; what were some things that you found either very easy or very difficult?
- 3) How do you think other students perceive you?
- 4) Is there anything that you think the school could have done to ease your transition?
- 5) Is there anything more you would have liked to have done before coming to the U.S that could have eased your transition?
- 6) Talk about what it is like for you to make English speaking friends. Has it difficult or easy? Are there cultural differences or similarities? Explain.
- 7) How long do you think it took you before you felt comfortable on campus? That is, until you were no longer in the transitional phase of "getting used" to being here?

For administrators :

- 1) What is the biggest concern international Chinese students approach you for upon their arrival on campus?
- 2) How do you think other students perceive the international students?
- 3) What were some of the difficulties the international Chinese students faced when starting school in the U.S if any?
- 4) Is there anything that you think the school could have done to ease their transition, or that students can be doing to better prepare themselves for college prior to arrival?
- 5) Based on your experience working with international Chinese students, do you think it is easy for them to make English speaking friend? Explain.

Appendix 2: Interviews

Interview 1: (Administrator A)

1) What is the biggest concern international Chinese students approach you for upon their arrival on campus?

Want to know about working on or off campus, getting a US driver's license, getting social security numbers.

When they arrive for their gov't mandated orientation they want to know where all the other students are; they want to make sure that they are able to have the American experience and interact with domestic students.

When they arrive initially all they have for several days are the other international students. It is good in the sense that they can create a foundation but bad in the sense that it may make it harder for them to branch out later.

I always suggest that they do the outdoor pre-orientation as a way to get to know the domestic students, but it requires a lot of gear and when you are travelling from another country that can be a lot of extra preparation and items to pack. Even though I tell them that they do not need to necessarily pack all those extra items, or buy those items upon arrival (they can borrow for the outdoor club in some situations such as sleeping bags), it can be a bit of a deterrent. Although, over the past few years more and more incoming students have opted to participate in the pre-orientation.

More so the girls than the boys.

I also encourage participation in mini-terms; where students have more of a chance to just be themselves and there is not really as much of an academic element. But the mini-terms are not considered as part of the normal tuition and can be a bit expensive for many people, not just the international students.

A lot of the time though, they will not come to me with any issues they are having, a lot of the time (especially in terms of academics) it is faculty that brings issues to my attention.

2) How do you think other student perceive the international Chinese students?

Not really sure a lot of the time, what I do for them a lot of the time is mostly help with immigration and visa type situations. I do not usually have the chance to really see them with other students.

But I what I do tend to notice is that it depends a lot on the openness of the international Chinese student.

I notice that the American students do not go out of their way to talk with the international Chinese students and I am not saying that it is right or wrong either way, that is just what seems to happen.

It really relies on the Chinese student then to take that first step at interacting with the domestic students.

Many students wish that others would ask more questions, many are very interested in sharing their knowledge and their culture with others but are just not sure how to make that first step or are too nervous.

Some girls will join sororities it is interesting for them because it is unlike anything they have ever experienced before. Some have said that it can be overwhelming

to get to know and be friends with so many people at once. But they usually adjust to it pretty well. Just as with any other student, Greek life is not for everyone.

When joining and being a part of a sorority some also have said that after a while it is hard to find separateness. After living in the house with the Greek girls for example, they often leave the house. They still stay in contact with many of the sisters though, which is a good thing; that is a good experience for them.

3) What were some of the difficulties the international Chinese students faced when starting school in the US if any?

Out of the 30 international Chinese students that we get per year there are usually one or two that really struggle. A lot of that may be language proficiency; they understand mostly what is going on and being said around them but are really not able to communicate well for whatever reason. It can be general nerves, language proficiency, classroom cultural differences, etc. It really takes most of the first year to really adjust well to that type of situation. However, once they get used to how the class works and take their professors off the pedestal and are able to ask for help they do fine.

Those that really struggle are put on academic warning, if they are on academic warning for two terms we then send them home for a term with the option of returning. Many of them do. And sometimes it is good to address homesickness or any other issues they were having while they have the opportunity to be home. A lot of the time, especially for first years, they are really not willing to open up and say what is going on with them.

Other schools have an ESL course on campus and I think that it can be a useful tool for those that are struggling. Here at Union we have a workshop run by Dean Wunderlich in which students can partake if they are having issues of any kind with language or want to work more with the language. This is an optional program and is not worth course credit. A lot of students do not want to admit that they need help or would like to go because it is almost seen as something to be ashamed of. I wish it wasn't like that.

The writing center however, has gotten a lot better. In addition, the overall TOEFFL score for Union acceptance is 90. It varies from school to school but 90 is pretty high which in some ways is why we don't necessarily need an ESL course from a government perspective. And if the recruiters come across someone who has a borderline score like an 85 we conduct skype interviews with them and can admit them on the basis that their speaking skills are up to par based on those interviews.

4) Is there anything that you think the school could have done to ease their transition, or that students can be doing to better prepare themselves for college prior to arrival?

I think that we should offer a more structured ESL program for course credit here at Union. I know that a lot of the time students who are struggling do not want to come forward and say that they are having a hard; most of the time it is faculty members that bring up to us that they think a student may be having a hard time understanding what is going on. With this class, faculty could recommend students in order to better their experience here and hopefully help them to better adjust and interact with students that are not just other Chinese students.

I would also like to encourage or have them seriously research health insurance in

the United States. Many of them do not realize how expensive a privatized health care system is. And although the Union health plan is good it does not cover things like dental or certain medications. That is why I would like to tell them all to fill all of the prescriptions that they need and to go to the dentist while they are still home because even minor trips to the doctor can cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars. And even if the student happens to come from a wealthy family these kinds of bills are shocking and no one really wants to have to pay them.

5) Based on your experience working with international Chinese students, do you think it is easy for them to make English speaking friends? Explain.

It is difficult to say from my perspective, I often really don't get to see that kind of interaction. But I would say that it can be a bit hard; students really have to put themselves out there or make the first step when it comes with interacting with the domestic students. In addition, personality is huge.

I find that the most successful students are the kind that are not afraid to make mistakes or to admit that they do not know a certain word in English. They are the ones that put themselves out there by attending events and trying to talk to people and are ok at having both Chinese and English friends. This one girl I am thinking of in particular would make friends in class and invite them to have lunch; she would then bring one of her Chinese friends come along and that was a good way for her to incorporate both sides. And not to mention that it was good for the other Chinese student who maybe was not as outgoing. Especially with the girls sometimes, American women can appear intimidating at times and learning how to approach them can be really difficult.

This is also why I think the pre-orientations that the school has each year are so important; students can use this experience as a common bond and will give them that something that they need to break the ice. I think the more we do programs like that the more Chinese students can get involved with domestic student life and the less intimidating it might seem. "Just being human together" is one of the best ways to feel comfortable here and "sharing those things that make us happy."

Also important when you consider the party scene here. If you come from a place that doesn't really have that sort of atmosphere it is important to show that there is something else in the school other than that type of social life.

Interview 2: (Student A)

1) What was your first reaction upon coming to the United States?

That is wasn't like what you see in Hollywood. I was thinking about New York City when I arrived but then I got to Schenectady. It was very different.

2) What was it like for you when you first transitioned into campus life in the United States, what were some things that you found either very easy or very difficult?

One of the things that I thought was pretty easy was only having three classes. Unlike other schools that have 5 or 6.

I had also studied in an international school before so I did not find the classes and the language teachers used overly difficult.

Also the way American students are around their boyfriend or girlfriends are very different. In China, if you want to spend the night with your boyfriend, you go to a hotel, here you just put a note on the door or lock the door. It very odd having to get used to that. I do not regret having a roommate, there were times though that I didn't like having one and times that I did.

3) How do you think other students perceive you?

For the most part, other students are pretty nice. Sometimes I feel as though they can be a little bit inconsiderate. Nothing too bad. One thing was that in China if you were a new or an international student and were having a problem or did not understand certain customs or where to find something, most people would stop and tell you what you had to do. That did not happen so much here.

4) Is there anything that you think the school could have done to help ease your transition?

There was an international orientation before all the other students got to campus. They told us a lot about cultural differences; things that Americans do that we might find strange or have difficulty with, like how in America you drink ice cold water, that is never something that you do in China. Basically, anything that the school could do to prepare you mentally for the beginning of classes.

I did see that there was a pre-orientation and I think I did do that, there were some other Chinese students that I went with as well, it was some sort of picnic with activities.

5) Is there anything more you would have liked to have done before coming to the United States that could have helped to ease your transition?

Although the international student orientation addresses a lot of things on cultural differences, I think the more you know the more you can prepare yourself. For example, how Americans like to drink ice cold water and in China you never really drink cold water. Also, central heating. You do not really have that in China as much and it can be very different. Sometimes it is just way too hot in the rooms.

I went to an international school before coming here so there were some things that I was familiar with. But I wish I had known more about the party life. Now I understand it and accept it but I still think it is very strange.

And language, there is always an issue when you start out but you work on it.

6) Talk about what it is like for you to make English speaking friends. Was it difficult or easy? Are there cultural differences or similarities? Explain.

It is very hard to just walk up to someone and introduce yourself. American students don't really have anything to necessarily gain by taking that first step so you have to be that person.

7) How long do you think it took you before you felt comfortable on campus? That is, until you were no longer in the transitional phase of "getting used" to being here?

It really took about one year for me to really adjust to being here. Initially, I thought I would only take a couple of months.

A lot of adjusting had to do with understanding that there were some things about American culture or American campus life that you weren't going to agree with or understand but continuing on anyway. Some things are just a matter of getting used to.

Interview 3: (Administrator B)

1) What is the biggest concern international Chinese students approach you about upon their arrival on campus?

A couple of things: first that their language skills weren't up to par with the other students; that either they are not being understood when they try to speak or that they have trouble understanding English speakers. The other thing I think is a concern is not being able to find those items or places around them that remind them of home, especially authentic Chinese food. When they are this far from home and they get homesick I imagine it can be pretty difficult to alleviate that feeling. That may also be a big reason why they tend to stick together.

2) How do you think other students perceive the international students?

I think a lot of the time other non-Chinese students rely on stereotypes of Chinese students; they are very smart, study oriented, like to hang out only with other Chinese speakers, etc. They do not really break out of their own comfort zones to get to know these students. On mini-terms that Chinese students have attended, the group is pretty small and we are with each other 24/7 during that time. Many times Chinese students and American students will talk and realize they actually had a lot in common they had just never made the effort before to talk to one another. But I think in general even though they aren't really talking to each other they are pretty courteous, I have never really seen students being outright hostile towards Chinese students.

3) What were some of the difficulties the international Chinese students faced when starting school in the United States if any?

I know that for a lot of students they come to campus and all they had to go on before coming here was what they saw on the campus website. Not that it isn't accurate, but the school is doing a lot to promote itself and appear welcoming online, it is difficult to then get a sense of what student life is truly like from just that once perspective. Unfortunately, due to some of the censorship in China, they do not have the option of going through social media like Facebook or Twitter to see what other students are doing or saying.

In addition, they are pretty jetlagged when they first get to campus; and a lot of the important information that we convey to them is discussed as soon as they get here. It is maybe too much too soon for them in that sense. Not to mention that they are also during that time transitioning to the food and trying to acquaint themselves with other students. At that point, seeking comfort in other Chinese students just seems necessary. That might also be again, why they end up sticking together some of the time rather than branching out.

4) Is there anything that you think the school could have done to ease their transition, or that students can be doing to better prepare themselves for college prior to arrival?

I think it would help to get the international Chinese students here earlier so that they have a day or so to adjust before we start to really load them up with information. I know that in terms of housing this is an issue, but ideally we could make that happen. And, if they have more of a chance to rest then they can participate in the pre-orientation with the other incoming freshmen. I think that pre-orientation—like the mini-terms—is a great way for them to get out of their comfort zone and maybe make some English speaking friends. Pre-orientation is one of those great ways to make lasting friends pretty quickly and before school starts. I also know that for pre-orientation the outdoor activities option requires a lot of gear; that is not something that the international students can bring in addition to what they need in order to survive the term.

Also, if there was more done with the student blogs posted on the Union website it could maybe give the international Chinese students more access to what the college experience is like here at Union. I think that could be really helpful as they prepare to study abroad.

5) Based on your experience working with international Chinese students, do you think it is easy for them to make English speaking friends? Explain.

I think that it can be pretty difficult for the incoming international students to make English friends here. Unless they attend and participate in clubs around campus where they get to interact with other English speakers it can definitely be a challenge. It is another reason why the mini-terms are so great because it really forces people's internal barriers to come down and it can really be a transformative experience for everyone not just the international Chinese students. But in general I think this campus will allow you not to meet people who are unlike you.

Interview 4: (Student B, Graduate Student)

1) What was your first reaction upon coming to the United States?

我第一次来到美国，是坐飞机到洛杉矶机场，然后转机。在等待转机的过程中，我在周围的商场中逛了逛。让我的感觉这是个很漂亮很繁华的大城市。

2) What was it like for you when you first transitioned into campus life in the U.S; what were some things that you found either very easy or very difficult?

感觉很新鲜，一切都和在國內的大学生活不太一样。饮食完全不一样，学校的活动也很丰富。我认为一开始想和美国学生和当地居民顺畅地交流很困难，因为英语口语和听力都不够好。

3) How do you think other students perceive you?

美国学生会把我当成一个外国学生对待，但是如果你遇到一些问题，不管是学习上还是生活上，他们会非常耐心地解释和帮助我，不会因为我英语表达不清楚而不耐烦。我在学校有时参加各种活动，认识了一些美国朋友，他们都很热情，他们也认为我是个友好有趣的人。

4) Is there anything that you think the school could have done to ease your transition?

我在学校有时参加派对或者健身活动，认识了一些美国朋友。在交流的过程中，我了解了一些美国和中国的文化和观念上的差异。在学校的食堂和当地西餐厅就餐让我慢慢熟悉了西餐，虽然我还是不能完全接受。我也认为学校应该为国际生多组织些和当地学生的交流活动，来加快我们在学校的适应和融合。

5) Is there anything more you would have liked to have done before coming to the U.S that could have eased your transition?

在到美国之前，我经常看和美国有关的新闻，了解发生在美国的时事。有时我也会看美国的大片来感受美国的文化，这也会对我尽快适应美国生活有帮助。我本来并不会怎么做饭，到美国来之前我也学习了一点烹饪的认识，对自己在这里做饭有所帮助。

6) Talk about what it is like for you to make English speaking friends. Has it difficult or easy? Are there cultural differences or similarities? Explain.

这在一开始到美国交朋友，并不容易。这还是因为自己的英语水平不好。但是随着时间的推移，英语能力的进步，和美国学生交流会容易一些，虽然有时候还是会有障碍。文化差异会有一些，但感觉也不是不能克服，比如到美国家庭吃饭，一般都是用刀叉，我开始会不习惯，但时间长了就会好些。在这边感觉美国学生很友善很开放，不会太拘泥于一些小细节，特别是男生，所以不会感到交往很难。但是毕竟还是有语言文化和观念的差异，深入地交往还是不易。

7) How long do you think it took you before you felt comfortable on campus? That is, until you were no longer in the transitional phase of "getting used" to being here?

我大概花了一个学期来适应在美国学校的生活，现在感觉比较习惯了。但说实在的，我然在处在习惯适应的过程中，比如说美国的饮食，你很难一下就习惯，我有时候还是自己做中餐吃。而且文化和观念的差异，和美国学生和导师的深层交流，和当地人做朋友，这都需要很长时间来适应。

Interview 5: (Student C)

1) What was your first reaction upon coming to the United States?

I came the United States for the first time my freshman year of High School and it was very different than life in China. I wasn't used to seeing so many white people; being in a situation where I was the minority. Then the summer before I came to Union I visited New York City and it was this big bustling place; I really liked it there.

2) What was it like for you when you first transitioned into campus life in the U.S; what were some things that you found either very easy or very difficult?

It was pretty difficult to find food that I liked. Communicating with others was pretty difficult and that has not gotten much easier; but I am okay now with speaking with professors. To be honest I did not find really anything that was very easy when I first got here—everything was a challenge.

3) How do you think other students perceive you?

I am not very sure, I am not very social with others. I had English roommates as a freshman and a sophomore but now I have a single and I prefer that. Almost all of the people I hang out with are Chinese and I only ever speak Chinese with them. I do not like to go out to events around campus, even then if I go; I have a Chinese friend with me.

4) Is there anything that you think the school could have done to ease your transition?

If they had gone over some more cultural differences with us when we got here. For example, I was always confused when people asked me “what’s up?” I never knew what that meant. When we were taught language it was much more formal than what you often see here. It is one of the things that makes me uncomfortable talking with American students.

5) Is there anything more you would have liked to have done before coming to the U.S that could have eased your transition?

Some more practice with informal speaking or common slang phrases that American students use. Maybe an English speaking pen pal or something like that.

6) Talk about what it is like for you to make English speaking friends. Has it difficult or easy? Are there cultural differences or similarities? Explain.

I still speak mostly Chinese, and I really only talk English with the professors or if there is just no other way to communicate than with English.

7) How long do you think it took you before you felt comfortable on campus? That is, until you were no longer in the transitional phase of "getting used" to being here?

It took basically a year to get used to the academic system at Union. The social aspect, I am still not used to or comfortable with. A while ago I almost transferred back to China to study because I thought that it would be easier to find a job and I would be able to do more with my studies and with my overall life but I decided against it. I also thought about transferring to a larger University in a big city because I prefer the city lifestyle; here is pretty rural. I have decided to stay at Union until I graduate but when I apply for graduate school I am definitely going to a large school in the city.

Interview 6: (Student D)

1) What was your first reaction upon coming to the United States?

I reacted better than I thought. Originally I thought there would be a lot of guns or gun violations; it was a lot more peaceful than I thought.

2) What was it like for you when you first transitioned into campus life in the U.S; what were some things that you found either very easy or very difficult?

There was nothing that was largely difficult; I thought the weather was pretty good. I really liked the architecture. In terms of classes the social sciences were pretty difficult, the English was pretty difficult while the math and the science I thought were pretty easy.

What I thought was pretty difficult was that even if you can speak English you cannot necessarily communicate because of the difference in culture; there is something about it that makes it harder to speak.

3) *How do you think other students perceive you?*

Ok, pretty nice for the most part. I don't think that is always the case at other schools.

4) *Is there anything that you think the school could have done to ease your transition?*

More trips to Walmart, I needed a lot of stuff when I first got here.

5) *Is there anything more you would have liked to have done before coming to the U.S that could have eased your transition?*

I liked the orientation that I had before I came to the United States. We had a discussion about certain cultural differences, I did not think they gave too much or too little information.

6) *Talk about what it is like for you to make English speaking friends. Has it difficult or easy? Are there cultural differences or similarities? Explain.*

I lived in Davidson my freshman year. Everyone was pretty friendly and close to each other so I had no real issue; I still keep in contact with a few of them. Also, when I had issues with vocabulary my roommate would clear them up for me. Slang is also pretty difficult.

7) *How long do you think it took you before you felt comfortable on campus? That is, until you were no longer in the transitional phase of "getting used" to being here?*

It took me a couple of weeks to adjust to life on campus. I travel a lot so I am used to having to adapt to new situations. The only thing that really took some time was the food; the food is really bad. Also on my first day my class was cancelled and I did not know it had been switched to a different section. I missed the first class on accident and I did not like that because I feel the first class is pretty important.

Interview 7: (Administrator C)

I want to start off by saying a couple of things, from the description that you gave me of the purpose of your study is to see if the Chinese international students and administrators are on the same page when it comes to addressing all that is happening and all that needs to be done when an international Chinese student comes to the United States. I think for the most part they are; what really affects international students and their experiences studying in the U.S can have a lot to do with the budget and politics that exist within the school itself. It comes down to what needs to be done versus what can be done in the eyes of the school.

Another thing is that there are two groups of students: you have the graduate students and the undergraduate students. They represent two different generations and levels of maturity and that can greatly affect their experience here on campus. The

graduate students at this point in their lives have certain ingrained habits and learning behaviors that the younger generation may not necessarily share.

Lastly, you have to understand that a student's previous schooling and their backgrounds can vary a lot just like in the United States and as a result so does learning ability. This is noticeable more so in less well-known schools as opposed to Harvard or Berkeley, or Union.

1) What is the biggest concern international Chinese students approach you for upon their arrival on campus?

Understand where a Chinese student is from makes a big difference in how you approach finding a solution to their concerns; not all places in China are the same; as a result determine the concerns of the "average" Chinese student can become difficult. When you arrive for the first time in the U.S your first concern is finding a way to adapt and go about doing what you need to do, hopefully there are people around you are able to help you. But what can really differ across schools is the passion of these people who are there to help. This can make a huge difference in the learning experience for Chinese students more so than any concern they may have.

2) How do you think other students perceive the international students?

International students are perceived differently depending on where they are from. Students from China are all perceived as wanting to stick together and so they are left alone. European students have a much easier time integrating. When I ask the Chinese students that I know what they think about this they agree that they are a group. I would say that of a group of twenty students coming in from China, you have two that will make a point to talk with American students and integrate into the broader campus culture. The other eighteen will stick together; a lot of that I think is the language barrier and lower levels of confidence in their speaking abilities. Many just want to stick to the educational aspect of their stay here and leave out the social aspect in regards to American students.

3) What were some of the difficulties the international Chinese students faced when starting school in the U.S if any?

There are of course difficulties. Again, keeping in mind their many different backgrounds and academic levels; some are able to adapt and integrate faster than others. I will say that in general their most noticeable difficulties are related to the language. When they are in the classroom and they have to give an oral presentation, if they do not feel as polished in their language skills as they would like this is a huge problem in their eyes. They often question themselves or what they know about themselves and the world around them because they suddenly do not know how to describe these things or to make a point. But I think that overall this is a good age to be able to adjust; not just Chinese students but American students as well. It is all in how they are able to react in new situations, they must think actively about how to learn and adjust their learning behavior.

4) Is there anything that you think the school could have done to ease their transition, or that students can be doing to better prepare themselves for college prior to arrival?

You have to keep in mind that nowadays schools are a business operation. They can even be considered a small government onto themselves with a president,

administrators, a treasurer, teachers, and campus safety. So what school end up doing with their international students is not just a matter of what needs to be done but also a matter of budget and what the particular politics of the school will and will not allow.

However, integration through participation in activities is the best way to encourage students to integrate. Some schools promote students to organize into a club to promote socializing. It is something that does not have to cost a lot of money. I also think that schools administration should work with the student council in order to ensure that international students are being included. For example, having a minimum of 10% of all activities be aimed at international students or activities that are geared towards international students; activities that they enjoy doing as part of their own cultures. On holidays having events geared towards international students so that they can have that cultural experience.

This will also help to bring out those that are not necessarily anti-social but do not like to go out much. This could be social gatherings, picnics, games, trips, shopping, cooking, or sports. Having an organization or a club that can coordinate is helpful. About two years ago we had a group that was really organized and outgoing and it was great for that group of students. This year the students are much less motivated.

When I was in a Chinese student club in college we would organize and would have things like ping pong tournaments and we would invite the Chinese clubs from many different colleges and it would be wonderful. Though there were mostly only Chinese students at this type of event. But that is a large school organizing these events. Small schools like the one down the street do not have that kind of budget or neighboring schools in which to host activities. When that happens it is more on the students to find something to do or hope that the school will compensate in some way. It is all about building bridges, and that is what I try to do with these kids so that they know they have someone to come to when they need advice or help.

In addition, this school's ESL program does not give the students as much time to work as other colleges. It is more focused on getting the international students through the graduate programs they are enrolled in.

I am also thinking that some of what makes it hard to make friends is that the American welcome is not the same as the Chinese welcome. When a Chinese student arrives in the U.S an American student will ask them where they are from, when they say they are from China they will say "Oh, how cool," and that is the end of the conversation. When Chinese students in China see international students they tend to ask a lot more questions and that is what they are expecting when they arrive her but that is not the case. It is a cultural thing, neither is right or wrong they are just different.

It also has a lot to do with money, for the most part these students are pretty well off financially. When I took them skiing for the first time on the mountain, some of them were so thrilled by the experience and about eight or nine of them enjoyed themselves so much that they went and bought all the equipment that they needed (which is over \$900) and it was no problem. But you also see these students enjoying the American pastime and embracing the American culture...with other Chinese students. When they were skiing they did not ski with Americans they only skied in groups of Chinese students.

5) Based on your experience working with international Chinese students, do you think it is easy for them to make English speaking friend? Explain.

Yes, it could be easy if they increase their confidence. I think that the school should house international Chinese students with American students; and maybe give students an incentive to do so. This sort of situation is good for both the international Chinese students and the American students as it will help the Chinese students adapt and will increase their learning curve. You can also pair up people according to their majors because I think that would also be helpful. It will all promote cultural exchange and it will be like a tutorial for the international Chinese students on culture and language. So these students are also learning a lot from each other just from being able to interact with other groups of Chinese peoples. Even when it is spring break and they travel around the U.S and visit other Chinese friends at different schools, they are experiencing the culture with other international Chinese students.

I think that this will be helpful also because it is not necessarily conventional; one of the professors on the graduate level had a conventional approach for several years and told me once that he had no idea how any of the students had passed the TOEFL as they did not seem to be motivated or learning anything that he was teaching. But when he started bringing the students out to eat or out shopping and talking with them about things that they were interested in, their learning sped up; they seemed to learn twice as fast as they had before. It was as though they were trying to memorize a textbook on organic chemistry; they can do it, but they aren't retaining the information.

Another thing to keep in mind is that not all Chinese are the same: you have probably noticed in your school that there are groups of Chinese students that do not really associate with one another. I have found when I have dinner parties for the students that the undergraduates and the students that do not need to take an ESL class separate themselves from the graduate students and those that are in the ESL program. In addition, there is a huge difference between students from Taiwan, Hong Kong, even north and south ends of China; they might as well all be different countries. They may share a language but their customs, beliefs, dialects, and overall cultures can be very different.