International students face a diverse set of challenges when they arrive on campus, including language barriers, understanding a new culture and making friends with American students.

Muyao Shen, a junior from China studying journalism, and Massey Pierce, a recent graduate from Cincinnati, Ohio, created a video that enabled international and domestic students to share the experiences they have had while making friends with someone from a different culture.

The video offers an opportunity to learn about the social hardships international students face when they arrive on campus. Students admitted that simple issues like enjoying different musical artists, or practicing different religions can make it more challenging to find common interests that can lead to friendship.

Shen said her American friends often ask questions about other international students’ behavior. Domestic students wonder why international students are so quiet, and why they don’t understand common phrases like “let’s hang out.”

“I feel like there is a gap between international and domestic students. I am only one person. I can't explain to everyone so, with videos like this, I hope people can understand each other more and more,” said Shen.

Both Shen and Pierce think their video will help bridge the gap between international and domestic students.

“There really aren't many opportunities to be in the diverse community that Ohio State has to offer and I think people need to take advantage of that while they can and learn from each other,” said Pierce.

The two will continue to share this video on campus, and Shen plans to start working on additional videos this summer focused on other issues affecting international students.

Global Engagement at the Office of International Affairs promotes and facilitates cross-cultural understanding and relationships through programming, events and student leadership opportunities. Visit oia.osu.edu to learn more about upcoming events with Global Engagement.