

equals/peers. You will definitely be the expert on some specific things, and your match will be an expert on other things, but the goal is for this to be a learning process for both of you. The following would therefore be important as you consider this new friendship:

- Respect your match's personality, wishes, culture, etc. You may not understand the differences, but it is important to retain an attitude of respect.
- Be patient in your interactions, especially when there is the potential for miscommunication or misunderstanding.
- Display a genuine desire to learn and you will find that your friendship will grow significantly.
- Be careful to avoid presumptions about your match's culture, country, or background.

The OISS will also be working to facilitate and promote what you are doing wherever possible. We look forward to working with you in the coming year!

Getting Involved



Jesus said in Matthew 25:40, "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it to Me" (MKJV).

Your involvement in this ministry to international students will not only be a blessing to them, but it will enlarge your outlook and help expand your understanding of other nations and their cultures.

If you would like to be involved in this program, application forms are now available on the OISS website at www.regent.edu/oiss. You can print, complete, and bring your application form to the OISS in the Student Center, Suite 201, or you can fax your application form to us at 757-352-4100. If you have any other questions, please feel free to call or send an email. OISS contact information is available on the next page.

Thank you and God bless you as you engage in this cultural exchange ministry to international students.

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Regent University
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I-Connect: Building Bridges... ...Making Friends

Settling into a new place is an exciting and challenging task when you are simply moving from one community to another. Even when the two communities are similar, building ties includes moments of great joy and periods of frustration.



When this relocation occurs across international borders, the challenge is even more complicated and exciting. International students come to the U.S. from backgrounds as varied as the countries they come from. Their cultures, experiences, worldviews, and so on, will sometimes be quite different from the cultures and worldviews they will encounter here in the United States.

I-Connect is a new program offered by the Office of International Student Services (OISS). One goal of this program is to make it possible for incoming students to transit very smoothly into life in the U. S. and in the Regent community. Another goal is to provide the Regent University student community with opportunities for cultural exchange.

About New International Students

International students just arriving in the U.S. share some of the most basic needs of everyone who has to move to a new place, but they also have some unique needs. Some of these include:

- A possible airport pick-up at initial arrival
- Cultural adjustment
- Overcoming shopping challenges and decisions
- Finding the right church
- Meals (cooking at home, ordering take out, etc.)



The needs of these new students will vary and some students may need more help than others, but they could all benefit from fellowship and support. On the other hand, these students will have many gifts, talents, cultural perspectives, worldviews, languages, lifestyles, and traditions to share. These attributes will greatly enrich the cultural repertoire of anyone with a desire to learn.

Where Do You fit In?

The OISS believes you have something valuable to offer students just arriving in the U.S. Your experience, knowledge, and understanding of life in the U.S. makes you a valuable resource to new international students. Through the I-Connect program, the OISS would like to give you this opportunity to help incoming international students.

While this will be an opportunity to serve these new students, it will also be an opportunity for you to expand your knowledge of another culture. The intention of the OISS is that this program be a two-way street between you and the international student with whom you are matched. We believe that international students also have something valuable to offer, and your interaction with them will enrich you, not just in terms of what you will learn, but also in terms of the friendships you will be able to build. As Regent University strives to pursue global competence for everyone connected to the school, you will have a head-start through your direct connection with someone from another culture!



Expectations and Guidelines

First 2-3 weeks of the semester—As everyone hustles and bumbles through the first few weeks of the semester, new international students are likely to feel overwhelmed and alone as they also try to navigate through the twists and turns of a new culture.

You could assist in the following ways:

- Offer to join the student for meals
- Help make sure their basic needs are being met
- Introduce them to your church
- Introduce them to your friends

First semester—We want to reiterate that this program is meant for both parties to be able to gain something out of the new relationships you will be building. Therefore, we'd like to recommend the following:

1. Make it a point to have at least one meal together regularly. We leave you the discretion to decide how regularly you want to do this, but we hope that you do this at least once a month.
2. Do at least 2 social things together each month, for example:
 - Invite them to a party
 - Go to see a movie together
 - Go for a walk or jog together
 - Attend a campus event together
 - Go to church or chapel together

The OISS would like for this process to be as natural as possible for you. We are not asking for you to change your life or habits to accommodate your match. We simply ask that you think to include your match in some of the things you are already doing. As you get to know each other, we are quite confident that the cultural exchange will occur naturally.

Helpful tips for building lasting connections—OISS has specifically avoided mentor/mentee language because we prefer for your interaction with these new students to be an interaction of