

**ACCULTURATION – AMERICAN DREAM: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS’
NIGHTMARE**

A Documentary Play

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May 3, 2023

Voiceover 1 of statistics of the number of international students to the US each year

On the screen a video is played titled “Na Uncle Sam” by Ukairo

Prologue – The Homeland, Where It All Begins

The following words are projected in the screen: “The struggles of international students don’t start when we get to the US. It starts from our home countries.”

On screen we see a video of students reenacting moments in the line at the US embassy. The following dialogue will be performed in this video:

Student 1: *To get into the US the process is very complex.*

Student 2: *Stressful!*

Student 3: *And expensive!*

Student 1: *Before you even pay your tuition fee you already pay a quarter or more of that tuition amount on paperwork and procedures to get to the US.*

Student 3: *From the required WES credential evaluation process which is horribly expensive!*

Student 2: *That’s my parents’ 2–3-month salary back home. Not to mention the US visa application process*

Student 3: *Trust me like I joke about this. But even if you want to be the Prime Minister of my country. You don't have to do that much paperwork, because the amount of paperwork you have to do to come to the US.*

Student 2: *It's horrendous.*

Student 1: *It’s just stressful.*

Student 2: *You have to get to the Embassy at like 5 am in the morning, because if you get there later than that, you will do your interview very late! And stay outside in the sun!*

Student 1: *And then we usually have issues with getting dates. It is not easy to get a date.*

Student 3: *But that is not even the issue.*

Student 2: *The SEVIS fee is \$350 USD. And the Visa fee is \$160 USD. But when you convert it to some of our home country currency that’s a lot of money.*

Student 1: That's like close to 300 and something 1,000 naira in Nigerian currency. When you calculate everything, you already paid close to 500,000. Naira.

Student 3: After paying so much you would expect that Okay, when I get to the Embassy, they should at least look through your documents and put you through.

Student 1: But even when you have a partial or fully funded scholarship. You have to show them proof of bank statements covering your tuition.

Student 2: You have to explain to them.

Student 3: You have to convince them.

Student 1: You have to show them that you can afford or finance yourself when you reach the US.

Student 2: If you don't portray that, then they are not going to grant you the visa.

Student 3: They will reject you.

Student 2: And if they deny you 3 times you have to pay your visa fee three times over.

Student 1: And most people will tell you oh this is my third attempt.

Student 3: It is my second attempt.

Student 2: It is my fourth attempt.

Student 1: You will see people who say it was my sixth attempt, my seventh attempt!

Student 3: You have to keep paying. You have to keep paying.

Student 2: And of course, we see a lot of people crying at the Embassy asking what else they want? That they have tried their best.

Student 1: Even if you paid your tuition and you want to start school in the next 2 weeks, maybe you will lose your teaching assistant position and the full scholarship expires if you don't start.

Student 3: They don't care!

All: They don't care

Student 1: Getting your visa approved is like a miracle for some people.

Student 2: So just imagine what an individual has to go through, applying like 2, 3 times.

Student 3: *Finally getting your visa approved.*

Students 1: *Then you get to the all-mighty United States of America, and you can't get a good job even on campus.*

All: *The frustration continues...*

Part One – The Arrival

“Honeymoon Stage” is projected on the screen. International students are entering the stage one after the other with their suitcases. They have arrived. They enter with great excitement. When they are not talking, they are unpacking and setting up their respective tables on stage.

Student 1: 7,760 miles from Nepal

Student 2: 6,993 miles from China

Student 3: 5,379 miles from Russia

Student 2: 4,697 miles from Belgium

Student 1: 1,960 miles from Jamaica

Student 3: Thousands of miles from all over the world

All: *(Draping self with the US flag)* To land here in the great United States of America!!

Student 2: It felt fancy coming to the US.

Student 1: I always dreamt of the big city life, socializing, meeting, and going out with friends!

Student 3: I think I had too high of an expectation. I think everything would be so good!

Student 1: And everyone would be nice. And we were gonna go partying.

Student 2: I think it was going to be like the typical Hollywood movies!

Student 1: It was very exciting!

Student 3: *Pause* At first.

Student 2: But the US was the best option!

Student 3: In my country, for students like me, the options are to either go into computer science. You do engineering. You either become a doctor or you go to the US. That's like the best option

you can come up with. You're on the track to being successful, you know. That's like the conventional way of determining who is successful or not.

Student 1: I chose it because I want to be a journalist, and I've always been adventurous, and I want to go out! Coming from a small city, a small town, and then because I think we know, like we're not the best, so we always want to see what's the best, and then the US is considered as the best.

Student 3: For me, you understand that you don't have many options in jobs, because the only good money you can make is in IT, or if you're a dentist, but that's not for me. I mean the industries, there is not a big option, you know, to choose from. Before I didn't know a thing about the US. I wanted to study in Sweden, but then I realized, after working in international business, that the US, that's the center of business. And as far as I'm going to study marketing, I think that the best education is here in the US. That's why, I decided to look only for programs in the US. Because it's simply the best

Student 2: The field back home is very small, so I know I'm not getting the job that I want. I feel like people there, they don't want you to follow your dreams too much, because then you're doing something that's out of the norm. Everyone needs to like stay in that little box of having a nine to five, having kids and a house, and everyone follows that. But I really didn't want to do that. So, I did my bachelors in journalism and basically the whole field it's kind of like owned by two companies. And if you don't get a job with those two companies you won't get a job in journalism at all. The chances of getting into that are very, very tiny. But yeah, the publishing industry in the US was the biggest!

All: The US was the best option!

We hear "The Best" by Tina Turner

Video of different international students stating their names and the country they are from.

Part Two – Language Barrier

"Culture Shock" is projected on the screen. Student 2 enters continuing from the video to introduce themselves and tell where they are from. He enters wearing a beanie and scarf. The scarf is covering his mouth. He slowly unveils it.

Student 2: I am __ and I am from __. It was very exciting, but also very unexpected. I have learned English all my life. But American English is totally different. The spelling is different and not to mention the accent. I realized I didn't understand anything they're saying because of the accent. And then the speed of how they talk, it is too fast, and I would have to watch people, and how their tongue works very carefully. And so, I didn't feel comfortable, and confident speaking. Because I had a very thick accent, and no one would really understand me. I get nervous about it,

or I don't know. I just feel like sometimes it's like embarrassing a little bit, that you don't speak like everybody else, and they can immediately see that you are different. Once I start talking, they know that I'm not from here. I also think something that makes me insecure a lot, is that I often think people think I'm stupid because like if I can't find the right word, or like I don't pronounce something their way, or like, have an American accent, and it's like I must seem like I'm illiterate or something. Especially when someone like brings up your accent or the way you pronounce something, and like kind of mocking you. Or when a classmate makes a mistake and refers to your English as unintelligible because they don't understand your culture.

Voiceover 2 of statistics of the number of international students to the US each year

Part Three – Missing Home, The Pain of Leaving

Students are seen entering the stage with backpacks on. They are sad. They move to their respective space on stage and relax. The song "I Miss Home" is played.

Student 1: I really miss home.

Student 3: I've been dreaming about home very, very often lately.

Student 2: My hometown is called Eternal Spring City

Student 1: I'm from the land of wood and water.

Student 2: We only have one season. It's spring. It's like always growing all the time. The weather is always nice.

Student 1: A tropical island that is warm all year round.

Student 3: It has a rich, rich culture.

Student 2: I love my home city because it's very beautiful, you know. Every time you walk in the city center you enjoy looking at those architectures.

Student 3: Oh yes, the architecture, I miss the architecture because my hometown is a historical town. So, all the architecture is very old and ancient and when I think about that. I feel like that's a part of my identity. Feels like a part of me is missing. *They sigh.*

Student 1: Life wasn't bad back home if I'm being honest.

Student 3: Before this I had five years of experience. I already worked in IT Sales.

Student 1: I worked 5 years as a teacher.

Student 3: And before that my first education was in intercultural communication, which I think is also helpful, because I not only studied languages there, but also, you know, try to understand the differences between the cultures and I like that topic.

Student 2: I had a relatively stable life, you know, childhood, very, very simple upbringing. My parents, they're not rich like, by any means. Although, I did have sort of like privilege, because we have a caste system back home. So that's why I had certain privileges that came with it. I went to a private school that was amazing. I also have a little brother, who is also very smart. He goes to NYU Abu Dhabi right now.

Student 3: It's hard, so hard to be far away from your family, when you're so close-knit. Just try to understand the baggage we're carrying being here. The pain. The things we're losing. The people and the things we have to leave behind for coming here. The sacrifices I was willing to make to actualize my dream that was burning inside of me. Only because we want better. We want opportunities. I know students who resigned from their tenured job, gave up their apartment, spent all their savings, gave away most of the things just to come here. I'm very close to my family, and we have such a strong bond. But right now, I'm forced to live here, far away from them to study in the U.S. Where I am from, we don't live separately for a long time, because family is all we can rely on. We always decide to stay near each other, if not the same apartment, at least the same neighborhood. It's my first time living abroad, and it's the hardest part. I get homesick often. I cry. Not once, I cry regularly. And especially, when it rains. It's so hard!

Part Four – Relationships and Interactions

Phone rings. Students answer and talk to their family or friends over video call. Pictures are shown on screen of family members.

Student 1: Hey guys!

Student 2: Hey Cousin

Student 3: Hey mom! Hey dad!

Student 2: I'm okay, first three months!

Student 1: Yeah, I'm eating!

Student 3: And drinking iced coffee!

Student 2: Hey, this is kind of funny. Americans drink cold water all the time. Even in the winter they drink water with ice. Even when outside it's like snowing they just drink cold water and they add ice, and they eat a lot of cold food, and they eat Pizza all the time. Whenever you go to the

parties there's always pizza and everything is such big portions. When you go to like McDonalds, and when you ask for coke. It's like this big, back home it's like very tiny.

Student 3: The worst part is going to a supermarket and trying to find things that are similar to things back home and what you like to eat. But not able to find things that are equally as good. So that's like a real struggle because it's like all bagels. I'm like, where's the good bread? *Pause* Everything is so different.

Student 1: It is all a big change.

Student 3: I feel a little bit lonely.

Student 2: I don't know, I feel like everyone is in their own world.

Student 1: Like it's very individualistic.

Student 2: Tight knit

Student 3: Selfish

Student 1: I am just confused.

Student 2: Everyone just seems to be so fake. I feel like they don't really care about other people or what they are doing.

Student 1: They see you and ask hey, how are you? Or what's up? And I'm ready to talk and have a whole conversation, but they don't really want to know, that's just how they greet you! They continue walking and I'm like. Oh uh, Bye!

Student 3: It seems so rude to me. I am confused why some people would be nice to me, but not kind, you know.

Student 2: I realize more when people are nice to me, it doesn't mean like they are nice, nice to me. They are just like that to everyone.

Student 1: A few times I talked to some of my classmates, and they were super nice, and you know I will find them on Facebook, message them, and I treat them like you know they are really good friends. But then I realize no, that's kinda creepy for them. Like they don't want to go that far. They are nice to me just because we're classmates, and that's it. After class we're done, we are not even supposed to hang out. It's like they have a whole different life.

Student 3: I mean, there's a lot of cultural differences. Like in health care!

All: Oh my God! Health care!

Everyone else freezes except for Student 1

Part Five – Health System

Student 1: I never had health insurance; where I am from, we just go to the hospital. So, when I came here, I constantly lived in fear that I'm gonna get run over by a car, and I'm gonna have to pay way too much money. I now know I have health insurance that is covered in my tuition. I have been struggling with my vision, for like a long time. I don't see very well. I thought I should really get an eye examined, but I'm like, does it cost money because if that is the case to do it, I don't know about that. But then I found out that there's like a free one with the Health Insurance every thirty-six months, but like my program is over in like twenty-four months. But it was okay. I'm going to wait until I get back home. Yeah, it took me a while to understand what I could do to get just an annual checkup. I didn't know how to go to a doctor. After a while I got it, that I could just go to the Wellness Center or just find a primary physician for myself. I needed a dermatologist, so I had to find a doctor. I found a doctor. I called them and they told me the next appointment is for January next year. I was like, Okay, sign me up. *(Pause)* I mean, why do I have to like to wait more than six months for an appointment if I need it now. So that's different. That's hard. But I had a leg injury from playing soccer a couple months into the semester right. So, I had to get it treated urgently. I went to the doctor, and I was, you know, constantly asking them, "hey? Like, I hope this gets covered by my insurance." Because even a hundred dollars was a lot for me at that point. And so, I go to the doctor. And they tell me "Oh, yeah, it's fine. Yeah, your insurance is accepted, but I can't really say how much it's going to cost, maybe like twenty dollars." So okay, I went there, got my leg checked, they gave me a bunch of exercises. It's fine. um after that, a couple of weeks later I got a bill in the mail for like two hundred dollars. And I was just like, why? like, I don't know! And so, I call the insurance people, and they're like. "Oh, cause that's your co-pay." I was like copay? What the fuck is a copay? I don't know what a co-pay is. And then I had to do, you know, all this research by myself and then, apparently, now I know what the copay is, and what a co-insurance is. But why? I think that it would help if at colleges they would have a translator or someone to help, because medical terms and healthcare in itself can be tricky. Because that's like a basic human thing. Anyways I'll talk to you later, I still have to try and find a job.

They all hung up. They get dressed for a job interview. We hear "Get A Job" by The Silhouettes

Part Six – Jobs, JABS! Job?

"Initial Adjustment" is projected on the screen. Student 1 and Student 3 narrate the story using signs to help, while Student 2 plays the role of an international student in distress.

Student 1: Over 1 million international students' study in the US each year.

Student 3: Higher education is one of America's top service exports generating 42 billion in revenues each year.

Student 1: International students contributed 33.8 billion to the US economy between 2020-2021. Before the pandemic it was up to 44.7 billion each year.

Student 3: For every three international students one US job is created.

Student 1: International students supported 335,423 jobs in the US between 2020 and 2021, Before the pandemic it was up 460,000 each year.

Student 3: International students pay way more to attend school than local students.

Student 1: About 62% of all international students receive the majority of their funds from sources outside of the United States, including personal and family sources as well as home country governments or universities.

Students 3: The US remains the leading destination for international students. There are over 20 countries where you can work while studying, including Canada, Australia, Ireland, Spain, Germany, UK, France, and Sweden.

Student 2: But here in the US you cannot. Since we're not allowed to work. We don't even have many options, you know, to find any extra money, so it's either, you know, survive somehow, or go home, and that's not good.

Student 1: At least, we can work on campus. The United States only authorizes international students to work on campus.

Student 2: By now I am running out of savings at this point.

Student 3: I'm financially stressed.

Student 1: I'm also suffering.

Student 2: So, I was like living off my last savings, and I was like I hate it here. I don't have a job. I don't have any money.

Student 3 plays the role of an advisor.

Student 3: Yeah absolutely, you can work on campus. Just follow these steps, *(Takes out a rolled paper, opens it and it rolls out into a long list to the floor)*

Student 2: *(Reading the list)* Onboarding,

Student 1: Form I-9

Student 3: W-4 form.

Student 2: Form this

Student 1: Form that

Student 3: Student-employment-f-1-certification

Student 1: Social Security Number application

Student 2: So yeah, I didn't realize I needed to get a social security number in order to work, and that could only happen once I had a job on campus. A work. I had a lot of help from people, it was not too complicated, but it was very tedious.

Student 1: When I just came here, I could not get a job on campus. I thought this would at least be easy!

Student 3: But it was not easy to find a job on campus. I guess not all departments want to hire international students right away, because they understand that they will need to wait for us to get a social security number or whatever, and maybe not everybody wants to wait.

Student 2: I spent like a whole semester applying to things, and I could not get anything, and nobody even wanted to schedule an interview with me, and I was like, why is this? I was like why nobody wants to give me a chance? I have like experience, and I speak multiple languages, and I can write well. That was like a thing that made me feel like not welcome here.

Student 3: It was definitely one of those things that you wouldn't have the experience of if you were born in the US.

Student 2: And so, I applied for not 1, not 2, not 3 not even 4. I applied for several jobs, until.

Student 3 plays the role of an on-campus job interviewer.

Student 3: Thank you so much for your interest in working for us on campus. So, first question. Why do you want to work with us?

Student 2: *(To the audience)* Well, I really just wanted to respond saying I am running out of savings! I'm financially stressed! I'm suffering! I hate it here. I don't have a job. I don't have any money! But I smiled and responded politely. And so, I got my first job on campus.

Student 2: At the interview they didn't ask me about me being an international student, even though I didn't hide that. But when I got the job, she didn't expect that it would take that long for me to get a social security number. Yeah, but she was fine with that. I have a great supervisor. But still I think if they had, like, you know, the same candidate, but native then they would've given it to them.

Student 1: And so, I got accepted, my employer wrote a letter for me and allowed me to go to the Social Security Office. That process is for another play. Then I finally got myself a social security number like a week after that, and then I could finally work.

Student 2: But then, I needed more experience off campus and more money to survive. But there are strict legal restrictions on even doing internships.

Student 3 plays the role of an off-campus job interviewer.

Student 3: Thank you so much for your interest in working off campus. So, first question. Tell me a little about yourself.

Student 2: Well, I am originally from Chi-

Student 3: Wait, you are an international student!

Student 2: Here we go!

Student 1 recites the poem.

Student 1: Now let me tell you about the CPT and OPT options
 Good luck to you if you find one
 Ah mean you will, but the process comes with frustration
 Little consideration if you're from a different nation
 Because if you are not from here, not a native speaker
 Big minus. Automatic bias. They'll give you no feature
 They automatically think you write worse, talk worser
 So, its best I don't start by telling them I'm from Russia
 We're international yes, but my English is impeccable
 So why when applying for a job there's a disclaimer, that's terrible
 "Will you now or in the future require sponsorship for employment H1B visa status?"
 Check this box, so we know that we don't hire you to work with us
 I'm qualified! but US citizen, or permanent residents only
 It feels bad, it's hurtful you keep breaking our hearts slowly

There is a fight with students 2 as the students in distress and student 3 as the oppressor. This symbolizes the fight with restrictions to work in the US. Students two loses. Student 2 crawls offstage defeated.

Transitions into a dance to 'Na Uncle Sam' By Ukairo

Part Seven – American (Dream) Nightmare

“Mental Isolation” is projected on the screen. The dance takes the characters through the journey of their pain and anguish which is further communicated through the Spoken Word Poem ‘American (Dream) Nightmare’

All: Lonely, stressed, sad, angry
 Things are now going crazy
 Oh my God, can you save me!
 It is scary
 It is not easy
 It's complicated, please believe me
 And I just feel very, very, very lonely
 Awkward
 I really struggled daily
 It's horrendous
 It's complicated for you as an international grad student, trust!
 You have less of a connection with the campus, and I'm just trying to adjust.
 I couldn't meet friends or that's more for undergraduates than us?
 This is kind of ridiculous
 It was all a big change, everything here surprises me
 It was all very unexpected, bounded in the land of the free
 And then it started to decline. I just remember it got hard
 No motivation, loss of interest, Insomnia, Depression
 I don't know. I didn't understand it. I just felt very out of place
 I don't even know how to act. Suddenly like everything was a mistake
 I became so uncomfortable, my confidence got low
 Feel like a part of me was missing I wanted to go home
 And then we start to suffer a lot from imposter syndrome
 I don't belong, don't deserve, don't know if I should be here though
 Deep down, like I know I'm working really hard, yes!
 But another part of me is like, oh no, I'm not doing as much, I'm doing less
 I start feeling guilty, stressed, depressed
 You are taking a fifteen-minute break?
 Don't you see you are like wasting time
 Time here is kind of limited
 Time here means productivity
 Time here must be managed every time
 You don't deserve to be here because you're not working ninety percent of the time!
 So, get up
 Spend the time doing some research
 Get up
 Spend the time on some jobs

Get up
 Spend the time working on some writing
 Doing this!
 Doing that!
 You know what, give up, quit now, and go home honey
 You're only just wasting your parents' money.
 This massive change affected me mentally, emotionally, physically, psychologically, and financially
 It feels like nobody can help you with that difficulty
 It's really like you're on your own, though there's of course faculty
 And offices that can help you,
 But they're not right there when you need them to
 And by the time you send an email and contact them
 What's the point when it's already a distant problem
 When a hate crime is in effect
 And this guy just looks at you and he goes, "Is he from a different country? Where is your yard?"
 I don't answer, and so with no regard, excuse my language, he asks "is he a retard?"
 All that stuff that you have to deal with
 Judgments and the systems
 Xenophobia and racism
 When you feel like they don't respect you
 Like people don't accept you
 But instead, they feel bad for you. And then you start feeling bad for yourself, too,
 You want to go in a corner and cry
 Or die
 But I'm just so afraid, though in the home of the brave
 It is scary
 It's complicated, please believe me
 Oh say, can you see It's not that easy
 When you have now become a minority.

Part Eight – Successes

"Acceptance and Integration" is projected on the screen. The students start a game of UNU as they speak.

Student 1: Though it is hard transitioning and settling in the US, if you asked us who was most helpful in this process, we would boldly tell you Americans.

Student 2: Americans

Student 3: Americans

Student 2: Some have been very helpful.

Student 3: They are mostly helpful if you communicate.

Student 1: I have this group of friends. We've stayed together since my arrival when we went on an orientation trip together. We still get brunch every Sunday, and stuff like that. I know all of their parents and for winter break and stuff like that I go to their home to stay. I can't deny their involvement in helping me get settled and everything. They are all Americans.

Student 2: When I wanted to practice my English, and just curious about the culture, I volunteered in a church. I met this incredible woman. She is in her mid-seventies. She was one of the volunteers. We became close friends. It became a ritual, we would meet every week, and for hours, she would take me to a new restaurant, and she would take me to new places, either a new hike or a new park or a new museum. And then I tell people I tell everyone she's my grandmother. We have a beautiful friendship. She's American.

Student 3: I think there are a lot of people who contributed along the way. One of them was a woman we met at Waltham. She is a real estate agent. We were trying really hard to find accommodation quickly, because we had to stay in a hotel which was very expensive. We liked this house but there was another person who already rented the house, he was faster. But we still needed a place to stay after our hotel booking was up, and we just asked that woman if she knew any place we could stay, and she talked to that person who rented the house that we liked. She asked him if we could stay there because it's a very big house and he was waiting for his girlfriend to come in a few weeks. She didn't have to do that for us. But she did and he actually offered and allowed us to stay there. He helped us a lot and we stayed there for seven days, maybe, until we found our apartment in Boston. She was American.

Student 1: Some Americans are helpful.

Student 2: The world in general is very negative.

Student 3: And the US is hard.

Student 1: But I still think a lot of people here are very nice, and they're even nicer than a lot of people back home.

Student 3: I got support from professors and classmates and staff.

Student 2: I didn't have any professor who wouldn't be nice to me.

Student 3: I felt like from the first email from both Admissions office and the director of my program that I was welcomed.

Student 1: The people that I work for and work with are incredible, and my boss is so much fun, and she always tries to like to help me or introduce me to people, and I feel like she doesn't do it out of obligation or anything but just because she wants to help people.

On screen we see a video of different international students' events while they speak.

Student 3: But yeah, I feel like one of the like best moments was definitely some of the events with Office of International Student Affairs (OISA) and International Graduate Student Organization (IGSO)

Student 1: Like the picnic thing

Student 2: That was a good connection.

Student 1: International students got to know each other.

Student 2: It was nice to meet other people, and everybody wanted to meet new people.

Student 3: That was a pretty nice time to break the ice with other students.

Student 2: OISA, you know, they're really helpful.

Student 1: Everybody smiling just helpful.

Student 3: That just confirmed for me that this might be the place I belong.

Student 1: I felt the most welcome when we slowly started celebrating Diwali. And now we have a giant celebration. These are the moments that were the best moments. When I could celebrate things from my culture. And it was crazy to think that everyone was joining in my celebration.

Student 3: Or when I got to share a poem from my country in my native language.

Student 1: It was exhilarating. And it was exciting because I was able to do something very close to me.

Student 3: I feel so, included.

Student 1: And so even though the challenges we face are hard, we have built communities here, we have forged friendships and relationships that we cannot deny. We have greater employment, career, and training opportunities because of the high standard in education.

Student 2: But there is still a lot that can be done.

Part Nine – The Charge

All: So, we have a message, and we hope you listen up!

Student 1: To Americans, listen up!

The instrumental for "We Are the World" plays under the following dialogue.

Student 3: We wish you can be more curious.

Student 2: Talk to us, Listen to us.

All: Listen up!

Student 3: Don't let what you have heard about us, cloud your perspective of us.

Student 2: And don't be judgmental.

Student 1: Be curious.

All: Listen up!

Student 2: Offer more help, because we are new and sometimes we don't even know where to start.

Student 1: But don't be a savior, you know a lot of times we feel and experience that people think we come here because we were in some adversity or like we couldn't eat food or something like that.

Student 3: And they try to be the upper hand.

Student 2: Superior

Student 1: And then not treat you as an equal, almost, you know like inferior.

Student 3: It happens in school.

Student 1: It happens in the workplace.

Student 3: And we know sometimes it's not intentional.

Student 2: But just be conscious of that fact that you're not pulling someone out of deep waters

Student 3: We can do stuff

Student 2: We are bad asses

All: Listen up!

Student 2: I wish people knew that foreigners coming to this country to study means they are some of the top people in their country

Student 3: So, treat us better

Student 1: We are smart

Student 2: We are hard working

Student 3: And that doesn't mean we are coming here to steal your job

All: Listen up

Student 1: We are just humans

Student 2: We have our own traditions

Student 3: We have our own perspectives on things that might be different from yours, so understand that that we wouldn't know certain things

Student 2: So, help us

All: Listen up!

Student 3: Administrations, organizations, boards, and offices

Student 1: We are vulnerable, powerless non-immigrants who can make no change on the overwhelming strict legal restrictions on us. We depend your advocacy and on your political influence to make our voices be heard

Student 2: Listen up! We need greater guidance in all aspects

Student 3: It would help to assign us each a friendly mentor, someone who can help us with all the quick questions. Because we have a lot of questions when we come here, from health care to transportation, and if somebody can just quickly answer those questions, it wouldn't be so rough. It would help with us having less anxiety.

Student 2: Have more SIMPLE convenient websites. With special resources for everybody who's coming here non-immigrant or immigrant doesn't matter in their language. So, if you need resources, this is the website to go to. With all the information you need if you are new to the country. Sections with information on health care, food, culture, the academic system, finances, and accommodation

Student 1: It is an overwhelming experience for international students when we get here. There is so much happening. Trying to figure out this new life while not being connected to the campus and receiving a million emails in one day. We don't understand all the acronyms and offices for resources. It all gets lost. Sometimes it's long after an issue, we learnt that oh there's an office for that or some resource available. So please find other ways for us to know about the resources. Reach out to us!

Student 2: And we know right now you might be sitting there saying "oh but there are so many resources" So do you see our point?

Student 1: Educators, listen up! consider our needs in the design of the curriculum and classroom activities

Student 2: When you have international students in your classroom don't talk about America for one hour. Find a way to include us. Include our culture.

Student 3: At the same time, be more patient with us and learn about the differences in communication styles, word choice and nonverbal expressions.

All: Listen up!

Student 1: Future International students listen up

Student 3: The American college experience is not like what you watch on TV. It is nothing like that. It is very different.

Student 2: Expect that the food here is not like back home. So, you may need to learn how to cook.

Student 1: But If I'm being honest with you. It is scary

Student 2: But don't be afraid

Student 3: Don't be discouraged

Student 2: Take the leap

Student 1: Because it may be scary. It may be hard

Student 3: But there's also a lot of good things that come out of hardship

Student 1: A diamond is always formed under pressure

Student 3: So, don't let the bad things define your experience

Student 2: No journey is easy

Student 1: And you do need to get a little push so that you can fly

Student 2: You can only have global experience here

Student 3: Have friends from all over the world

Student 1: So, take the leap

Student 2: Explore

Student 3: Try to make connections early

Student 1: Find a community you belong to

Student 2: Do not be afraid of getting to know people

Student 3: Try to communicate with your friends, peers, and professors

Student 1: At some point you may not fit in or feel included so, do things that make you happy

Student 3: Keep in touch with your family frequently

Student 2: Video calls

Student 1: Even though you are far away, it will help you to feel less homesick.

Student 2: You have to be strong

Student 1: Speak up for yourself

Student 3: Or people won't hear you

Student 2: You will have to fight for yourself

Student 3: Advocate for yourself

Student 1: Let your voice be heard

Students 3: Have conversation with your friends about your culture

Student 1: Once you start to express yourself, they will be curious

All: Listen up

Student 2: The world is a mess right now

Student 3: And there is no perfect country

Student 2: There's no perfect home

Student 1: But you can make it home

Student 2: Be comfortable with yourself, knowing that you are different

Student 3: And being different is cool

Student 1: As Andrea, our director of International Student Affairs said international students are badassess

All: You are a badass! We are badass!

Students 1: So now that you've seen our wounds, how can you help us heal them?

Student 2: With unwelcoming immigration policies, the system works against us

Students 3: It strips us

Students 2: It beats us

Student 3: It robs us.

Students 1: Millions we give with no promise of even a visa, job, or security

Student 2: Without us the system fear losing revenues, but with it, we fear losing our cool

Students 3: Being stressed, worried and uneasy

All: So how can you help to heal them now that you have seen our wounds?

Characters join in closing song

What will we do?

When we're away from home

Strangers in your home and you won't help us through

International doesn't make us supernatural

We need your help

We need your intervention