

## How Do I Contribute?

As a Chinese American who's seen his parents struggle to be understood and heard, I saw the injustice language barriers posed in minimizing an individual's ideas, voice, and consequently identity. Fortunately, for me as an American born citizen, English came naturally to me, and I had the privilege of living my life without directly experiencing these obstacles. However, through my work as a teaching assistant and my time as a fellow classmate at Ohio State University, I came to work with many international Chinese students who had immigrated to this country just as my parents had. I was struck by how such academically gifted students often underperformed in their coursework because of both misunderstandings over project instructions and inability to formulate and ask clarification questions. I was incredibly frustrated at how these barriers again minimized individuals and their ability to demonstrate academic aptitude. Not wanting to stand by helplessly, I worked with my students and classmates by listening to their concerns and questions voiced in Mandarin, provided clarification to the English instructions by parsing through nuances of commonly used grammar structures, and most of all facilitated their independence by helping them learn to structure their own questions. Through my work, I developed a strong passion to help individuals get to where they deserve to be based on merit and not superficial barriers, which I hope to continue during my time in graduate school.