

## WCUSpanish program numbers highest in years

If what WCU students want are more options in Spanish, they couldn't have picked a better time to study it here in Cullowhee. At the beginning of Fall 2015, there were 60 students majoring in Spanish (either the B.A. or the B.S.Ed.) and 175 students working on a Spanish minor. This represents a 50% increase for Spanish majors in only two years.

So, what does this increase mean for students? With higher enrollment, the Spanish program(s) will be able to offer more upper-level (300- and 400-level) classes from which students can choose, and they will be able to offer them more frequently, which translates to more options for students.

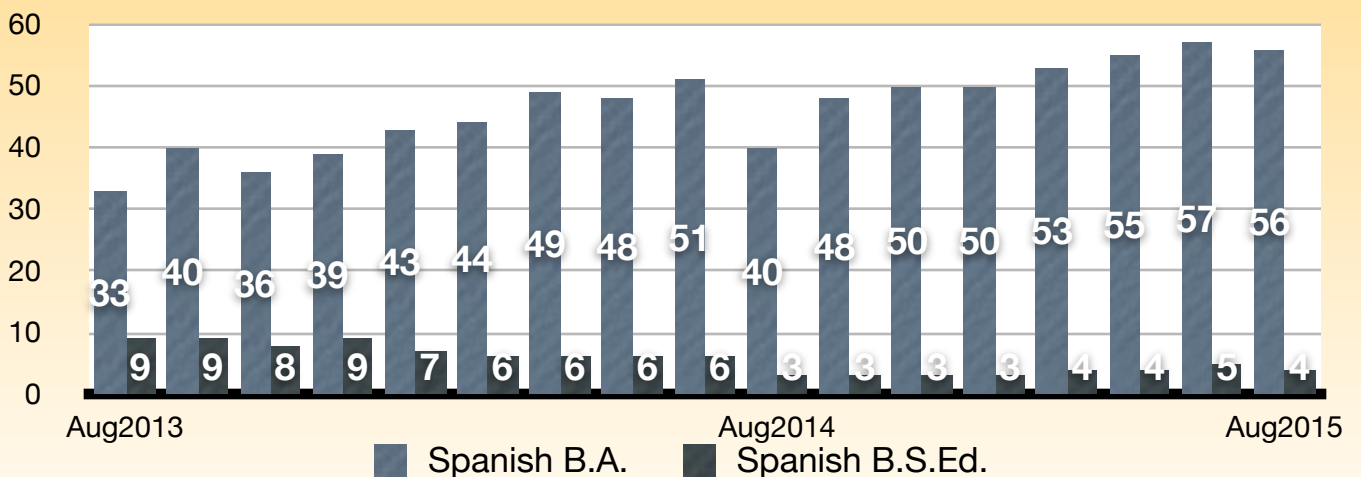
To what does WCUSpanish attribute the growth? Well, no one can say for sure, but we suspect that the jump in numbers is due to the

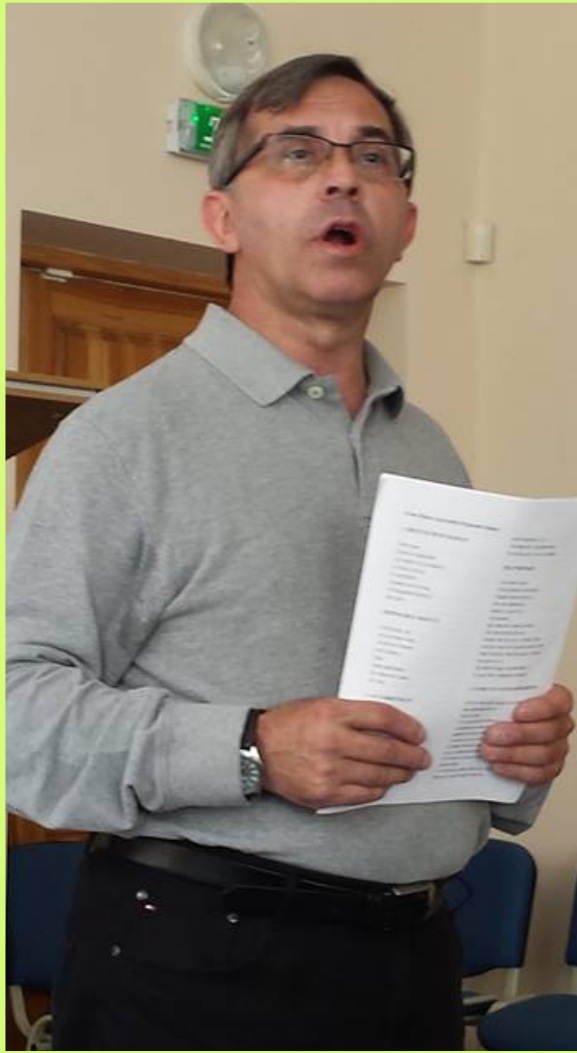
Spanish program's shift in focus. After the program nearly got the ax as a result of Program Prioritization in 2013, WCUSpanish revamped its curriculum and hired faculty with expertise in linguistics and translation/interpretation. Even at the lower levels, WCUSpanish has modified its approach to a more practical one, emphasizing student's abilities in language production.

Whether students feel more confident because of a different approach at lower levels, or they enjoy having more subjects from which to choose at the upper levels, we can't be sure. What is clear is that WCU students are choosing Spanish as a major more than any other time in recent years.

Take a look at the chart below to see how numbers have grown in the last two years.

### Number of students majoring in Spanish





**Santiago García-Castañón reading his poetry at Vilnius University in Lithuania.**

## **Prof. García-Castañón has been busy:**

- In May, he won First Prize in the Lincoln-Martí International Poetry Competition in Miami.
- Also in May, he traveled to Lithuania, where he gave a presentation and a poetry reading at Vilnius University, as well as a conference presentation at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas.
- In June, he gave a reading of some of his most recent poems at the Café Lord Byron in Avilés, Spain.
- His English translation of the prologue to the second part of *Don Quixote* (1615) was published in a brochure and distributed to schools in northern Spain on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the book's publication.
- In August, his seventh poetry collection, *Las orillas de una mar incierta / The Shores of an Uncertain Sea*, was released in Spain and accompanied by another poetry reading.

## **Did you know?**

**The United States has the second largest population of Spanish speakers in the world, at 50 million native speakers and second language speakers. The only country to top that is Mexico. This means that there are more Spanish speakers in the USA than in Spain or any country in Latin America!!**

## WCUSPANISH STUDENT PROFILE: SARA CLARK



### Where are you from?

I am from Marion, North Carolina, and I have lived there for all of my life.

### What are some other places you have visited, and what did you do there?

When I was 16 I traveled to Flensburg, Germany with an exchange program through my high school. I was partnered with a German student, lived with her family, and attended school with her for a week. The summer of my sophomore year in college I studied abroad in Costa Rica for three weeks. I lived with a host family and took classes at ILISA, a language immersion school. My most recent travels took me to Perú this past summer where I spent two months working in medical clinics and hospitals through an organization called Vive Perú. My intentions were to gain as many clinical hours as possible in preparation for applying to Physician Assistant School, and with the extended amount of time that I spent there I definitely ended up learning a lot about the Peruvian Health Care system as well as the culture itself.

### You are majoring in Spanish and Biology. Why did you choose these?

From a young age I knew I wanted a career where I would be helping people. After my freshman year I became interested in healthcare, and I decided to continue my education after graduating by attending PA school. There are a lot of Biology and Chemistry prerequisites that must be completed before applying to PA school, so I decided to major in Biology to

prepare me for the road after my undergraduate career. I also knew ever since taking my first Spanish class in high school that I wanted to work towards fluency. I was only a Spanish minor during my first two years here at Western, but after completing the minor through studying abroad I decided to change to a major so I didn't lose all the knowledge I had gained thus far. I hope to maximize the number of patients I can communicate with as a PA by studying Spanish, traveling abroad, and continuing to work towards fluency.

### Tell me about your role in student organizations or other on-campus events.

The summers of my freshman and sophomore years I worked as an Orientation Counselor, and during my sophomore and junior years I worked as a Resident Assistant in Walker Hall. Now I work as a course tutor for the Writing and Learning Commons helping students in various Spanish, Chemistry, and Biology courses. I am a member of the Honors College as well as a member of the Alpha Lambda Delta Honors Society.

### How do you spend your time when you're not doing school-related stuff?

When I am not doing school-related things I enjoy playing volleyball, and I also volunteer at the Jackson County Good Samaritan Clinic. I help interpret as well as do patient intakes and shadow doctors during their consults.

### Tell me about your motivation to study Spanish.

My motivation to study Spanish stems from the desire to help as many people as possible. I believe that with my intentions of becoming a PA, it would make a huge difference if I am able to directly communicate with a patient who is a native Spanish speaker rather than having to rely on an interpreter. My motivation for Spanish also originates from the fact that learning the language has always been natural to me. I love learning new phrases and listening to different dialects, and my experiences abroad have only further driven my passion to continue expanding my vocabulary.



# WCUSPANISH ALUMNI CORNER

WCUSPANISH wants to recognize achievements of WCU alumni with a major or minor in Spanish.

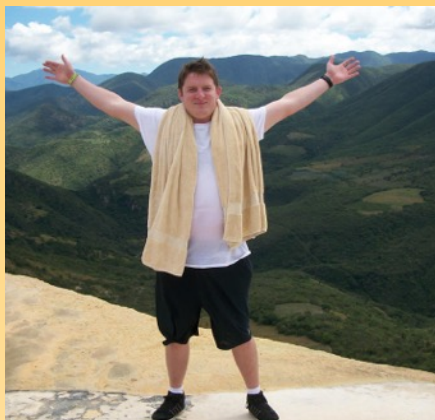


**ASHLEY CORWIN** (BA, Spanish and BS, Criminal Justice, '10) is an Investigator with the Hall County Sheriff's Office in Gainesville, Georgia. Since she graduated from WCU in 2010, Ashley has been working in law enforcement and working toward a Masters degree in teaching, since she plans to teach college students and share her law enforcement experiences with them. She recently received an award for excellence at work from the county commissioners where she lives for having worked diligently on a major case involving the wellbeing of local children. She uses Spanish almost daily, given

that the county in which she works has a very high Hispanic population. She told WCUSpanish: "It's very helpful being able to help the Hispanic community by understanding their language and their culture." Ashley is engaged to be married in April 2016.

**ZANE DOCKERY** (BA, Spanish with minor in CIS, '13) has worked as "the IT Department" at the company where his father works since he graduated. Zane says:

"After having experienced the challenge of studying abroad, I had achieved a motivation to succeed that was much stronger than I had beforehand. Since my hire, the company has grossed more



than \$1 million, more than they ever had in the past, because of the tools I made for them to edit their website. My budget as a marketer was zero, so I had to learn several new technologies and programming languages. Occasionally, a sales call from a Spanish speaker will come in and, even though it's not my job, I will be paged to answer the call." Zane plans one day to visit as much of South America as he can and to immerse himself in various dialects of the language that has obsessed him for as long as he can remember.

**KATY ELDERS** (BA, Political Science with Spanish minor, '11, and MPA, '13) stayed in Cullowhee after graduating in 2011 to earn her Masters in Public Affairs at WCU. She focused her studies in the field of nonprofits, and worked closely with Vecinos, Inc., a local organization working to serve farmworkers and their families in health, education, and advocacy. Katy now works full time as a dance instructor at area schools and a local dance studio, where she is grateful to share her passion for dance and performance with students of all ages. She teaches many styles of dance, including "Spanish Song and Dance," for children. Through school and work, Katy has continued her study and practice of Spanish. And of course, she's saving for a long trip back to South America very soon! ¡Abrazos a todos!



*¡Enhorabuena!*

*Nosotros aquí en WCUSPANISH siempre estamos muy orgullosos de nuestr@s alumn@s.*

Alumni: share what you've been up to with the rest of the WCUSPANISH community! Send your info to [Lori Oxford](mailto:Lori.Oxford@wcu.edu) and be sure to pass the newsletter along to your family and friends so they can celebrate your achievements along with the rest of us.

## WCUSpanish sends sixth group of students to Valencia, Spain



Dr. Alberto Centeno-Pulido, one of the program's coordinators, confirms: "This may have been the sixth group, but every year the program is different: from residence halls to host families, from instruction space sandwiched between dorm rooms to elaborate, high-tech facilities, and from day excursions to weekend trips, every single group has had a distinct experience."

above: *WCUenVLC2015* students rest after climbing to a hermitage overlooking the city of Xàtiva. O'Shay Malley, Juan Bautista, Ryan Kastle, Andrew Goodman, Laura Dowell, Brittany Garber, AJ Morris, Anna Ferretiz, Laura Robinson, Victoria Simmons, and Marykay Kelly are all catching their breath.

Dr. Mark Couture participated in a conference in Havana, Cuba called "*La Diversidad Cultural en el Caribe*" (Cultural Diversity in the Caribbean) sponsored by the Cuban cultural organization [Casa de Las Américas](#). He read a paper on the poetry of José Lezama Lima at the University of Havana on May 22.

at right: Couture reads under the watchful eye of Cuban patriot José Martí



**SPAN 240 in Costa Rica:** Mr. Garrett Fisher coordinated a brand new program for WCU students, offering them the opportunity to earn credit for SPAN 240 (equivalent to SPAN 231 and 232 together) while exploring the most peaceful nation in Latin America: Costa Rica. One student, Beth Winze, created the summary below to share their experiences with the rest of WCUSpanish. (Thanks, Beth!)

# Costa Rica

May 31 – June 28, three WCU students, along with Profe Fisher traveled to Costa Rica to learn, live and experience the “pura vida” lifestyle.



By Beth Winze

## Only some of the adventures...

- Fishing** The students were able to go trout fishing using the Costa Rican method.
- Tours (Giras)** Every Wednesday, El Tec provided opportunities to travel - coffee farms, San José, and Cartago to name a few.
- Beach Trip** Weekends provided time to travel the country. This included a trip to the Pacific beach Jacó!
- Local Experiences** From eating at restaurants, shopping locally to viewing movies in Spanish, extra time was for exploring and getting to live life as a tico!

San José statue replication:

Left: Beth Winze

Top: Profe Fisher

Right: Kellie Willcox

Bottom: Roxanne Scott

## Why Costa Rica?

The trip to Costa Rica offered the students 6 credit hours of Spanish with Spanish 240, a combination of Spanish 231 and 232. In one month’s time, the students completed the course while being able to live, learn and experience all that the vibrant Costa Rican culture had to offer.

The students lived with host families, eating, and speaking with the ticos, applying classroom knowledge into the real world. Weekends were spent exploring and traveling Costa Rica, allowing students to culturally dive into the country and all of its natural beauty.

The connection with Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica also fostered relationships with the local students to practice Spanish and compare college experiences.



Interested in traveling?

Visit Profe Fisher for more information on future trips in his office McKee 132b or email him at [gdfisher@email.wcu.edu](mailto:gdfisher@email.wcu.edu).

# ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

## WCUSPANHISH

### WaLC TUTORING AVAILABLE

The [Writing and Learning Commons](#), or WaLC, is currently offering tutoring for this semester in Spanish with student tutors. Remember: most students who use the WaLC have Bs or better in their classes! If you think you could improve your reading comprehension, speaking and writing skills, or grammar usage, call 227-2274 or click on the link above to make an appointment. If you're interested in becoming a tutor, talk to the faculty member who teaches the class with which you'd like to work.

### ¡TERTULIA!

Come practice your Spanish with us! The weekly *tertulia*, or Spanish conversation hour, will allow you to practice speaking or just listen. All Spanish professors offer extra credit for attending, and this can be one more step in your path to proficiency. Upcoming *tertulia* dates include:

- Tuesday, Sept. 1, 4:30 at Tuck's
- Wednesday, Sept. 9, 4:30 at Tuck's
- Thursday, Sept. 17, 5:00 at Tuck's
- Monday, Sept. 21, 4:30 at Tuck's
- Tuesday, Sept. 29, 4:30 at Tuck's
- Wednesday, Oct. 7, 4:30 at Tuck's

*Tertulia* was packed at the semester's start, with a record **32 people** in attendance! WCUSpanish wants to acknowledge the top-notch service and patience that [Tuck's Tap & Grille](#) has always shown when hosting our group, even when it's tricky to shift from Spanish back to English to place an order!



Do you know a student in the Spanish program or an alumnus/alumna with an interesting story? Is there an event of interest to Spanish study that we should announce here? Let us know! Contact [Lori Oxford](#) with your news.



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Follow us on twitter: [@SpanishWCU](#)

Come by and talk to us in McKee or check us out on the [WCU Spanish program's webpage](#).

**¡Muchas gracias!**