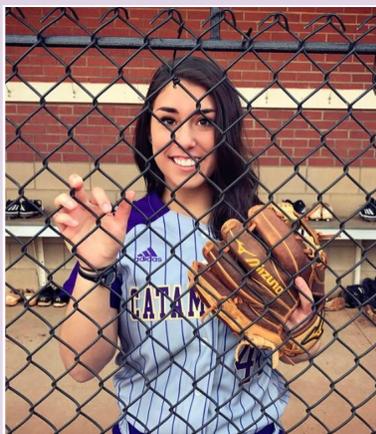


WCU SPANISH newsletter

Kassy Flores Recognized as Dean's Outstanding Scholar for World Languages

This year's honoree for the Dean's Outstanding Scholar Award from the Department of World Languages is **Kassy Flores**, a multitalented student who is finishing up a B.A. in Spanish, a B.S. in Biology, and a minor in Chemistry. During her time at WCU, Kassy proved herself as a valuable softball player, shadowed medical professionals, won a highly competitive paid internship at the Mountain Area Health Education Center, and studied abroad in three different Spanish-speaking countries, all while managing to earn a nearly perfect GPA!



clockwise from top left:

Experiencing downtown Valencia, Spain; on horseback at a ranch outside Buenos Aires, Argentina; with John Lennon's statue in Havana, Cuba; receiving her award with WCU faculty; making Catamount fans proud.

ALUMNI PROFILES



above:
Sara with her "tripod," Stella, who makes up for her missing leg with energy and love

SARA CLARK

BA in Spanish, BS in Biology, 2016

I have been working in a dermatology office for the past two years and in my pursuit for further education have decided to start a masters program in physiology at NC State University beginning August 2018. I have not decided on my specific end goals, but I am interested in a wide range of professions from medical school to teaching to veterinary school. This program will allow me to pursue any avenue and open up even more opportunities. I have gotten to use my Spanish skills at work translating for our Hispanic patients, and even though I haven't used the language as much as I would like to, I have had some good opportunities to help provide a more personal patient experience for those who do not understand English. I miss Western dearly but am excited for this new chapter!

Upcoming events related to language & culture:

Thursday, Apr. 19th 5:00 - 6:00pm Tuck's Tap & Grille	¡Tertulia! -weekly conversation hour in Spanish
Monday, Apr. 23rd 5:00 - 6:00pm Tuck's Tap & Grille	¡Tertulia! -weekly conversation hour in Spanish
Tuesday, Apr. 24th 8:30am - 12:30pm Ramsey Center	Language Contest - 37th annual language competition for regional high school and middle school students, including quiz bowls, poetry, music, skits, and speaking events
Wed., Apr. 25th 6:00 - 7:00pm UC Theater	"Social Customs in Apartheid South Africa: A 'Coloured' Perspective" -Odette Kennedy, a South African, will discuss her experiences as a person classified as "Coloured" in that country. (See flyer here.)
Monday, Apr. 30th 5:00 - 6:00pm Tuck's Tap & Grille	¡Tertulia! -weekly conversation hour in Spanish



WCUSpanish Student Profiles: QUENTIN WALTON

Where are you from? Where have you lived?

I was born in Orlando, Florida but due to my father being in the U.S Army, we moved around a lot. After that, we moved to Fort Hood, Texas, and then to Heidelberg and Schwetzingen, Germany. When I was 9, we moved to Fayetteville and have lived there ever since.

What are some places you have traveled?

One of my proudest travel experiences was presenting my undergraduate research at the Geological Society of America national conference in Denver, Colorado in

September 2017. This was the research done for my summer 2016 internship with Western Carolina's Hydrological Research Station studying how land-use history affects hydrology and hydrological pathways (water and how it moves). I wanted to prove myself as a scientist and get our work professionally published.

When we were in Germany, my family went skiing for the first time on the Bavarian Alps in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. I was initially terrified and could barely get down the mountain alone, but I eventually overcame this and became a decent skier!

You are majoring in Spanish and Environmental Science. Why did you choose these, particularly in this combination?

In high school, nothing interested me as much as these two fields. I received a Spanish cord for taking four years of Spanish, and I excelled at AP Environmental Science. When I enrolled at Western, I knew I wanted to continue my study of the Spanish language and culture as a half Puerto Rican and half African American citizen. I

always had difficulties with my identity, not feeling fully black nor Hispanic, as I did not

grow up speaking Spanish, though much of my family did. Growing up hearing about stories of my Grandfather Silvio escaping Cuba and the regime under cover of night on a boat with about a dozen other families made me yearn to feel connected with that part of my heritage. In Environmental Science, you learn about many issues in developing countries; water and water scarcity was something that I was drawn to, especially learning about apartheid and its effect on the African people. I want to be able to travel and work in relieving the stresses of water scarcity as well as other environmental issues: sustainable agriculture, education, recycling, environmental health and infrastructure, because I've always wanted to help those in need.



WCUSpanish Student Profiles: QUENTIN WALTON



What have you read lately that spurred you to really think?

"Pulvis et umbra sumus. (We are but dust and shadow.)"- Horace, *The Odes*

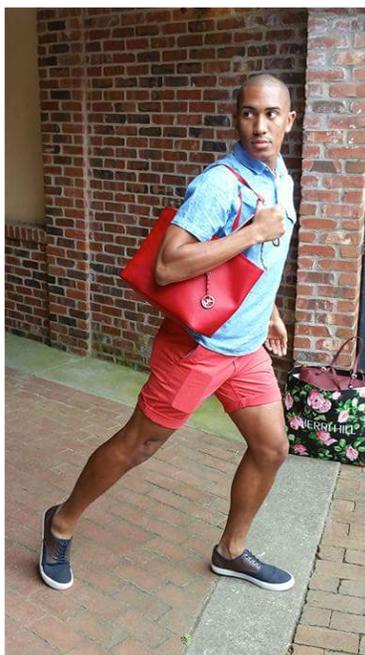
While re-listening to an audiobook of this series I used to read in high school, I heard the above line by Horace. Funny enough, his full name was Quintus Horatius Flaccus, with "Quintus" meaning 5, which is also where I get my own name. This line spoke to me in many ways. It speaks to both the utter lack of time we humans have on Earth as eventually we all return to dust, as well as the both the permanence of human existence, since although we return to dust, that dust then becomes the ground, soil, trees, and world that comes after us. Although some may believe what we do while we're alive is irrelevant, there is always going to be a part of us that creates and influences the future. We are as permanent and temporary as shadows and as flexible and undulating as dust in the wind. I like to think that although I am alive for such a brief time, I can create mountains.

What are some issues that define you?

My struggle with my identity as a Puerto Rican, black, gay male growing up in the southern USA. Bullying and divorce and poverty all worked to open my mind to the vast diversity of the world.

Tell us about your motivation to study Spanish.

Spanish is cool! It's such a rich and beautiful language. It's a tool that I want to use to make changes in the world. Also, have you ever heard music in Spanish? Vicente Fernández, Silvio Rodríguez, and Joaquín Sabina? You don't get much better than that.



How do you use your Spanish most now? How do you foresee using it in the future?

I try to listen to Spanish music, watch shows in Spanish, and call my family as often as possible to prevent myself from getting too rusty. I want to be able to use Spanish in my career, working in Spanish-speaking countries and assisting on environmental issues.

Tell us about another aspect of your WCU experience.

I was a teacher's assistant for three semesters for Geology 150, which I loved. I'm in the snowboarding class and have played ultimate frisbee, for which I am the Vice President, for four years. Last fall, I tried out and made the men's club volleyball team and am playing that along with ultimate frisbee. For about three years, I have served as the public relations representative for the Sustainable Energy Initiative, which is a committee of students, faculty, and staff advisers, who are all responsible for allocating money towards the implementation of renewable energy, energy efficiency improvements, research, and internships on campus. I was one of the voting members to get the Solar Lounge built on campus.

Volunteer opportunities:

Are you interested in using your Spanish to serve the community? The Spanish Program keeps a running list of volunteer opportunities. To be included on a list of potential volunteers, contact [Alberto Centeno-Pulido](#) with your info and interests. He can put you in touch with folks who could use your talents, organizations like the farmworker health program [Vecinos](#) and the [Mountain Area Pro Bono Physical Therapy Clinic](#).

Quick tidbits:

- Be on the lookout for the upcoming issue of the WCU Spanish Newsletter, which will feature sixteen students graduating next month with a degree in Spanish!
- The approved program in **U.S. Latinx Studies** is on its way to becoming a minor, so keep an eye out for that opportunity. Questions? Contact [Melissa Birkhofer](#) or [Lori Oxford](#) for info.

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

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¡Muchas gracias!