

The Office of New Student Programs welcomes over 4,000 first-year and transfer students to West Chester University through their New Student Orientation program each summer. In addition to the new student's schedule, there is a full day schedule planned for their family members or guests. In prior years, Spanish speaking family members accompanied their students to their orientation day. Because the family members and the students have separate schedules, the Spanish speaking family members had to navigate their day without someone offering language support for presentations. We employ student leaders to guide incoming students through their day referred to as Orientation Leaders (OLs). In some instances, some of our OLs spoke Spanish and were able to help these family members out with language support. This was not sustainable as it was overwhelming for a student employee to be expected to do two positions at once, especially without specific training or guidelines with how to interpret.

The Office of New Student Programs applied for the Innovation in Diversity & Inclusion Grant to secure funds to hire a Spanish Student Interpreter to join our team. Undergraduate or graduate students at West Chester University were considered if they had successfully received an Advanced Oral Proficiency or higher in Spanish. In our first year, New Student Programs hired a graduate student from the Wells School of Music from Paraguay. Spanish was her native language. The grant funded the wages for this student position and other compensation for it including uniform, housing, and meal swipes. The Office for New Student Programs worked closely with the Languages and Cultures department to form a position description, determine an appropriate wage for position that would match skill set, and to assure candidates completed an exam administered by the department to prove their proficiency in the language.

During the summer of 2022, the hired Spanish Language Interpreter served 5 families during orientation. The interpreter contacted each family member prior to their session to do an intake phone call with them, in Spanish. She asked questions about what the family members hoped to see for their orientation day and worked with them to build a schedule around their interests. The interpreter was alongside the family member the entire orientation day, guiding them from session to session. In addition to leading family members and offering interpretation support, the Spanish Language Interpreter also translated our print orientation schedule into Spanish, so these families were able to read the schedule in their native language. She also created signage in Spanish, so these family members knew what sessions were happening in each room. Additionally, the Spanish Language Interpreter translated our new student orientation feedback survey in Spanish, so these family members were able to provide their honest feedback about the program.

The Spanish Language Interpreter Program has become a permanent part of our new student orientation programming. Our office hired two interpreters for the 2023-2024 academic year who are undergraduate students from the Languages and Cultures department. With more and more families coming to orientation each year with Spanish as their first language, this interpreter role will continue to be essential in serving our Spanish speaking

families. The grant we received helped launch this program to provide a welcoming environment for Spanish speaking students and their families.

Spanish Interpreter Position Description

Orientation Student Interpreters

Job Description: Orientation Student Interpreters are a part of a team responsible for welcoming and offering language support to Spanish speaking families and guests at West Chester University during orientation programs offered for first year students, transfer students, and adult learner students. This position is an exciting opportunity to receive practical experience in the field of Languages and Cultures, while also building valuable leadership skills working on a larger team.

Expectations:

- Provide on-site language support during Orientation days to Spanish speaking families and guests
- In collaboration with an Orientation paraprofessional, offer Spanish language support for information about campus resources, involvement opportunities, and campus policies
- Engage in virtual communication with Spanish speaking incoming students and families through email, Zoom meetings, and other virtual events
- Provide intake phone calls to Spanish speaking guests ahead of their orientation date to help plan a customized schedule for their orientation day
- Research best practices in engaging Spanish speaking students, families, and guests at new student orientation programming
- Work with the Office of New Student Programs to create an assessment plan to measure success of the language support services at orientation programs
- Develop signage and social media posts in Spanish to help acclimate & welcome guests on orientation days
- Demonstrate an appreciation of cultural differences and support diversity and inclusion
- Attend mandatory orientation training and designated events
- Possess a sincere desire to serve WCU's incoming students, families, and guests
- Demonstrate professional communication skills and effective leadership skills
- Support all university policies and procedures, faculty, and staff

Minimum Qualifications:

- Current WCU degree seeking undergraduate or graduate student and enrolling in class for the 2023-2024 academic year
- Must currently have, or can obtain, credentials to prove proficiency rating of advanced or higher in Spanish oral interpretation.
 - *Interpretation ability will be measured through the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) process*
 - *Students in the Languages and Cultures Department at the 300/400 level language have the ability to fund their Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) through the Languages and Cultures Department. The OPI is administered through the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.*
 - *The Office of New Student Programs will work with students who are not enrolled in the Languages and Cultures department to have their OPI funded through other means.*

- Comply with the University Student Code of Conduct and be in good standing as a full-time WCU student

Preferred Qualifications:

- Writing proficiency in Spanish

Compensation

Orientation Student Interpreters will receive compensation of \$15.00 per hour as well as meals on days in which they are on campus working orientation. On-campus housing is provided from June 11- July 15 if desired. Interpreters will work up to 8 hours per assigned orientation session.