

# Department of Spanish

# Departamento de español

Honors and Awards  
Spring 2024  
*¡Felicidades a todos!*



# 2023-24 Department of Spanish Honors and Awards



The Department of Spanish is pleased to offer awards and scholarships each spring to recognize the excellence and dedication of our undergraduate majors in Spanish. We congratulate the following students and recent graduates for their achievements and thank the generous donors who make these awards possible.

# In Memoriam, Dr. Michael Millar (1972-2023)



- PhD, Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan, 2002
- Department of Spanish, WMU, 2002-2023
- College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Achievement Award for Teaching, 2012
- Center for Service Learning's Excellence in Service Learning Award, 2012
- Director of Internships and Service Learning, Department of Spanish, 2009-2023
- Director, Heredia, Costa Rica Study Abroad Program, 2017-22
- Research focus: Literatures and cultures of Central America, the short story genre, and literature of resistance

# Suzanne M. Wheatley Award

(Presenter: Profs. Robert Vann & Mariola Pérez de la Cruz)

The Suzanne M. Wheatley Award is made each year to honor the memory of Suzanne M. Wheatley, who attended WMU from 1985 to 1988 and passed away before completing her studies. It is given to undergraduate students who embody some of Suzie's remarkable qualities, such as her love for the Spanish language and Hispanic cultures, as well as her zest for life.

The recipients of the 2024 Suzanne M. Wheatley Award are: Nic Buccilli, Sara Bussey, Jacob Clevenger, Yossi Diaz, Marysol Millar, Teddy Richards, Anayeli Rosales, Aleks Slotwinski, and Naomi Washington.





# Nic Buccilli (they/them)

Gracias a la Dra. Tasende por ayudarme a estudiar en Costa Rica durante mi primer año, al Dr. Vann por animarme a seguir todo lo que me interesa, y a la Dra. Jeffers por educarme más en el problema complejo de inmigración.

Después de terminar mi pasantía con Immigration Law & Justice MI, pienso matricularme en el programa AGDP en Estudios Hispánicos mientras termino la licenciatura en Ingenierías Aeroespaciales. Después de graduarme, un puesto ideal para mí sería algo multidisciplinario en que puedo usar mi conocimiento de español, mis habilidades mecánicas y mi pasión para aviación en un ambiente multilingüe y multinacional.



# Sara Bussey

Throughout my academic journey, the individuals in the Spanish department have been some of the most encouraging and supportive people I've encountered. Thank you to Dr. Vann, who ignited my love of Spanish linguistics during high school, and the donors who are offering their financial support now. This summer, I plan to study in Santander, Spain, which is an opportunity that is only possible through the help of the WMU Spanish department. To all future Spanish students, remember that your journey involves more than just a language. Embrace the cultural interactions and service opportunities that come with learning Spanish as well.

# Jacob Clevenger

Majors: Biomedical Sciences, Spanish  
Minor: Chemistry

I am currently in my third year of studies at Western and plan to attend pharmacy school after finishing undergrad. My goal is to become a hospital pharmacist and to be able to utilize the Spanish language in my work, assisting me in providing the best patient care, even if there is a language barrier. I will be participating in the Santander, Spain study abroad program this Summer and am very excited for that experience. If it weren't for the availability of scholarships, the decision to attend would not have been as easy. I am very grateful for the generosity of donors, making this trip a possibility.



# Yoselin Diaz



I would like to thank the Wheatly family and the whole Spanish department for supporting me as I continue my Spanish studies and pursue my master's degree.

I would like to give a special shout out to Professor Montilla and Professor Perez de la Cruz for all the advice and support they have provided me.



# Marysol Millar



Since I began studying Spanish at WMU, I have lived in Spain, received my interpreter certificate, and become an ESL teacher at El Concilio. I am eternally grateful for the ways in which the Spanish faculty support me and for the collective expertise that they share with their students. I want to give thanks to the whole department, especially professor Pastrana, for his continuous support during this especially difficult time for me and my family. This community is very special and I feel so prepared to go out into the world and pursue the things I love. I intend to continue teaching English, hopefully in Latin America after my graduation. My career aspirations are to become an Ayurvedic Practitioner with a focus on women's health, family planning, and post-partum. I am so grateful for this award and will use it to finish the last semester of my Dual Bachelor's in Spanish and Vocal Performance with a Minor in Holistic Health.

# Theo Travís Richards



Los sueños son nuestro escape de la realidad, pero con el corazón amable de las personas, algunos de esos sueños pueden hacerse realidad. Agradezco a los donantes maravillosos por permitir que un joven isleño alcance las estrellas. ¡Muchas gracias a los profesores Pérez de la Cruz y Torres! Su amor por compartir su lengua con el mundo me ha inspirado a mí y a muchos otros estudiantes. En fin, a los futuros estudiantes de español: cultiven conexiones significativas, amén de lo que hacen y descubrirán que el estudio nunca es aburrido.

# Anayeli Rosales



Thank you to the entire Spanish Department for selecting me for the Ruth Kirby Scholarship, and to the Wheatley family for the Suzanne M. Wheatley Award! A heartfelt acknowledgement to Professor Pérez de la Cruz and Professor Ohanna for their unwavering support and assistance whenever needed. Upon completing my double major in Spanish and Social Work in Spring 2025, my goal is to serve the Hispanic community as a migrant specialist.



# Aleks Slotwinski



Otra vez, quiero expresar mi sincero agradecimiento a la familia Wheatley por su generosidad con respecto al Premio Suzanne M. Wheatley. Este es un honor increíble, y esta inversión en mí será reinvertida en las conexiones de por vida que hago con mis habilidades de español en el mundo académico y más allá.

Además, aunque se supone que debo reconocer a un profesor especial, es imposible para mí no reconocer el impacto legendario que todos mis profesores de español me han dejado. Por lo tanto, debo dar un reconocimiento especial a la Dra. Tasende, Dr. Vann, Dra. Pérez de la Cruz, Dr. Pastrana-Pérez, Dr. Isea, Dra. Tubino-Blanco, Dr. Zarate-Sandez, y Dra. Montilla por cambiar mi vida para siempre al darme las herramientas para apreciar la belleza y el poder sobre la lengua, la historia y la cultura española.



# Naomi Washington



I am honored to receive the generous financial support of the Suzanne M. Wheatley Award and the Ruth Kirby Scholarship, and grateful to the Spanish department for their invaluable guidance. This recognition inspires me to strive for excellence and make a meaningful impact in my field. I am filled with gratitude for all of the contributors to my educational and professional journey.

# Mathilde Steckelberg Award

(Presenter: Prof. Benjamín Torres)

The Mathilde Steckelberg Award was established by her upon her retirement from our department. She taught Latin at WMU from 1927 to 1961, and was chair of the Department of Modern and Classical Languages, which included Spanish, from 1944 until she retired. She established a scholarship to recognize outstanding achievement by students majoring in the languages available at WMU at that time, directing that students would be selected for their performance and potential in the language.

The recipients of the 2024 Mathilde Steckelberg Award are: **Nadia Famiano** and **Charlie DeGraves**.



# Nadia Famiano



I am a double major in English and Spanish. I plan on using the skills I acquire from these majors to become a children's librarian in the Kalamazoo area. This fall, I will be participating in a study abroad program in Spain. I would like to give a shoutout to my favorite professor Robert Vann. He's the one who convinced me to add a Spanish major in the first place. I would also like to thank all the donors who make my education possible.

# Charles M DeGraves



Muchísimas gracias al montón de gente que me ha ayudado con mi título en español. Me gustaría agradecer a mi primer profesor de español en WMU, Timothy Erskine. Decidí estudiar este idioma en un nivel universitario por su bondad y apoyo. Después de mis estudios de español, antropología, y estudios internacionales en Western, pienso trabajar en el campo de antropología de desarrollo sostenible. Les diría a estudiantes futuros de español que estudiar en el extranjero es maravilloso. Es la manera más fácil aprender una lengua, y el apoyo que el departamento de español provee es excelente. Además, experiencias así expandirán tu visión del mundo.

Gracias por este premio. Les prometo que voy a mostrar al mundo lo que pueden hacer los Broncos y los Michiganders.



# Herb B. Jones Award

(Presenter: Prof. Benjamín Torres)

The **Herb B. Jones Award** is made in memory of Herb. B. Jones, a professor of Spanish who taught at WMU for 35 years. He was a man who devoted his life to the true assimilation of Hispanic culture. He passed away several years ago, and we remember him each year by awarding this scholarship to an outstanding student.

The recipient of the 2024 Herb B. Jones Award is **Hope McHugh**.



# Hope McHugh

Thank you to everyone for your support!

I want to express my gratitude to the donors who made my education possible and also give a special shoutout to Mariola Perez de la Cruz and Benjamin Torres for guiding me in my Spanish academic journey. This summer I will continue my journey by studying abroad in Spain.

One piece of advice I would give to future Spanish majors is to take every opportunity you get! You only get so much time here at Western so make sure you make the most of it.

**GO BRONCOS!**

# Michael Braun Award

(Presenter: Prof. Germán Zárate-Sández)



The **Michael Braun Award** was established in memory of Michael Braun, who was an alumnus of our program who returned to become a beloved professor and mentor to students interested in becoming Spanish teachers. Since his untimely death in 2018, the department makes this award in his honor to celebrate his passion for the Spanish language and his dedication to training the next generation of equally passionate Spanish teachers.

The recipients of the 2024 Michael Braun Award are: **Megan Baldry** and **Valeria Cusumano**.





# Megan Baldry

Quiero dar mis gracias a todo el Departamento de Español de Western y de la Universidad de Burgos que me ha ayudado en mi educación y mi carrera. Gracias a los donantes, cuya generosidad es la razón que tengo la suerte de tantas oportunidades en este programa. Después de graduarme, trabajaré en el campo de los recursos humanos como especialista bilingüe.

El tiempo que pasaba estudiando español aquí y en Burgos ha sido sumamente formativo para mi tanto en mi carrera como en mi vida personal. Ya lo echo de menos.



# Valeria Cusumano



Thank you to everyone who helped me to receive this award, so I can further my studies in Spanish.

Can't wait to see some of you in Burgos!

# Carolyn Harris Award

(Presenter: Prof. Mariola Pérez de la Cruz)

The Carolyn Harris Award was established by the faculty in memory of Dr. Carolyn Harris, who was a professor and undergraduate advisor in the Department of Spanish from 1985 to 2014. Each year we give the award to an undergraduate student who embodies some of Carolyn's outstanding qualities: generous, kind, service-oriented, pleasant, and passionate about what they do.

The recipient of the 2024 Carolyn Harris Award is: **Audrey Dorman.**

# Audrey Dorman



Audrey Dorman está estudiando Food Marketing y el español. Tiene planes de graduarse de WMU en la primavera de 2025. Después, tiene planes de viajar a todas partes del mundo. El año pasado ella tenía la oportunidad de participar en los programas de Santander. Ella tiene una gran cantidad de agradecido para todas sus experiencias en España, y todas las personas que ha conocido durante su viaje. Gracias a los donantes por hacerlo posible, y mil gracias a todos sus profesores y la paciencia que tienen.

# Michael Millar Scholarship

(Presenter: Prof. Pablo Pastrana-Pérez)

Our colleague Michael Millar was a faculty member in the Department of Spanish between 2002 and 2023. To those of us who knew him, Mike was the life of the party. He was a specialist in Latin America, the founder of our service-learning course, a passionate advisor, and the first director of our Costa Rica study-abroad program. We remember his passion for teaching, his fierce advocacy for students' rights, and his unique sense of humor . The **Professor Michael Millar Scholarship** has been established by his family, friends, and faculty in his memory.



The recipients of the inaugural 2024 Michael Millar Scholarship are: **Rory Campbell** and **Landon Palmer**.





# Rory Campbell



Thank you so much for this acknowledgment!

I've been able to experience so many different fulfilling opportunities thanks to the Spanish department, including studying abroad in Spain and now volunteering in the Adult ESL Classes at El Concilio. I hope to continue volunteering my time here throughout the summer and the rest of my years here at WMU.

I will use this funding to complete my courses and graduate with a dual-degree in Exercise Science and Spanish.



# Landon Palmer

Quiero dar las gracias al departamento de Español. No solo por darme la oportunidad de aprender el español al nivel universitario. Pero también por darme la oportunidad de hacer amigos nuevos, fundar el club de español, y hacer nuevas conexiones profesionales.

También, quiero agradecerle a un profesor especial. A pesar de que no está aquí con nosotros ahora. Gracias al profesor Millar, por enseñarme cómo entender a la literatura, y particularmente la poesía en español. Y por conferir un amor por el arte en español a sus estudiantes. Abriendo un mundo nuevo de información y arte para mí, y muchos otros estudiantes.

# Bullard-Marshall Scholarship

(Presenter: Prof. Mercedes Tasende)

Maggie Bullard-Marshall graduated from WMU in 1998 with degrees in Spanish and Organizational Communication. She was an honors student and studied abroad in Spain. After graduating summa cum laude with Phi Beta Kappa distinction, Maggie held different jobs in sectors from banking to insurance. In 2009, she and her husband Rodney co-founded their own Kalamazoo-based company, called Aldevra, a small government contracting business, where she serves as the Chief Operating Officer.



The recipient of the 2024 Bullard-Marshall Scholarship is: **Tate Wierda.**





# Tate Wierda



Costa Rica 2023

Thank you to Maggie Bullard-Marshall and Rodney Marshall for this scholarship, and to Maggie for sharing her Spanish story when she came to Western in 2022.

Gracias a Profesores Torres, Tasende, y Tubino-Blanco por prender de nuevo mi amor para el español, y a Profe Perez de la Cruz por preguntarme "¿por qué no?" cuando tuve indecisión sobre estudiar en el extranjero.

I plan on graduating Spring of 2026 with Majors in Spanish, Political Science, and Economics.

To future Spanish majors: find Spanish music you like and sing along! And study abroad before you think you're ready to!!



# Graduate Teaching Effectiveness Award

(Presenter: Prof. Germán Zárate-Sández)

The Graduate Teaching Effectiveness Award is given yearly to a graduate teaching assistant who is a consummate pedagogue and who excels in the craft of teaching. The recipient is not only the top choice of our Director of the Spanish Language Program, Dr. Germán Zárate-Sández, but the teacher rewarded with the highest student evaluations.

The recipient of the 2024 Graduate Teaching Effectiveness Award in Spanish is **Gabrielle Francois**.



# Gabrielle Francois

Muchas gracias al departamento de español por este premio y a todos mis estudiantes que han hecho que mi experiencia aquí sea genial. Este programa me ha enseñado mucho sobre mí misma y la pasión por enseñar. Quiero agradecer a todos mis profesores de español por seguir encendiendo mi amor por el español y también a Profesor Rob Vann por introducirme a este programa de maestría cuando yo era una estudiante de pregrado.

# Graduate Research and Creative Scholar Award

(Presenter: Prof. Patricia Montilla)

The Graduate Research and Creative Scholar Award is given yearly to a graduate student who excels in research. The recipient of this award is someone with high intellect, an excellent ability to read critically, and a notable writer. The recipient of this award is the top choice of graduate faculty and the Director of Graduate Studies, Dr. Patricia Montilla. In this case, the decision was unanimous!

The recipient of the 2024 Graduate Research and Creative Scholar Award in Spanish is **Sandra Ollety**.





# Sandra Naa Dedei Chinenye Ollety

As a young girl from Ghana who started learning Spanish at the university and has never been to a Spanish speaking country, this is truly an honor and a testimony to the wonderful language professors I have had over the years.

I would especially like to thank Dr. Zárata-Sández. Firstly, for his excellent execution of the Methods course which helped shaped me into a better teacher and secondly, for being the first professor to truly recognize and appreciate my efforts as a student.

Lastly, I would like to thank Dr. Pastrana-Pérez, Ms. Colleen Sante and all my very cool course mates. I appreciate you all and it is a delight working with you.



# Honorary Speaker and 2023-24 Alumni Achievement Award recipient in Spanish




Julián Ramírez Torres came to WMU as a first-generation TRIO student. The son of Mexican immigrants, Mr. Ramírez Torres studied Spanish and Secondary Education, and was a stellar student. He was highly involved with the Spanish service-learning course, proving instrumental in bringing Dolores Huerta to campus for the César Chávez celebration. After graduating in 2012, Julián worked as a high-school teacher to later become the Principal of the Southwest Middle High School – Academia Bilingüe in Grand Rapids. He is a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, having served two tours in Afghanistan and continuing as an active member of the U.S. Army Reserves.



# WMU Spanish Department Awards Ceremony

Julián Ramírez-Torres



**¡Felicidades!  
Congratulations!**

# **My Journey With the Spanish Language**

- **I was born in Guanajuato, Mexico.**
- **My family and I immigrated to the United States in 1992.**
- **Started school in the United States and began assimilating to the culture and learning the language.**
- **Developed identity struggles because I wanted to assimilate but also didn't want to let go of my own language and culture.**
- **In 2007, I started my undergraduate studies here at WMU, declared my major in Spanish!**
- **Thanks to our amazing faculty, especially my phenomenal mentor (Dr. Millar), I developed a sense of pride for my native language and my culture which helped me develop a strong identity and feel proud of who I am and where I came from.**



# Spanish After WMU Years

- **Daily in my personal life with my family (especially my mom).**
- **Migrant education (teacher and recruiter).**
- **Middle School and High School Spanish teacher.**
- **Assistant principal of Southwest Elementary-Academia Bilingüe. A dual language immersion school in Grand Rapids.**
- **Principal of Southwest Middle/High-Academia Bilingüe, dual language theme school in Grand Rapids.**
- **Use my language to bridge communication gaps between our parents and school district. Advocate for their needs at the district level.**

# Spanish in the United States

According to [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov) “Spanish was the most common non-English language spoken in U.S. homes (62%) in 2019 – 12 times greater than the next four most common languages”.

# Spanish Around the World

**According to worlddata.info “ A total of about 457.1 million people worldwide speak Spanish as their mother tongue. Additionally, Spanish is an official language in 22 countries”.**

# Why Continue Your Spanish Journey?

- **Job Security**
- **Communicate with those that might not speak English.**
- **Advocate for the Spanish speaking community.**
- **Allows you to be an open minded person.**
- **See the world from other people's perspective.**
- **Travel the world without needing a translator.**
- **Options for work around the world.**
- **If you speak Spanish and English you can communicate with 80% of the people on the planet.**
- **Many more.**



The background features abstract, organic shapes in brown, grey, and yellow. A dark brown shape is in the top-left corner, a grey shape is in the top-right, and another grey shape is at the bottom. A yellow shape is partially visible in the bottom-right corner.

**“The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.”**

**Ludwig Wittgenstein**



**Nuevamente, Felicidades y les  
deseo mucho éxito.**

**Congratulations once again. I  
wish you all the best.**

# Musical Interlude



Voice: Marysol Millar

Cello: Piper Meldrum-Roy

- *Pajarito colibrí*, by Natalia Lafourcade
- *Cucurrucucú paloma*, by Tomás Méndez

# Presidential Scholar and Robert and Barbara Felkel Cervantes Prize

The Presidential Award represents the highest academic honor at WMU that a department bestows on an undergraduate student.

The WMU Department of Spanish **Presidential Scholar** for 2023-2024 and winner of the **Robert and Barbara Felkel Cervantes Prize** is **Piper Meldrum-Roy**.

Thanks to the generosity of our retired colleague, Professor emeritus Robert Felkel and his lovely wife, Magistra Barbara Felkel, we award the Cervantes Prize each year to our Presidential Scholar.





# Piper Meldrum-Roy



I am incredibly grateful to the professors and mentors who have guided me through my Undergraduate experience here at Western. Some of my favorite memories include learning from passionate instructors, experiencing the study-abroad program in Santander, Spain, and engaging in discussion about film, literature, and language with my peers. Post-graduation, I hope to continue my cello and language studies with a master's in performance and/or a position teaching music in a Spanish-speaking country.

# President's Award for Study Abroad

(Presenter: Prof. Mercedes Tasende)

This year's recipient of the Department of Spanish President's Award for Study Abroad is:

**Delanie Antilla**, for her participation in the study-abroad program in Heredia, Costa Rica (Spring 2024)

¡Felicitaciones y que estés disfrutando de la experiencia!



# Delanie Antilla



Muchas gracias a todos los donantes y profesores en el departamento de Español, especialmente Pablo Pastrana-Pérez y Mercedes Tasende por su apoyo y consejos mientras estaba estudiando en el extranjero. Además, gracias a mis profesores Benjamín Torres y Natalio Ohanna por animarme a hacer lo mejor en mis estudios. Estoy tan bendecida de haber tenido la oportunidad de estudiar extranjero en España y Costa Rica, no hubiera sido posible sin premios así.

Espero graduarme el próximo año y usar el idioma en mi carrera de Psicología.

Les recomiendo que aprovechan cualquier oportunidad que se les presente para estudiar este hermoso idioma.

# President's Scholarship for Study Abroad

(Presenter: Prof. Mercedes Tasende)

This year's recipients of the Department of Spanish President's Scholarship for Study Abroad are:

- **Abagayl Bielat**, for Santander, Spain, Summer II 2024
- **Benjamin Edlefson** for Santander, Spain, Summer II 2024
- **Raylie DeCator** for Burgos, Spain, Fall 2024
- **Julia Young** for Santander, Spain, Summer II 2024

¡Felicitaciones y buen viaje!





# Abagayl Bielat



I am incredibly grateful to receive the President's Scholarship for Study Abroad which will help fund my study abroad to Spain. Thank you to the Spanish Department, and a special thank you to Professor Rob Vann and Irene Kivinen for all their help during my studies. Receiving this award is truly an honor and I am excited to continue my Spanish studies.

# Benjamin A. Edlefson



It's a long and sometimes challenging road to travel when you're an aspiring Spanish major, so I'll tell you some great steps I took to build my skills. For those who struggle with vocabulary, I recommend making flashcards and studying them for at least 15-20 minutes each day. The students in more advanced classes would find that finding a friend or two to study with works wonders, and in their down time they can incorporate some Spanish in by watching their movies or playing video games in that language. It's a bit jarring at first but they'll soon find it effective!

# Raylie DeCator

As an English and Spanish education major, I'm proud to accept the **President's Scholarship for Study Abroad** as it will allow me to spend the fall semester of 2024 studying abroad in Burgos, Spain. Receiving this award is a true honor, and I am immensely thankful for the recognition of my hard work and dedication to the field of education. This award is a testament to the unwavering support and guidance I have received throughout my journey. I extend my gratitude to everyone who has played a role in my success, especially Profesora Mariola Perez De la Cruz, and Profesor Benjamín Torres. With their instruction, I am confident I will thrive in Spain. ¡Muchas gracias!





# Julia Young



I want to express my gratitude to the donors and the Spanish department. I am honored to be chosen to receive this scholarship—your generosity is sincerely appreciated.

Receiving a college education and traveling the world has been my goal for most of my life and this scholarship helps me to take my educational journey abroad. I am eager to arrive in Santander, Spain to make new connections and enhance my language skills.

To all future Spanish students, embrace every opportunity, both inside and outside the classroom, to learn and connect with all things Spanish.



# Antonia H. Rostami Award

(Presenter: Prof. Natalio Ohanna)

The **Antonia H. Rostami Award** celebrates the life and work of Antonia H. Rostami, who was born in Mexico and lived in Portage, Michigan for many years, where she was a Spanish teacher. This award recognizes the initiative to study abroad, with preference given to future teachers of Spanish .

The recipients of the 2024 Antonia H. Rostami Award are:

- **Molly Dixon**, for Heredia, Costa Rica, Spring 2024
- **Cassidy Neil**, for Heredia, Costa Rica, Spring 2024
- **Emma Olson**, for Santander, Spain, Summer II 2024
- **Teddy Richards**, for Santander, Spain, Summer II 2024





# Molly Dixon

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to the scholarship sponsors and faculty of WMU. They have made my education possible and allowed me to study abroad for three months in the beautiful country of Costa Rica.

I'd also like to thank my Spanish professors Mariola Pérez de la Cruz and Benjamín Torres for their help in preparing me for this trip.

I encourage all Spanish students to pursue any study abroad opportunities. It is a humbling and life-changing experience that fosters personal and educational growth. Also, it is so fun!

Gracias a todos y ¡pura vida!

# Cassidy Neil

Un gran agradecimiento a los donantes que hacen posible estas becas.

Un saludito a todos mis profesores de español, especialmente a los profesores Tasende y Vann, que me han apoyado mucho durante mi tiempo aquí.

Unos consejos para los futuros estudiantes de español:

Un poco de progreso cada día da para mucho.

Cometer errores es fundamental en el aprendizaje. ¡No hay presión para ser perfecto!

Si yo puedo lograrlo, ustedes también pueden.

¡Nunca se rindan!





# Emma Olson

Thank you so much to everyone who has supported me in my journey to pursue both my passions!

Thank you to the donors for choosing to support me for my studies! I will be using these funds to study abroad in Santander, Spain this summer!

In the future, I hope to pursue a career in education with both music and Spanish. I hope to teach one or both subjects or have the ability to incorporate both subjects in my classes for my future students.





# Theo Travís Richards

Los sueños son nuestro escape de la realidad, pero con el corazón amable de las personas, algunos de esos sueños pueden hacerse realidad. Agradezco a los donantes maravillosos por permitir que un joven isleño alcance las estrellas. ¡Muchas gracias a los profesores Pérez de la Cruz y Torres! Su amor por compartir su lengua con el mundo me ha inspirado a mí y a muchos otros estudiantes. En fin, a los futuros estudiantes de español: cultiven conexiones significativas, amen lo que hacen y descubrirán que el estudio nunca es aburrido.

# Suzanne M. Wheatley Scholarship

(Presenter: Prof. Natalio Ohanna)

The Suzanne M. Wheatley Scholarship, much like the Award with the same name, is made each year to honor the memory of Suzanne M. Wheatley, who attended WMU from 1985 to 1988 and passed away before completing her studies. It is given to undergraduate students who embody some of Suzie's remarkable qualities, such as her love for the Spanish language and Hispanic cultures, as well as her zest for life.

The recipients of the 2024 Suzanne M. Wheatley Scholarship are:

- Delaney Brockmyre, for Burgos, Fall 2024
- Lauren Smit, for Santander, Spain, Summer II 2024
- Holly Remund, for Santander, Spain, Summer II 2024





# Delaney Brockmyre

I want to express my appreciation for the entire Spanish department. Thank you to each of my teachers for all of your guidance. I have learned a lot in the past two years, and I am excited to see what else is in store.

After the Burgos trip I plan on staying in Europe to explore, visit friends, and gain new skills. Much of it is undetermined right now, but I am optimistic that it will all work out. After I return, I hope to finish my degree and earn my TEFL certificate to teach English as a second language. I want to travel and gain experience before starting my career. Said career hasn't been decided yet, but that is a future me problem.

My advice: learning a second language is hard. Accept that you will mess up and struggle sometimes. Give yourself grace and keep trying. :)



# Lauren Staley Smit



If I had to sum up my many years of learning Spanish and its background/history, I'd say "¡Ay caramba, que hago ahora!" It's been a long and sometimes difficult journey, but through it all I've learned to keep moving forward. My advice to you future Spanish majors is to see the light at the end of the tunnel, for you are one step closer everyday to one of the most rewarding accomplishments you'll ever experience.



# Holly Ann Remund



Thank you to the Wheatley family for your support and for providing me with this opportunity to continue my studies and to have the experience of studying abroad.

I also want to thank Professor Mercedes Tasende for being an incredible professor and for helping me these past few years while I work towards my Bachelor's in Spanish.

# Ruth Kirby Scholarship

## (Presenter: Prof. Natalio Ohanna)

Ruth Y. Kirby was a life long educator who taught French and Latin for many years in both the Portage and Kalamazoo Public School systems before joining the faculty in the College of Education at Western Michigan in 1945. For the 23 years of teaching that followed, Professor Kirby served as an inspiration to her classes and colleagues alike. Her mastery of languages was second only to her unwavering dedication to her students. Because of her very generous bequest in 1990, Ruth Kirby's devotion to our students continues today by supporting them in their studies on campus and abroad.

The recipients of the 2024 Ruth Kirby Scholarship are: **Nic Buccilli, Sara Bussey, Jacob Clevenger, Molly Dixon, Nadia Famiano, Marysol Millar, Emma Olson, Anayeli Rosales, and Naomi Washington.**



# Ruth Kirby Scholarship



Nic Buccilli



Sara Bussey



Jacob Clevenger



Molly Dixon



Nadia Famiano



Marysol Millar



Emma Olson



Anayeli Rosales



Naomi Washington

# Spanish Advancement Scholarship

(Presenter: Prof. Pablo Pastrana-Pérez)

This is one of our newest awards. It was established through the generosity of Dr. Irma López, a longtime Professor and Chair of Spanish who is now the Dean of the Lee Honors College, and recognizes the promise of a Spanish major or minor with a scholarship to support their continued studies at Western Michigan University.

The scholarship winners for the 2024 academic year are: **Marta Baughman, Rebecca Atwell, Andreas Rodriguez-Kupres, and Destiny Clark.**







# Marta Baughman

I'd like to thank Professor Mariola Pérez de la Cruz for her encouragement. When I first met with her last semester, it was to discuss the courses necessary for a Spanish minor. Instead, she motivated me to consider Spanish as a major, and I left her office that day with multiple study abroad pamphlets. Thanks to Professor Pérez, the donors to the Spanish department, and those that selected me for a Spanish Advancement scholarship, I'll be attending the University of Burgos next Fall through the study abroad program. Thank you to WMU's Spanish Department for offering opportunities like this.

# Rebecca Atwell



The Spanish Advancement Scholarship, made possible by the kindness of Dr. Irma López, is enabling me to pursue my academic goals with a study abroad program in Quito, Ecuador this summer. To my fellow Spanish majors, I urge you to seize every chance to immerse yourselves in the language and culture. Embracing these experiences will not only enhance your language skills but also broaden your understanding of the world. Dr. López, your generosity is creating opportunities for students like me to explore and grow. Your belief in the power of education to transform lives is truly inspiring. Thank you for your unwavering support and investment in our futures!



# Andreas Rodriguez-Kupres

Major: Biomedical Sciences

Minors: Chemistry, Holistic Health, Spanish

Future Plans:

I will be studying abroad in Santander, Spain over Summer II, to continue my Spanish education. Once I graduate from WMU I plan to go to medical school, but I'm not sure where yet. I plan to become a Pediatric Cardio Surgeon and use my Spanish skills to help less fortunate Spanish-speaking families.

Gracias al Departamento de español y a la Profesora Pérez de la Cruz!



# Destiny Timeah Clark



Huge thank you to the donors of this scholarship! I am so thankful to receive this and to be included in something so wonderful.

*Gracias a todos mis profesores de español. Siempre me animaron a seguir adelante.*

What's next? SPAIN! I will be there for the entire upcoming fall semester, taking classes, indulging in the culture, and perfecting my Spanish,

Advice to future Spanish majors: KEEP GOING! It gets hard sometimes, wipe your tears and keep striving. *Eres Valiente!!*



# Spanish Student Support Scholarship

(Presenter: Prof. Pablo Pastrana-Pérez)

The Spanish Student Support Scholarship is awarded to those students who have plans to study in the Quito, Ecuador, study-abroad program and have yet to declare a Spanish major or minor. It is meant to help them defray the costs associated with our study-abroad programs.

These are the students receiving a 2024 Spanish Student Support Scholarship: **Lochlain Mcfarlane, Millie Boutwell, and Alyssa Cousino.**



# Lochlain Robert Macfarlane

I am a first-year student at Western Michigan University majoring in Spanish and CIS. I have absolutely loved learning at WMU and am planning to study aboard in Quito, Ecuador in the summer. My favorite professor is Dr. Mercedes. She is one of the best Spanish teachers I have ever had. She keeps class fun and interesting. Thank you so much for the support you have given me!

Future Plans: Graduate with a CIS and Spanish major traveling the world.

Advice for future students: Make a study group with your classmates.



# Millie Boutwell



I moved to Kalamazoo in 2022 to learn Spanish. I ended up finding a wonderful community that has encouraged me every step of the way, in and out of the classroom.

Thank you to everyone who made this possible. Special shout out and thank you to Alexis Ramírez Victoria his dedication and collaborative approach to helping me get to where I am today. ¡Muchas gracias!

Your future plans: Me voy a Ecuador!

Advice to future Spanish majors.-The obstacle is the way. Keep going!

# Alyssa Grace Cousino



I would like to give a special thanks to the Spanish department for supporting my endeavors, especially my professors:

Robert Vann - for encouraging me to pursue my minor

Alexis Ramirez Victoria - for encouraging me to study abroad, which I plan to do this summer.



# Travel Study Award

(Presenter: Prof. Pablo Pastrana-Pérez)

The Travel Study Award from the Department of Spanish was established to help students to study abroad. It is also meant to help them defray the cost of airfare and personal expenses while studying abroad.

These are the students receiving a 2024 Travel Study Award in Spanish: Ella Klute, Kal Moyet, Lilly Powers, and Megan Fleming.

# Ella Klute



I have learned and grown so much throughout all my Spanish classes at Western. I appreciated that they were always in-person classes because my major has few options for in-person. I am planning to go to Santander, Spain this summer to continue my development in Spanish.

When I graduate from Western with my degree in Family Studies, with minors in Holistic Health and Spanish, I want to help families in need. Knowing Spanish gives me the ability to help a larger population.

This picture is from my most recent study abroad to the Dominican Republic over spring break.

# Kal Lynn Moyet



Muchas gracias por este premio. Ahora puedo estudiar en el extranjero y tener nuevas experiencias mientras mejoro mi español. Estoy muy agradecido que tengo la habilidad para ir a España a través de este programa y el dinero que he recibido.

Me gustaría agradecer al departamento de español por esta oportunidad. También me gustaría agradecer a Benjamín Torres por su ayuda y una clase muy divertida.





# Lillian Powers

I want to thank the sponsors who made it possible for me to receive this award. I am so honored and grateful to be a recipient. Having help funding my study abroad experience means a great deal to me. I also want to thank the Spanish department here at WMU. I have experienced nothing but positivity and support from all my Spanish professors here, particularly Mariola Pérez de la Cruz and Robert Vann, who have both been so wonderful to work with. After my time here at Western, I plan to attend law school. I intend to focus on divorce or immigration law where I hope to use my background in Spanish to represent and assist clients in their native language whenever possible.



# Megan Fleming



My name is Megan Fleming, I am a senior majoring in Healthcare Services & Sciences with a pre-PA focus & I am minoring in Spanish.

I would like to thank all of the donors who make this scholarship available. Additionally, a huge thank you to my professors (Mercedes Tubino-Blanco, Mariola Perez de la Cruz, Benjamin Torres) who have believed in me & pushed me to be where I am today.

When I am finished with graduate school, I would like to move out west & specialize in Women's Health, Pediatrics, or general surgery.

**THANK YOU AGAIN!!!**

# Recognition of Department Service-Learners and Volunteers

(Presenter: Prof. Lindsay Jeffers)

We honor all of our students participating in Service learning opportunities in our community schools, hospitals, legal offices, immigrant services, and administrative posts.

Abagayl Bielat, Delaney Brockmyre, Nic Buccilli, Kayla Byrd, Rory Campbell, Alexis Hallberg, Kiona Powers, and Naomi Washington

# Phi Beta Kappa

The oldest and most prestigious honor society for the university's top liberal arts students

(Presenter: Prof. Kristina Wirtz,  
Theta of Michigan Chapter Secretary)



**Lauren Brainard**  
**Kayla Byrd**  
**Kyra Dyke**  
**Anita Zandstra**

*The* **PHI BETA KAPPA** *Society*

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— Founded December 5, 1776 —



# Congratulations from our Vice-President of Diversity and Inclusion, Dr. Candy McCorkle

Dear WMU Spanish Department Students,

I am so sorry that I am not able to attend the ceremony today to celebrate each of you and your outstanding accomplishments. However, as a senior administrator of Western Michigan University, I am so proud of the excellent academic achievement of our students as well as the excellence our students demonstrate inside and outside of the classroom. On this wonderful day, I am proud of each of you and want to congratulate you on your honors and awards. The hard work, persistence and commitment to excellence is being acknowledged today. Well done each of you. Enjoy this celebration and now you are a great example of a Bronco! *Felicidades!*



# THANK YOU!!!

We would like to thank all our volunteers. Special thanks to **Albert Asiedu-Larbi**, in charge of our computer projection, **Maruán Álvarez Villa**, **Sandra Olletey**, **Marta Pérez Cantero**, and so many other graduate students who have been helping with today's ceremony.

And our heart-felt gratitude to an essential person in our department, who is always willing to lend a hand and does it with grace and generosity, our Administrative Assistant, **Mrs. Colleen Sante**.



*¡Enhorabuena y  
nuestros mejores  
deseos para todos!*

Congratulations,  
students!

If you graduate this semester,  
we wish you all the best!

