

### **Describe your language experience at Logan High (brief)**

By the end of my freshman year at Logan I had become extremely interested in the mystical idea of speaking the language of far-away exotic lands, so I decided to start spending as much time with Spanish outside of class as possible. I did some grammar study, but what interested me more was using the language as native speakers did, so I started to read and watch the news online in Spanish, read novels from Spain and Hispanic America, listen to radio podcasts from Spain, watch films from Spanish-speaking countries, and so on. In fact, I spent so much time with Spanish that I advanced myself to a level at which I was able to take all of my Spanish classes at UW-L while I was a junior and senior, which at that point were classes on topics like the literary, historical, and linguistic cultures of the Spanish-speaking world that were conducted purely in Spanish. ¡Ni una sola palabra del inglés! There, I was able to connect with a number of native Spanish speakers both on and off campus through a variety of classes and programs, such as weekly conversation tables with local native speakers. As a senior I also took Russian classes at UW-L and started to study French and Italian on my own.

### **What are you doing now with the language, languages and travel?**

Right now I'm finishing my first year of study at UW-Madison. One of my majors is Spanish and I'm thinking of double majoring in either Russian or psychology. I'm also a student of a program called the Russian Flagship Program, which is one of many Flagship Programs in the country that are funded by the US Department of Defense and is designed to facilitate the acquisition of a superior professional linguistic and cultural proficiency in critical languages by the time the accepted student completes his or her undergraduate degree. The only Flagship Program at Madison is Russian, but around the US there are other universities with programs for Arabic, Chinese, Turkish, Persian, Hindi Urdu, Korean, Portuguese, and Swahili.

I'm hoping to study in Perú next Spring, and for the Flagship program I'll be required (and funded) to spend the following summer in Estonia, Kazakhstan, or Russia, as well as complete a capstone year studying and working an internship in Kazakhstan during my year of graduation. I also studied in Spain during the summer between my junior and senior years of high school. I continue to study French and Italian on my own, and I wish to add another language or two to my repertoire down the road to improve my profile as an interpreter. Right now I'm thinking of doing German and/or Czech.

### **Future career you are preparing for?**

My goal is get a master's degree, hopefully overseas, in conference interpretation and either work freelance or for a multinational institution like the UN, NATO, or the EU.

### **How have language classes changed you as a person?**

By studying foreign languages, I have been granted access to worlds upon worlds of different perspectives and insights on what it means to be in this world, not to mention all of the film, poetry, literature, and music. I have met so many people, heard so many musics, and read so many books from so many corners of the globe that I otherwise wouldn't have been able to. Knowing multiple languages –particularly Spanish in my case– has also already proven to earn my jobs and make money that I couldn't have earned otherwise. The list goes on and on. Simply put, languages have deeply enriched the lens through which I see the world and have left, and continue to leave, profound marks on my mind, psyche, and heart.