

Universidad Tecnologica de Bolivar Spanish and Cultural Immersion

Undergraduate Language Grant (ULG) | Submitted by a Junior in Weinberg

*This cover page is meant to focus your reading of the sample proposal, summarizing important aspects of proposal writing that the author did well or could have improved. **Review the following sections before reading the sample.** The proposal is also annotated throughout to highlight key elements of the proposal's structure and content.*



Proposal Strengths	Areas for Improvement
Student shows a clear path of what they have accomplished and what they still need to do in order to be successful in their long term goals. This path requires Spanish proficiency.	Student could have detailed out which Spanish classes they planned to take before graduation, since the audience is language faculty who are familiar with Northwestern's curriculum.
Student includes specific examples of course work, internship, and research that supports this argument.	Student's program focused on conversational skills, since this area is where the student most needed to improve skills. Supplemental material on program (not showed here) did demonstrate that the program focused on all three modalities of language (reading, writing, and speaking).
Student demonstrates time limitations to show pressing need for language learning during the upcoming summer.	
Students make clear argument for why this language program is the best fit. Rationale includes financial constraints, partnership with local organizations, desire to live with host family, and dialect/accent considerations.	



Other Key Features to Take Note Of
Student advocates for a program that meets financial needs in order to be able to afford total cost of program
Student selected a country that was under U.S. DOS Travel Advisory. Student showed awareness of procedures associated with traveling to a higher risk country, and student was already taking next steps to make this actually happen to minimize review committee concerns. If you think your program may be located in a higher risk area, please see: https://www.northwestern.edu/global-safety-security/travel-policies/undergraduates/index.html

First paragraph functions like abstract. Overview of 3 main arguments

I plan to use my Undergraduate Language Grant to study Spanish at Universidad Tecnológica de Bolívar in Cartagena, Colombia. The program will elevate my current limited working proficiency to full professional proficiency, so that after graduation, I can partake in community-based participatory research to study the interactions between humans and jaguars in South America. I have not been able to take abundant Spanish classes at Northwestern and immerse myself fully in the language due to a heavy course load and a late development of my career path. Receiving a ULG will allow me to spend the summer months becoming proficient in Spanish before applying for fellowships to complete independent research in South America.

Defines program, language, and goals immediately



I want to use community-based participatory research (CBPR) to study human-large cat interactions and determine what current problems and opportunities exist. Even more specifically, I want to study jaguars and their interactions with locals. It was not until this past summer when I worked with jaguars in Brazil that I realized how passionate I am about the cat and how badly I desire to work on human-jaguar conflicts in South America. Jaguars currently live in every non-island country south of the United States except for Chile. 16 of those 20 countries speak Spanish. In order to do CBPR, I must first become fluent, especially conversationally, in Spanish, so that I may have these conversations with locals and engage in the local community. The ULG is the first step in reaching fluency.

Defines big, long term goal and connects this to language usage



Prior work towards goal

I started to learn and practice asset-based community development (ABCD) through completing the Northwestern GESI program in Kenya during the Fall of 2015. When I returned to campus, I took INTL_ST 390: Research in International Development that focused primarily on CBPR. There, I developed a research strategy to study human perceptions of jaguars in Brazil. This past summer, I collected life history and territorial data on a jaguar population in the Pantanal of Brazil. Many of the guides and jaguar trackers actually originated from Peru and primarily spoke Spanish. Though I was able to communicate basic concepts, my lack of Spanish prohibited me from asking and understanding complex questions and answers as well as distanced me from the Spanish-speaking community. As such, much of the data I collected came from English speakers in the area, skewing the data towards foreigners and educated individuals.

Current work towards goal

I am currently analyzing my data from this summer in BIO 337: Quantitative Methods for Ecology and Conservation and plan to turn it into a senior thesis on jaguar behavior in human presence. At the beginning of next year, I want to apply for National Geographic's Young Explorers and/or a Fulbright Grant so after graduation, I can research how locals adapt and live with jaguars in South America. I then want to utilize my findings to alleviate some of the human-jaguar conflict. In order to achieve these goals and to be able to complete the research, I must get closer to fluency in Spanish. This is important not only for conducting the actual research and engaging in community development with local populations, but it is also integral in the logistical planning of the research project as well as forming partnerships with local academia. The Fulbright application is due at the beginning of September. I must have advanced Spanish by that time, leaving this summer as the only opportunity for me to become proficient.

Explains prior experience while drawing attention to the fact that language gaps were problematic



Future work towards goal

I know some Spanish, having studied it throughout high school and completing the intermediate level at Northwestern, but it is impossible for me to partake in CBPR with my current Spanish competency. I plan to take one or two more Spanish courses before I graduate,



Defining the future classes a ULG would prepare you to take can be a helpful supporting argument

Argument #1: Why is language of study essential for your future goals?

although, unfortunately, I am not able to take sufficient courses to propel my Spanish to where it needs to be for conducting research and applying for grants. On campus, as a STEM student, I work to balance my science classes with outside global engagement opportunities such as studying abroad and attending Buffett events. Additionally, Northwestern offers very few courses on animal behavior or predator interactions with humans. As such, I am currently teaching a seminar on Wolf Conservation in North America so that I can explore the topic of human-predator interactions here in the United States. I am also participating in Chicago Field Studies in the Spring of 2017 to learn about animal behavior. But both of these detract from my ability to study Spanish on campus. While the classroom can and has taught me grammar and conversation in an artificial setting, I must be able to understand Spanish regardless of context.

Argument #2:
Why THIS summer, and why not during academic year?

★ Therefore, I must fully immerse myself in the language to improve my conversational Spanish and listening comprehension. In a perfect world, I would be able to study abroad in a Spanish-speaking country in order to improve my conversational Spanish, except I cannot afford to study abroad again with my current course load and extracurricular involvement. At this point in my academics, being immersed in Spanish can only be done over the summer through a ULG. I believe that through an intensive eight-week program where I completely immerse myself in Spanish I will become conversationally comfortable and proficient.

Argues for an affordable program option

I have chosen the Spanish and Cultural Immersion program at Universidad Tecnológica de Bolívar in Cartagena, Colombia. Not only is it an academically rigorous program accredited by the Instituto Cervantes and a very economical program, but it also has a strong focus on conversational Spanish. Its immersion program offers 20 hours of small, intensive Spanish classes each week. The classes are known for their communicative and conversational approach, perfect for my goal of improving my conversational Spanish. There are additional classes in the afternoon including advanced conversation, which will give me added chance for conversation growth. I have the opportunity to take private lessons throughout the program for increased emphasis on specific topics or extra practice. They also partner with local organizations that focus on ABCD, which will allow me to practice my Spanish in the real-world as well as learn even more about ABCD. Finally, I will live with a host family where I can not only practice my Spanish outside the classroom but also learn and partake in local culture. Since I will be living and studying in Colombia, I will be completely immersed in Spanish even outside the classroom.

Argument #3:
Why this program (and city/country, if relevant)?

I have chosen a program in Colombia, despite travel warnings, because Colombia does not have a strong accent. Their Spanish is easily understood throughout South America, making it the most versatile. Since I aim to work in a multitude of Spanish-speaking countries, it is important to have a widely-understood/non-offensive accent. Colombia also has a vibrant jaguar population isolated from much of the rest of the continent by the Andes. As such, I am interested in returning to the country after graduation to study its unique human-jaguar interactions. I have already been in contact with Beth Osterlund, the program coordinator at Northwestern’s Office of Global Safety and Security, to begin requesting permission from the University to travel to a country with a U.S. DOS Travel Warning.

Even if you have an area of focus, Language program has to include reading, writing AND speaking.

Shows why other countries NOT under travel warnings are not a good alternative solution

Shows maturity and awareness of procedures related to travel warning countries

<u>Budget Considerations</u>	
Airfare:	(average the price of typical flights, and account for the fact that you will not be able to buy tickets for a few months until your grant is accepted)
Tuition:	(you may need to convert tuition costs into USD)
Local Travel:	(travel from international airport to language program site; commuting to language program, etc)
Housing:	(may be included within program costs, or you may be expected to figure this out yourself)
Meals:	(estimate reasonable amount per day, multiplied by length of program – may need to subtract out meals provided by program)
Health Insurance & Vaccines:	(Northwestern’s Office of Global Safety & Security requires you have travel insurance – check out their website and look into the travel health section. It includes information on recommended immunizations and insurance)
Visas	(Visas may or may not be required, pending the length of trip and host country)
Total Expenses	Add up the above expenses
Potential Other Funding Sources	Examples include: Critical Language Scholarship, Boren Award for International Study, Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS), Gilman Scholarship, Buffett Supplemental Grant
ULG Requested Amount	(Max request \$5,000 or up to 75% of the combined expenses above)