

### **Short Essay:**

My job as a spanish language tutor allows me to in more ways than I ever thought. Ideally, my job is to aid in the learning of the spanish language for 100 and 200 level students here at the university. What I have learned in my years in this position is that it is far more than a job to which I answer a few questions and send students on their way. I have learned so much from the students I have taught not only about their different passions and reasoning for learning spanish, but an insight as to what the language means for both native and non native speakers alike. I help to pull students out of their comfort zone for the time they are with me and I provide a space where they can openly practice speaking spanish without judgement. Often times I find that the students are eager to learn and practice, but are in need of a little encouragement. I serve my job not only focused on the correction of grammar or completing assignments for class, but also sharing the spanish culture and inviting the students to experience it even if it is for a moment.

We have conversations in spanish about class, school and life for within their culture and the latinx experience. We play games in spanish, watch episodes of spanish cartoons, and listen to podcasts to find other interactive ways to make learning fun and enjoyable. I deeply enjoy my job as a tutor of the spanish language and I gain a sense of satisfaction when students return for visits outside of required assignments. In addition to my job as a tutor I have also spent a few hours a week working with friends and peers in the Valpo community that are not taking a language, but are looking to practice. We meet several times a week to have conversations and answer questions that help prepare them for upcoming interviews or instances in which they will have to speak spanish for prolonged periods of time. This has been a beautiful addition to my Valpo experience as I have found people on campus who are actively going out of their way to speak and practice and allowing me to express a language I typically only use inside the LRC or with close friends. I am overjoyed when I hear news from those I've practiced with about job opportunities in locations such as Uruguay and Mexico. A good leader creates more leaders, a good tutor creates confident speakers. I can only hope I am a small step in their journey to confident speaking.

This year I have had the opportunity to serve on the executive board of Latinos in Valparaíso for Excellence (L.I.V.E.) as the Vice President. During my first year here at the university I looked to this organization as a home away from home and a place where I was able to express myself in a way that I was unsure would be accepted here. I soon found this organization may have been my starting point, but it continued to push me in more ways than I ever thought. In my time as a member, I found I wanted to a position of leadership in order to be

a beacon of light for other latinx and first generation students like myself. I earned the positions of historian and then vice president of L.I.V.E and I work to not only promote the culture throughout campus, but also educate and welcome others to share in it. As a first generation college student I have found that many of the new students that come into L.I.V.E have the same questions and concerns I had as a new member. Through my experience I am comfortable being support or a resource to students who may be in a situation I once experienced. I offer my help in any way I can and if I do not know the answer I know there are many places to find it.

My executive position has given me many leadership skills, but most importantly it has provided me with an understanding to the community around me and how through my position I can help those who do not even know where to start. L.I.V.E has grown tremendously in its forms of programing over the years and it means very much to be to be apart of the ever growing positive change we are trying to make on this campus. This past year we held our first ever first generation luncheon with Sigma Lambda Gamma National Sorority Inc. It was amazing to see the turnout of so many different types of first gen students all coming together to learn something that benefits this group of students. I was proud to be on both ends of this event as LIVE is dedicated to the latinx population of campus and SLG is my sorority that is rooted in latino culture and its open to multicultural membership. Overall, I have been grateful for all the opportunities this campus has provided me with to express my latino culture and be able to utilize this part of myself to benefit students who want to learn in grow in the same kinds of ways.