

CAREER AND WORKFORCE EXAMPLE:

SPANISH FOR GLOBAL HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



Institution:

The University of
Texas at Arlington

Location:

Arlington, Texas

Year Started:

2019

**Program Point
of Contact:**

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PURPOSE

Spanish for Global Health and Human Services' mission is to prepare Latino, and all, students to reduce language-based health disparities by developing the linguistic and cultural competencies needed to deliver responsive healthcare services. Language barriers contribute to unequal access to healthcare, increase the risk of miscommunication, and exacerbate preventable disparities for individuals with limited English proficiency, more than 60% of whom are Spanish speakers.

Latinos represent one of the fastest-growing populations in the U.S., yet only 5.8% of physicians identify as Hispanic and just 2% of non-Hispanic providers speak Spanish. Through its minor/certificate program, the program prepares a culturally and linguistically responsive healthcare workforce by developing students' advanced medical Spanish proficiency and intercultural competence, professionalizing the linguistic assets of heritage Spanish-speaking students, and increasing Latino representation and career readiness in healthcare and human services.

WHAT STUDENTS SAID ABOUT THIS YEAR'S EXAMPLE

"I am majoring in psychology and minoring in Spanish for global health and human services. I believe that the program I chose for my minor will be extremely helpful for my career as a therapist, as I will be able to treat patients in both English and Spanish, not to mention that it gave me incredible insight into the psychological impacts that physical health has on the psyche." - SGH participant



PRACTICES

The Minor and Certificate in Spanish for Global Health and Human Services started in Fall 2019 in response to the growing need for professionally trained bilingual healthcare providers. These workers needed advanced Spanish language proficiency, medical terminology, and a working understanding of the U.S. healthcare system in relation to diverse healthcare systems and cultural beliefs in Latin America. Recognizing that many Latino students enter college as heritage speakers and informal language brokers, the program intentionally validates and professionalizes their bilingualism as an academic and workforce asset. An ongoing multidisciplinary collaboration across departments ensures workforce alignment and academic rigor through curriculum design and the creation of interprofessional education (IPE) activities, including in-person and online simulations. These simulations bring together students from across programs to strengthen collaborative practice, and culturally responsive care mirrors future work environments.

The curriculum integrates advanced Spanish language development, medical Spanish, Latino health beliefs, and medical humanities courses. The program's core course is offered fully online each semester, an intentional strategy to support student success and accessibility for students across multiple disciplines who have varied program requirements and schedules, allowing them to integrate the course into their degree plans more easily. Faculty and advisors across health-related disciplines, including nursing, public health, kinesiology, biology, and social work, collaborate on recruitment, advising, and curriculum development, connecting students to interdisciplinary support and strengthening their preparation for health and human services careers.

IMPACT

SGH students graduate ready to step into health services placements. Organizations such as UT Southwestern, Children's Health (Dallas), The Agape Clinic, and Mercy Clinic partner with the program for students to gain hands-on experience through internships, service-learning, and externships.

- **Student Access and Representation:** The program has grown from two students at its launch to 37 students in Fall 2025, with enrollment largely comprising Latino and first-generation students, those with greatest need. In 2024–2025, 92% of SGH students were Hispanic, 85% were first-generation, and 75% were Pell-eligible, compared to 37%, 60%, and 46%, respectively, among UTA students enrolled in minors.
- **Student Readiness and Completion:** SGH Latino students maintaining a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher in their minor increased from 65% in 2022–2023 to 80% in 2024–2025, compared to 58% and 61%, respectively, among non-SGH Latino students. Over the same period, time to bachelor's degree completion decreased from 6.19 years to 4.19 years.

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