Student Highlight Nefi Reyes

Title: An IELI Alumnus: A writer, a researcher, and a future graduate student

Nefi Reyes De La Paz, an undergraduate student in the LPCS department, is passionate about books and research. He published his first book titled “Dimitri y el anillo de poder” in Spanish in 2018 (available on Amazon and Kindle) and is currently working on a new one.

Originally from the Dominican Republic, Nefi started his academic journey in USU with attending IELI and was recognized as Student of the Semester and Student of the Year in 2018. IELI faculty remember the integrity, creativity, curiosity, and humor that Nefi always brings to the class meetings. Personally, I feel grateful for having met Nefi as a student in one of my IELI courses and for having been able to continue working with him on research projects.

While attending courses in Spanish and in international studies in the LPCS department, Nefi was selected as CHaSS “A”-pin student of the year and as one of the Latinx leaders here, at USU. He also served as the USU global ambassador, presented a paper at the Student Research Symposium, and has been employed as a research assistant on two projects in literature and languages.

Certainly, Nefi could not have made this journey all by himself. When asked about whom he could thank for helping him along the way, he replied:

*I have received help from many people. My sponsors not only helped me economically, they trust me. My professors from IELI helped me by creating a strong foundation on what was going to be my academic experience and my professors in the Spanish department further facilitated my academic growth.*

At the moment, Nefi is working on a research project about the influence that Francisco Franco had on Spanish literature with a focus on Spanish graphic novels. He is strongly interested in conducting research and becoming a Spanish literature and culture professor. He is currently applying to pursue a graduate degree program in Latin American Studies in Princeton University.

Some of the advice that Nefi would like to share with other aspiring students is as follows:

*I could share some advice with new students, I would encourage them to take advantage of all the resources available around them. Go to the library! Learn how to obtain information and always ask questions! You won’t lose anything by asking your peers, professors, and your advisor. I like to think that nothing comes from nothing. I always remember my goals and that keeps me motivated to keep working.*

By: Ekaterina Arshavskaya, IELI