

# **Spreading the Word**

**Fall 2017**

**A Guide to CLS Alumni-led Information Sessions**



**CRITICAL  
LANGUAGE  
SCHOLARSHIP**

## Sharing Your Experience

Welcome back! We love it when CLS alumni return from the summer happy, healthy, and feeling excited about their language-learning experience abroad. We love it even more when they want to help spread the word about the program.

Because CLS is a relatively young initiative, there are still many qualified students at schools across the U.S. who have not heard of the program. We rely heavily on CLS information sessions to help get the word out to these students, as well as to the faculty and staff at their institutions who will help to promote the program to new students for years to come.

As much as the CLS staff likes to travel, we can't go everywhere every year. Alumni presentations help to give CLS a voice all across the country; plus, prospective applicants love to hear stories from and ask questions of real live program alumni! We have put together this short guide to help you plan your information session. Again, thank you for your enthusiasm!

## Where to Start

There are probably several offices on campus that would be interested in helping you with a CLS information session, and we recommend that you reach out to them. It will make your session planning much easier, and it will help you reach a bigger audience. If there's someone who told you about the program or helped you with your application, that's a great place to start. If not, try reaching out to some or all of these people:

- **CLS Campus Advisor** (search by institution here: <http://www.clscholarship.org/advisors>)
- Office of **Study Abroad, Education Abroad or International Programs**;
- Office of **Scholarships, Fellowships, or Nationally Competitive Awards**;
- Undergraduate **Honors Program**;
- On-campus **Fulbright Program Advisor** (search [here](#) for yours);
- **Language departments** – either by language (Arabic Department, Russian Department), world region (East Asian Studies Department, Islamic Studies Department), or under a catch-all term like Department of Modern Languages, English and Foreign Languages, or Foreign Languages. It is especially helpful to check with these departments if some of the 14 [CLS languages](#) are offered at your school, but you can check with them even if the language offerings do not include CLS languages;
- **Language Lab or Language Learning Center**;
- Office of **Multicultural Affairs**;
- Office of **Fraternity and Sorority Affairs**;
- **LGBT Resource Center**;
- Campus **Writing Center** or **Tutoring Center**.

People in these offices can help you spread the word, set a time and reserve a space on campus for an information session, and serve as follow-up contacts for students who are interested in starting an application but need help with it. Don't be afraid to email professors and administrators you don't know personally, or to ask for help from people in departments and offices without a clear connection to CLS.

Remember that the scholarship aims to attract diverse students from all areas of study, so feel free to email professors you're close to in fields like engineering, business, or fine arts, or administrators for campus organizations you're a member of, to ask for help with your information session or classroom visits and tell them about how CLS can benefit the students they work with.

These offices are doubly useful if you're planning an information session at a school other than your alma mater, where it won't be as easy for you to set things up alone or advertise your session by word of mouth.

## **When to Start**

The CLS application is open from approximately mid-September until November 15<sup>th</sup>. We recommend that you give your information session as close to the beginning of this period as possible, so if you already know you want to give a session, start planning it now. However, if you don't have time to present until mid-October, that's okay, too! Remember – the earlier students find out about CLS, the more time they have to work on their applications!

## **Getting the Word Out**

There are several ways to let students know about your CLS information session. You can download CLS Program fliers from our [website](#) and print them out, or make your own flier announcing the date and time of the session. You can email professors to let them know, write information about the session on the board in language classrooms, or create a Facebook event. You can also [let us know](#) that you're planning a session, and we'll announce it on the CLS [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter feed](#). Sample promotional materials are attached at the end of this document.

## **Your Information Session**

The easiest way to structure a CLS information session is to download the CLS PowerPoint from our website. The PowerPoint file has notes attached to each slide to help guide what you say.

If you're PowerPoint-averse, or if you're presenting in a space that doesn't have a projector, you might still want to look at the PowerPoint before you present, just to see what information it contains and how it's structured. All of the key points about CLS – how the program works, which languages and levels are offered, who's eligible for the program, and how to apply – are in the PowerPoint.

You're also welcome to personalize your session by giving a short presentation about your own experience on CLS. Photos and objects from your time abroad are great for this. There are also great photos of other participants on the CLS social media accounts: Facebook: [fb.com/CLScholarship](https://www.facebook.com/CLScholarship), Twitter: [@CLSScholarship](https://twitter.com/CLSScholarship), Instagram: [@CLScholarship](https://www.instagram.com/CLScholarship).

Overall, a good length for your session is 20 to 30 minutes of presentation from you, followed by about 15 minutes for questions.

If you like, you can collect names and email addresses at your information session. Check with the offices you worked with on campus to see if they would like this information; you may also send it to us at [cls@americancouncils.org](mailto:cls@americancouncils.org).

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Can I give an information session even if I'm planning to apply for the program again?**

Yes, of course! There is nothing bad about an information session presented by someone who liked the program enough to want to do it again.

### **Can I give an information session if I participated in CLS a few years ago?**

Yes, alumni from years prior to 2017 are welcome to give information sessions. We recommend that you spend some time on the [CLS website](#) to become familiar with what might have changed about the program since you participated, and of course, you can [email us](#) with questions.

### **Should I tell you about my information session?**

Absolutely - [email us](#) and let us know. Ideally, you'll tell us about it before it happens, so we can help you advertise it. If that doesn't happen, please tell us afterward, so we know how to explain the sudden uptick in stellar applications from your college or university!

### **Can I co-host my information session?**

Sure! You can check the [CLS alumni database](#) to see if there are other CLS alumni at your institution or at nearby schools. You can also co-host with a faculty or staff member from one of the departments or offices we mentioned above. Another option is to speak at a study abroad fair or an information session for other study abroad or fellowship opportunities. Check with your study abroad and fellowship/scholarship offices for schedules of these events.

### **Can I give information sessions at other universities?**

Yes! The CLS Program is interested in attracting applicants from the full range of American colleges and universities, so we encourage alumni to present at large public institutions, liberal arts colleges, community colleges, institutions with a technical or engineering focus, and minority-serving institutions such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, tribal colleges, and institutions with high minority enrollment. If you're interested in traveling to a nearby campus to present, please [send us an email](#). Depending on funding and on approval for your trip, we may be able to reimburse you for expenses such as gas and mileage or public transportation fares.

### **I don't have a printing budget for CLS fliers. Can you send me some?**

We have a limited budget for print materials, but please [contact us](#) to check whether we have some available to send you.

### **What do I do if someone asks a question I don't know the answer to?**

Don't panic! It's totally normal to have this happen, because we don't expect you to become an expert on CLS before you give a presentation. If the question is something you have experience with, you're welcome to share your experience. This may not help answer the question fully, but it does give your listeners a little bit of

personal perspective. For example, in answering a question about how often alternates for the scholarship are promoted to finalist status, you might share that you were an alternate who was promoted in mid-April, while also emphasizing that you don't know that statistic offhand.

If you don't have experience to share, a simple, polite, "I'm not sure about that, and I don't want to give you incorrect information" is fine. The first line of defense against tough questions is to direct applicants to the [FAQ](#) on the CLS website. You should also have our general email address, [cls@americancouncils.org](mailto:cls@americancouncils.org), ready to provide to attendees.

**I have other outreach ideas. Want to hear them?**

Yes! Please [email us](#).

## **Appendix 1: Promotional Materials**

### I. 2018 CLS PowerPoint

[http://www.clscholarship.org/craft-assets/images/materials/CLS\\_Recruiting-PPT\\_final.pdf](http://www.clscholarship.org/craft-assets/images/materials/CLS_Recruiting-PPT_final.pdf)

### II. CLS Informational Flyer

[http://www.clscholarship.org/craft-assets/images/materials/CLS\\_One-Page-Flyer.pdf](http://www.clscholarship.org/craft-assets/images/materials/CLS_One-Page-Flyer.pdf)

### III. CLS Blank Event Flyer

<http://www.clscholarship.org/craft-assets/images/materials/Info-Session-Flyer.pdf>

## **Appendix 2: Sample Promotional Materials**

### **Contents**

- I. Sample simplified flier. A full-color information session flier is available for download on the CLS website. If you don't have access to a color printer, you may consider creating a simplified flier that will look good in black and white.
- II. Sample email to a professor.
- III. CLS information session sign-up sheet.

Subject: Scholarship information session

Dear Dr. Ivanov,

Hello! My name is Taylor and I'm a junior at Western State. I spent this summer studying intermediate Korean in Wonju, South Korea as a recipient of the U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarship (CLS). CLS is a program providing fully-funded overseas intensive language study to U.S. undergraduate and graduate students in 14 different critical-need foreign languages. I think this is a great opportunity for students at Western State -- especially International Relations majors who are hoping to expand their knowledge of a critical language and world region -- so I'm planning an information session about the scholarship this fall. I'm contacting you to find out if the International Relations department is interested in co-sponsoring or helping to advertise the session. In particular, I'd appreciate help advertising the session to IR majors and reserving McKinley Auditorium on September 27<sup>th</sup>. If the department has funding available to print color fliers or provide snacks at the session, I would appreciate that as well. I'd also like to invite you and your colleagues in the department to attend the session and find out more about the scholarship.

Thank you for your time. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best wishes,

Taylor Smith

