Visit to Lawrence University
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In April 2015, I visited my alma mater—Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin—to speak to students about careers in translation. I had been invited by one of my former French professors and was delighted to have the opportunity to speak with Lawrence students about the profession.

My presentation, called “Making a Career in Translation,” gave the students an overview of what I had been up to since graduating from Lawrence: graduate school, working at a translation agency, and eventually freelance translating. In addition, I told students about professional associations: the ATA and the Midwest Association of Translators and Interpreters (MATI), both of which have been major sources of information and support.

The students at my presentation were undergraduates studying languages who wanted to know more about career options requiring language skills. Most of them were not familiar with how translation works as a business, so I gave a brief overview of key players (buyers, end-users, agencies, freelancers, etc.) and reasons why translation might be needed in day-to-day life. I also introduced the students to different roles within a translation company, some of which were linguistic and some of which were more technical or sales-oriented.

I told the students some personal reasons why I love being a translator. I wanted them to know that the profession is fun and extremely rewarding, so continuing their language studies is a great idea! I also provided statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics to show the students the positive job outlook in the professions of translating and interpreting. In addition, I highlighted the range of skills necessary for a successful career in translation: not only should the students continue their language studies, but they should also specifically focus on fine-tuning writing, communication, and technology skills.

The students were very interested to learn about career options that would fit well with their language studies, and asked questions about possible next steps after graduation. I had a lot of fun sharing my experiences with them and showing them that they can build successful careers from their language skills!