

Survey responses to open-ended question/comments: 40

uncritically positive: 19

negative: 7

We can be inclusive without going to this expense

If we value multilingualism, it's more important to require language study of all students on campus and better support study abroad. This is just window dressing.

Unless we can truly embrace multiculturalism from the bottom of our hearts, having multilingual signage is not going to change people's narrow perspective on different cultures.

I want students of all nationalities to feel welcome at WOU but, until more of our faculty & staff can offer bilingual support to students, I feel it would be misleading to suggest we can, via extensive multilingual signage.

Foreign students come here to learn English and experience American culture. Don't undermine their learning or our culture.

I feel we need to encourage the people here to learn to speak English.

Braille is already required on room signs by ADA and I don't consider ASL a language other than English. While I appreciate foreign cultures, it can be assumed that foreigners appreciate our culture as well or why else would they be here? (If they don't appreciate our culture, do we really want them here?) From a practical, political, and philosophical point of view multilingual signage doesn't make sense to me. Unless one is opposed to a particular culture and language, you would think that they would want to immerse themselves in it and try to learn the language of the host country without expecting that host country to accommodate their ignorance of the local language. Would you want to live in Thailand and not learn the Thai? NO multilingual signage.

suggestions and considerations:

The multilingual signs may prevent (and also may enhance) the immersion as part of the WOU experience.

Multilingual signage is good and bad. Good for the people who identify with the language represented but bad for the people whose language is not represented on signs. I think English signs are fine and then you don't exclude any since English is the "official" language in OR

I'm not sure how the Monmouth-Independence community will view it. I have heard some pretty xenophobic comments out there.

I really like this concept and initiative. I'm in full support. But I do want to register a concern. My assumption is we have a very small percentage of employees who speak a second language (I'm excluding ASL here). So if we have a lot of signage on buildings, directories, etc. - I worry it implies we have a lot of people around campus who speak those languages.

I'd love to see an initiative alongside this about providing language training to employees to go a step beyond signage and to better customer service.

Hey there. Yes. Not all languages (ASL) are written. So to produce the signs is more involved and I don't think it does much. Also, we don't "walk the talk" in any other way, i.e. WOU website, printed materials, brochures, SOAR, etc. (rare exception is sometimes a Spanish-speaking SOAR ambassador student. I think it's a great idea, and does have the inclusivity symbolism, but feels only surface deep if not really a shift to have more languages represented in print, etc. Hope that makes sense.

I think that it is important and would be great to see multilingual signage, but that does mean that whoever is doing it is making sign for every language that is spoken on campus. We are very diverse and would be great to have more multilingual signage, but we don't want to compensate being inclusive because of it and that may be difficult. Thanks for the survey and for this effort! I think this is a great start and a great idea.

It's a really interesting question! I have mixed feeling about it, though, really due to the design challenges inherent in it. One additional language, ok, sure, but incorporating multiple additional languages gets messy if the sign is anything more than the simplest message. And permanent signs are hard since our demographics could change (maybe Mandarin and Arabic would cede to Nepalese and Russian)? Perhaps another idea to consider would be universal pictograms for the restrooms, elevators, stairs, etc. Thanks!

The idea seems straight-forward, but may be fraught with implication challenges. I would favor signage based on demonstrated need, as opposed to the desire to appear 'diverse' and/or 'welcoming'. For example, what about Hawaiian languages? Native American languages? African Languages? If diversity and welcoming are the goals, those would be key areas seemingly omitted from that above. If function for non-English speakers (parents of students? campus visitors?, etc.), Spanish would be a logical inclusion. I'm not so sure about other's mentioned in WOU demographics, which may ebb and flow with the targets of international student recruitment. Japanese would have been a logical choice when I first arrived at WOU in the mid-1990's; and Arabic language speakers (Saudi students?) seem also to be a moving target. For things as permanent and signage, I would urge the University to make sound decisions based on demonstrated, functional need.

Since our student and staff population is expected to communicate in English for course/campus purposes, it makes sense to me that such an effort would begin with attention to the places where the family members of current and prospective students would find the information most helpful and welcoming, as well as prospective students who are still building their English proficiency for college admission.

I could see value where specific information is to guide...e.g. if at cashier office some sign says "have account number ready"...that that be in principle international languages students are likely to use.