



ELI NEWS

English Language Institute • University of Pittsburgh
Parkvale Building, Room M13, 200 Meyran Ave • Pittsburgh PA 15260

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elipitt@pitt.edu

Conversation Partner Registration is Open

Brianne Harrison

Would you like to meet a native English speaker who wants to meet an international student? If so, you should request a conversation partner! You can learn more about each other's backgrounds and hopefully become friends. At the same time, you can practice speaking English, and your partner might try your language, too.

If you would like a conversation partner this term, register now! **Online registration for conversation partners is only open until Monday, June 3.** Please note that only ELI students in the intensive program will be paired.

To sign up, go to:
<https://tinyurl.com/ELI-CLEP-SU19>.
Sorry, late requests will not be accepted.

E-mail Brianne at elicomm@pitt.edu if you have questions about Conversation Partners.

U.S. Alcohol Laws

All ELI students and employees of the University must fully obey the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania regarding the possession and consumption of alcohol. These laws prohibit providing alcohol to anyone under the age of 21 or to anyone visibly intoxicated. Anyone under the age of 21 is prohibited from possessing or consuming alcoholic beverages under any circumstances, and anyone under the age of 21 is prohibited from being on licensed premises where alcohol is served, unless under proper supervision. Please see Stacy if you have any questions about these laws.

Coed Group Work in the ELI

As you already know, students at the ELI work together in pairs and small groups during almost every class. Interacting in pairs and small groups is an important part of language learning. Please remember that ELI teachers will not be able to form separate groups for men and women during classroom activities. Separating men and women limits the amount of interaction that women at the ELI receive. In order to best serve all of our students and their language development, we must maximize interaction during class time. Remember, if you are planning to move on to academic work in the U.S., men and women will be expected to work together without question, so your ELI experience will be a good opportunity to practice in this situation if it makes you uncomfortable.

If you would like to talk more about this policy, please contact Stacy at sar72@pitt.edu or visit her in her office in M22.

You're not too late for Talk Time!

Brianne Harrison

If you want to join a Talk Time conversation group, it's not too late! E-mail Brianne at elicomm@pitt.edu if you want to register or you have questions about Talk Time.

In the Talk Time program, a native English speaker meets with a group of 4-5 students for casual conversation. Groups are scheduled in ELI classrooms, and meeting times are once weekly at 1:00 or 4:00 on Mondays, Tuesdays, or Thursdays, depending on what you choose. Talk Time groups will start meeting Monday, June 3, so this is your last chance to sign up!

ELI Activity:

Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium Deadline Today!

Lions and tigers and bears... Oh my! Join us as the ELI goes to the Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium on



Tuesday, May 28. There are no ELI classes on Tuesday, May 28 or Monday, May 27. However, ELI classes will meet on Wednesday, May 29.

Discounted tickets are \$13, but you must pay the main office **by 4:30 pm today, Thursday, March 23.** **Please bring the exact amount, cash only.** Feel free to buy a ticket for a friend, too, even if they are not in the ELI. Guests, including children, pay the same price. Children under the age of 24 months are free.

Keeping animals in zoos is a controversial issue. Some people are inclined to believe that these animals are exploited for people's entertainment. It seems rational that animals should remain in their natural territories. However, according to the Pittsburgh Zoo and Aquarium, "conservation is at the core of everything [they] do". This statement might seem abstract, but it can be clarified by learning about the variety of projects that the Zoo supports. For example, most recently, the Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium assisted several organizations in the rescue of ten stranded manatees from South Carolina. Over three days, the rescued manatees were relocated to Florida. For more information about the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium and its conservation efforts, visit www.pittsburghzoo.org. (cont.)

If you decide to join us on **Tuesday**, we will meet in the lobby of the ELI at **11:00 am** and we'll take the bus to the zoo together. The Pittsburgh Zoo is open until 5 pm, but you are free to leave whenever you like. You can also meet us at the zoo if you prefer, but make sure you have your admissions bracelet. See Ece in Room M02 from 12:50-1:10 pm on Friday, May 24 to get your bracelet. If you lose your bracelet, it cannot be replaced, and you must pay \$13 for a new one. Parking is free at the zoo.

The weather is supposed to be beautiful on Tuesday – 28 degrees C and partly sunny! There is a 30% chance of rain, but if it rains, we will still go to the zoo. **There are no refunds.** If you have any questions, contact Ece at ecu4@pitt.edu.

FI Students and End-of-Term Grace Period

The Department of Homeland Security requires students to complete all levels of the ELI program in order to receive the 60-day grace period following the completion of study. This means that if you complete level 6 at the ELI, you will have 60 days after your last day of study to remain in the U.S.

If you complete study at the ELI before taking level 6, you will have a two-week grace period after your final day of class. This means that you will need to leave the U.S. within 2 weeks of your last day of study if you do not complete level 6.

Please note that the grace period is different for students who transfer to a new program. If you transfer to a new program at any time, you must begin study at the first available term for the new program. You are permitted to be out of school for up to 5 months before beginning the first available term of your new program, however. Please see Stacy if you have questions about these policies.

ELI Activity:

Toastmasters Meeting Improve your Speaking Skills!



Imagine you are sitting in your speaking class, and your teacher announces that you will give a prepared presentation to the class. How do you feel? If the idea of speaking in front of a group of people makes you nervous, you are not alone! Giving a speech in public is the number one fear reported by Americans. Apparently, we are more afraid of giving a speech to a group of people than we are of snakes, high places or dying! From this information, we can extrapolate that students of English as a Second Language aren't the only ones who don't like to speak in public!

That's why Toastmasters International was created in 1924. Toastmasters is a social organization made up of people who want to improve their public speaking and presentation skills. Members learn from each other in a supportive environment. Each time you give a speech, evaluators will identify your strengths and suggest improvements.

Don't be reluctant to participate just because you are not a native speaker of English! Several former ELI students have become really involved with the Toastmasters Club in the past and loved it. No one will chastise you if you make a mistake. The objectives of this club include building confidence, improving presentation skills and helping each individual develop communication skills.

The number of members fluctuates a bit, but there are currently 350,000 members in 16,000 clubs in 143 countries... and you can be next! There are 3 clubs just on the University of Pittsburgh campus and approximately 25 in the Pittsburgh area! The ELI has made an arrangement with one of the clubs on campus so that you can attend your first meeting for free! After the

first meeting, if you'd like to join, there is a one-time \$20 membership fee. After that, you have to pay membership dues (\$51 every 6 months).

We will attend this meeting on **Wednesday, June 5**. Because space is limited, this activity is restricted to the first 10 students who email Ece at ecu4@pitt.edu. Please let her know **by 4 pm on Friday, May 31** if you would like to attend. On Wednesday, June 5, we will meet at the ELI at **11:45 am** to walk over to the meeting together. The meeting will finish around 1 pm.

For more information about Toastmasters International and a complete list of all Toastmasters Clubs, visit www.toastmasters.org.

Probation at the ELI

As you know, consistent attendance, homework, and participation in classroom activities are all important for successful language learning. If you do not attend classes regularly and do the assigned work, your progress may be slow, and your grades may suffer.

In addition, students who do not make a good effort in their work will be put on probation. Students on probation must improve their effort during the probation term, or they may be expelled from the ELI. Sponsors will be notified of probation, as well. There are three ways to be put on probation at the ELI:

1. Having failing final grades in two or more classes
2. Having over 8 absences in two or more classes
3. Having over 15 absences in one or more classes

If you had poor grades and/or attendance last term, you will receive a probation letter. If you are sponsored, your sponsor will be notified that you are on probation, as well. If you have any questions about the probation policy at the ELI, please see Stacy.



www.facebook.com/PittELI

ELI Trip to Laurel Caverns

Join the ELI for a special trip to Laurel Caverns, which is a large natural cave located 50 miles (80 km) south of Pittsburgh. It is the largest cave in Pennsylvania and the largest sandstone cave in the world. We will depart on **Saturday, June 8, at 8:45 am** and return the **same day around 8 pm**. The cost is \$60 per student and includes roundtrip transportation in a University van, a guided tour of Laurel Caverns, and a game of Kavernputt miniature golf.

When we arrive at Laurel Caverns, we will have a 1-hour walking tour of the cave. This tour covers all passages that can be reached without climbing down or up over rocks. You do not need special equipment on this tour. The ground is stable, but you must wear sturdy and comfortable shoes. There are stairs and sloped floors to walk down as well as walk up. After the tour, we will have a picnic lunch that you must pack yourself before leaving Pittsburgh. Then we will play a round of miniature golf. The course is called Kavernputt because they created the course to look like the cave formations in Laurel Caverns. After we finish our game, we will take a short 30-minute drive to Ohioyle State Park, where we can take pictures of the beautiful scenery. After enjoying the nature of Ohioyle, we will return to Pittsburgh.

The main office began collecting money for this trip on **Monday, May 20**. You must pay the main office by **4:30 pm on Thursday, May 30**. Please bring the exact amount (cash only). There are no refunds. Contact Ece at ecu4@pitt.edu if you have any questions.



**Follow Us
on Twitter!**

Follow us on Twitter at
[@UPITT_ELI](https://twitter.com/UPITT_ELI)

ELI Absence Policy

There have been many questions about excused absences in the ELI. It is true that if you are sick, it is not appropriate for you to come to school—you may infect others, and it is crucial that you rest to get well. Please note, though, that the ELI attendance policy states that “there is no such thing as an excused absence” in the ELI. Even if you are sick, the absence must be counted as an absence according to the ELI rules.

According to the ELI absence policy, if you miss over 8 classes, you will not receive a certificate of attendance at the end of the term. If you miss over 12, you may not be invited back to the ELI next term. If you are an F-1 student and you miss over 15 classes, your visa may be terminated. Please see the online Student Handbook for more information on the ELI attendance policy. In addition, please remember that sponsored students have attendance rules from their sponsors, as well.

Remember that if you do not do the work in your classes and the homework, this will affect your grade. If you want to make progress with your language learning, it is important that you attend class on time, regularly, with your homework complete. Please see Stacy if you have any questions or concerns about attendance in the ELI.

Repeating Level 6 at the ELI

Many of you are making plans for your academic future here in the U.S. Please remember that ELI students are allowed to take only two semesters at level 6. After you complete two terms at level 6, you must transfer to another program if you want to stay in the U.S. The ELI cannot make exceptions to this rule, so please plan carefully.

Please note: If you are sponsored by SACM, you may not repeat courses that you have already passed. Therefore, if you pass level 6 courses once, you may not repeat them in order to take an extra term at the end of your study. This is a SACM rule, and the ELI cannot make exceptions to it.

ELI Emergency Phone Number



The ELI has an emergency phone number for students to use in medical or legal emergencies. The number is (412) 444-

8280. Please take a moment to add this to the contacts in your phone. This number is only to be used evenings and weekends, during times that the ELI main office is closed. Please note that this is an emergency number. You should only call this number if you have a serious medical or legal issue and you need help. It is also possible that Stacy may not be able to answer the phone immediately when you call. If you get the voicemail, leave a clear message with your name, phone number, and emergency. Stacy will return your call.

Sponsored Students and Final Exams

Please note that if you are a sponsored student, and you miss your final exam for any reason, or if you fail the final exam, your sponsor will be notified immediately. Final exams in the ELI are worth 30% of the overall final grade, and both the ELI and your sponsors expect you to take the exams and to perform as well as you can on them. Remember, too, that satisfactory academic progress is a requirement of the F1 visa. If you fail courses, your F1 visa may be revoked. Please check the posted schedules for ELI final exams and plan your schedule accordingly.

ELI F1 Students and Employment in the U.S.

Please remember that ELI students with F1 visas do not have permission to work in the U.S. This includes both on-campus and off-campus jobs. Working without permission is a very serious violation of immigration rules, and ELI F1 students who work without SEVP approval will be terminated in SEVIS. Termination for unauthorized employment does not include a grace period, and students are required to leave the U.S. immediately. Please see Stacy if you have any questions about this rule.

Student Advisor Office Hours



Please remember that Stacy Ranson, your Student Advisor, can help you with questions about your registration and classes, academic issues, letters of recommendation, and personal issues, as well. Feel free to stop by her office in M22 during any of her office hours. You can also email her at sar72@pitt.edu.

Stacy's office hours are:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
1:00 pm-2:00 pm

Scam Phone Calls

Sometimes international students receive phone calls from people who say they are FBI agents, government officials, police officers, or other people of authority. The callers ask the international students for large amounts of money. Government officials, bank employees, and police officers will never ask you for money. The people making these calls are NOT authorized to ask you for information. They often have some personal information about you that seems to be accurate, and so they can sound very convincing. They are also very threatening and usually demand that a large amount of cash be withdrawn from the student's bank account and sent via PayPal. If you receive one of these phone calls, please take the following steps:

1. End the call, no matter how threatening the caller may seem. Do not withdraw money from your bank account or give the caller any information about yourself, your address, or your finances.
2. See Stacy right away, and she will help you report the call to the police.

Pitt Police suggest that you write down the incoming number, if possible. Pitt Police also warns students not to release any personal information concerning your identity. If you have questions or concerns, you may contact Stacy.

Title IX Policy

Title IX is a U.S. law that gives you the right to report any instances of sexual misconduct to the University, have the University investigate what happened, and have your complaint resolved. Sexual misconduct is sexual contact **that you do not want:**

- Someone speaking to you in a sexual way or asking you for sex when you aren't interested.
- Someone forcing you to have sexual contact.
- Relationship violence: Spouse/partner speaking to you or treating you in an abusive or violent way.
- Stalking: Someone repeatedly following or threatening you, including by phone/text/email/mail/social media.

You can report sexual misconduct to ELI officials or to the police. The ELI will help you report the issue to the University. Please note: If you report an issue to an ELI staff or faculty member, the ELI is required to report the issue to the University Title IX office. The ELI cannot maintain complete confidentiality. In other words, if you tell any teacher or staff member in the ELI, they must report it to the university. If you want to speak to a confidential advisor, the ELI can help you find a counselor at the University Counseling Center. In almost all cases, this counselor will not inform other people about what you tell them.

University Counseling Center
119 University Place
Nordenberg Hall
412-648-7930

If you experience any type of sexual misconduct, harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, please talk to the ELI Student Advisor or an ELI teacher immediately.



Schedule Changes for Summer 2019

The ELI will have a slight change to the regular schedule during the summer term. We will not have classes on Monday, May 27 or Tuesday, May 28, to celebrate the Memorial Day holiday. **The ELI will hold classes on Wednesday, May 29 to make up for this day off.** Please be prepared to attend classes at the usual times on Wednesday, May 30.

In addition, the ELI will not have classes on Thursday, July 4 or Friday, July 5, to celebrate the Independence Day holiday. **The ELI will hold classes on Wednesday, July 3 to make up for this day off.** Please be prepared to attend classes at the usual times on Wednesday, July 3.

Mark your calendars! Upcoming ELI Activities



Tuesday, May 28:
Zoo & PPG Aquarium
Wednesday, June 5: Toastmasters
Saturday, June 8:

ELI Trip to Laurel Caverns
Wednesday, June 12: Center for Creativity
Wednesday, June 19: ELI Picnic
Tuesday, June 25: Oklahoma!
Saturday, June 29: Pitt Day at Kennywood
Saturday, July 20: Pirates Baseball Game



Coffee Talk on Fridays!

4:00 – 6:00 pm Panera
(3800 Forbes Ave.)