

Case Study

How Live AI Translation Creates More Inclusive Commencements and Large Campus Events



Challenge: Making Every Milestone Accessible in Real Time

SUNY Oswego hosts some of the most meaningful moments in a student's academic journey - orientation, major campus gatherings, and the pinnacle event, Commencement.

As SUNY Oswego's community grew more diverse in recent years, it became clear that every parent, grandparent, and loved one needed a way to follow their commencement ceremonies in real time, even if English wasn't their primary language.

SUNY Oswego had long provided sign language interpreters for in-person events and captions for remote viewers on their livestream. However, in-person attendees lacked a reliable live captioning option. Watching the delayed livestream captions on overhead displays or broadcast monitors created a frustrating lag between the live stage speaker and the text on screen. To bridge this gap for on-site guests, the university later implemented Wordly for instant, personal-device captioning.

SUNY Oswego needed instant, accurate captions and translation that attendees could access directly on their own devices without special hardware and delayed text.

"These moments matter," said SUNY Oswego Assistant Director of Instructional Technologies, Tyrone Johnson-Neuland. "When a student crosses the stage, their family shouldn't be struggling to keep up, they should be celebrating right alongside them. We needed a way for every attendee to understand what was happening as it happened."



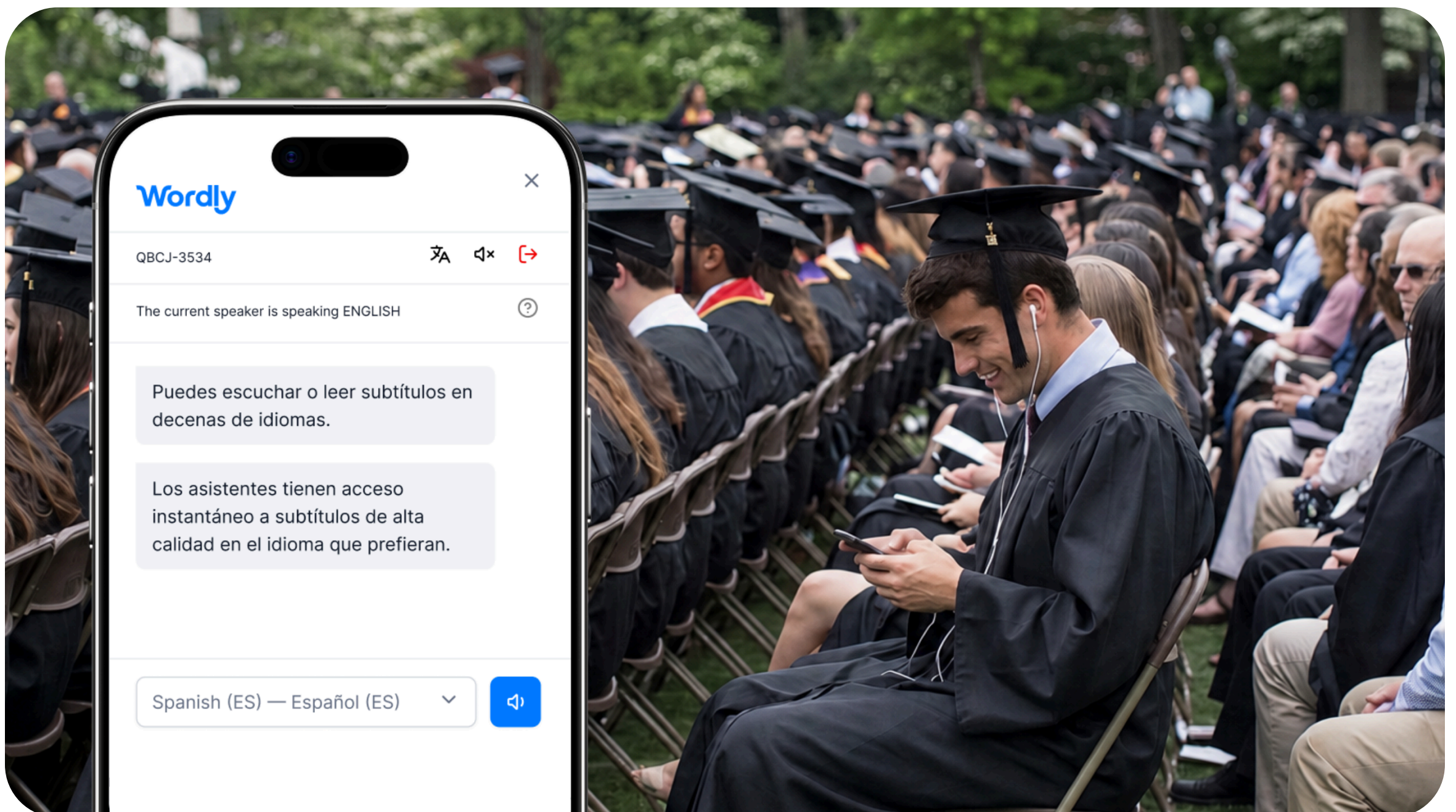
Solution: Live Language Access Made Easy with AI from Wordly

SUNY Oswego introduced live AI translation and captions from Wordly at its December 2025 Commencement, giving attendees an immediate, device-friendly way to follow every moment in their preferred language.

The setup was fast and easy. Audio from the arena's sound system is routed into a laptop running Wordly, and attendees access live captions and translation by scanning a QR code or tapping a link provided by the university. No special hardware, no sound booths, and no reliance on delayed captions displayed on the arena's main screen.

Every attendee can view captions or listen to translated audio directly on their own smartphone.

Before implementing AI-powered translation, attendees who needed language support also had limited options during large campus events. Wordly changed that, providing a scalable, accessible solution that helps every family share the moment.

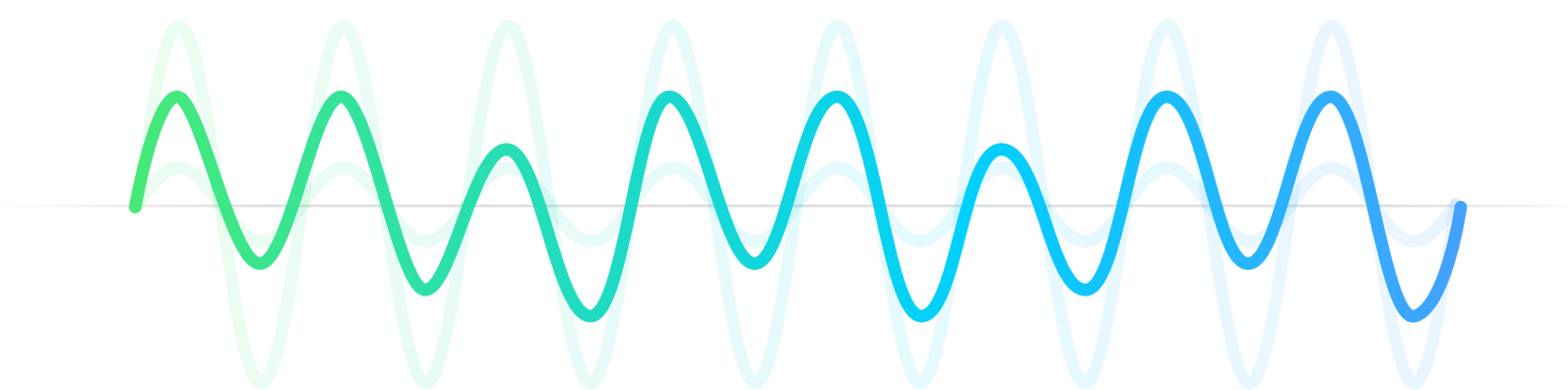


Results: 15x Growth in Users as Real-Time Access Gains Momentum

SUNY Oswego saw steady growth in usage after introducing Wordly at its December 2025 Commencement ceremony. The initial implementation was seamless and the captions were perfectly timed with the live presentations.

By May 2026, SUNY Oswego brought Wordly back for all three specialized Commencement ceremonies. Those events drew more than 8,000 attendees and averaged approximately 50 users per ceremony, with peaks as high as 70 people accessing real-time captions and translation on their own devices, an immediate jump in adoption just one semester after the initial rollout.

The university has since expanded Wordly to its Torchlight ceremony, one of SUNY Oswego's most meaningful and symbolic ceremonies. During Torchlight, faculty, staff, and current students pass the flame of the Torch of Learning to all new undergraduate, transfer, and graduate students as they join the academic community. At this honored event, 17 attendees used Wordly to follow the program in real time.



Beyond the numbers, the University has also been impressed by Wordly's accuracy, particularly its ability to capture international names seamlessly without additional support. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with compliments from attendees and inquiries from other departments interested in adopting the service.

"Every time someone tells us they were able to follow along because of Wordly, it reinforces why we're doing this," said Tyrone Johnson-Neuland, assistant director of instructional technologies. *"It means families can experience these moments fully and confidently, without feeling like they're on the outside looking in."*

SUNY Oswego's experience reflects a broader shift across higher education. As AI captioning and translation technology continue to improve, colleges can offer real-time language access to large audiences without requiring attendees to request multiple interpreters or make special arrangements ahead of time. With a simple, repeatable process – one QR code, one link, and no specialized equipment – SUNY Oswego now delivers real-time accessibility across Commencement and orientation events.

Future: A More Connected, More Inclusive Future with Wordly

SUNY Oswego plans to continue using Wordly for major campus events, expanding on the momentum created during Commencement and Torchlight ceremonies. The university is also exploring where real-time captioning and translation could support additional experiences beyond ceremonies, including academic programs and community-facing events.

“Wordly gives people another way to feel included,” Johnson-Neuland said. “If we can keep removing barriers, even one event at a time, that’s progress that matters.”

Large gatherings in the arena remain the strongest use case, where Wordly gives attendees a simple, device-friendly way to access captions and translation without slowing down the event or requiring additional equipment. The service has also become a regular part of event communications, appearing on the university website and event announcements so attendees know live captioning is available before they arrive.

What began with a small group of early users has grown into a trusted accessibility resource at some of SUNY Oswego’s most meaningful annual traditions. And the university sees even more potential ahead.





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Commencement / Live Captioning with Wordly

Live Captioning with Wordly

SUNY Oswego is pleased to offer **live AI-generated captioning** for all Commencement ceremonies through **Wordly**, an online translation and captioning service. This tool allows attendees to access real-time captions in **English and multiple languages** on their personal devices.

How to Use Wordly

1. Choose the option below that corresponds to your ceremony.
2. Captions will appear in real time on your screen.
3. You may also select a different language from the dropdown menu at the top of the page.

 **Tip:** For the best experience, we recommend using your phone or tablet and connecting to Wi-Fi.

Commencement

Graduate's Checklist

Cap and Gown

Information and Procedures

Guest Information

Live Stream

Academic Traditions

SUNY Oswego’s website explains how to access Wordly captions/translation at commencement

About SUNY Oswego

SUNY Oswego is a dynamic public university on the shores of Lake Ontario, committed to providing a transformative, affordable education. Guided by Vision 4040, the university is focused on expanding access, advancing innovation and preparing students for success in a rapidly changing world.

With more than 110 undergraduate and graduate programs and growing strength in STEAM, SUNY Oswego combines rigorous academics with hands-on learning to prepare students to lead, contribute and make an impact.

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Wordly is the pioneer and leader in AI-powered translation, providing real-time translation, live captions, transcripts, and summaries for meetings and events. Trusted by thousands of organizations across education, corporate, nonprofit, government, and association sectors, Wordly helps make global communication more inclusive, accessible, and engaging.

For more information, visit our website: wordly.ai

Wordly launched in 2019 and is the most trusted **AI translation** and **live captioning** tool on the planet

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Users

120+
Countries

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