

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Dept. works toward name change

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Summer Reporter

By renaming its 36-year old title, a Purdue department is hoping the academic world will more accurately view its purposes.

This summer, the head of the department of foreign languages and literatures, Adrian Del Caro, is submitting a proposal for the department's name change to the School of Languages and Cultures.

The new name is based on three main changes: the designation of "school," the inclusion of "cultures" and the deletion of "foreign."

Del Caro said one of the main reasons for the change is to

align Purdue closer with the practices of other Big Ten schools, none of which use the word "foreign" to describe its language programs.

"Foreign is not always an accurate description of what people in the languages and cultural studies do," he said. "It doesn't sound right to us."

Additionally, while many other Big Ten schools have separate departments for each language, Del Caro said the name "school" would more accurately reflect the 11 languages for which his department offers courses.

Purdue is only one of two Big Ten universities which house all of its world languages under one department.

Nathan Marks, a double minor in Spanish and Russian, agrees with Del Caro that "department" does not effectively illustrate its significance.

"I think the current name makes it seem smaller than what it is," Marks said. "I honestly don't think that department is suitable for something as important as languages and literature."

However, replacing "literature" with "culture" is also very important for Del Caro. He says literature is just a slice of what his department teaches.

"Literature falls under culture," Del Caro said. "Culture includes many things – the artistic, the societal dimension of a people."

Adding "culture" to the name is the most positive change for Dami Lee, a senior majoring in French and minor-ing in Spanish.

She said learning the culture is especially important when students learn words that can't be translated.

"By learning the culture you get to learn the language better," Lee said. "Learning the culture goes with learning the language."

Del Caro said in an optimistic situation, the name change would take place within the next year.

"Let's be more accurate," Del Caro said. "Let's be more encompassing and say we are a school of Languages and Cultures."