

CHaSS adding Portuguese major

Starting in the spring semester, Utah State University will become the first state school in Utah to offer a major in Portuguese.

While the university provides classes in several languages, the only language majors currently offered are Spanish, French and German. Head of the Languages, Philosophy and Communication Studies department Bradford Hall said the proposal for a Portuguese major was inspired by a combination of student interest and faculty resources.

Developing a program requires both students and faculty, as was shown in the department's decision to stop offering Korean classes after the university's sole professor left to return to Korea last year.

"Portuguese is one of the largest minors in our department, only smaller than Spanish," Hall said. "And we were able to hire a third faculty member to teach the language, so we had the resources to do it."

The approval process for creating a new major takes about a year, going through the Board of Regents in the Utah System of Higher Education. Department adviser Suzann Winn said the major probably won't become official until late November or December of this year after submitting the proposal last November.

Not only is the approval process for a new major lengthy, but it also isn't extremely common. "Global Communication is the newest major in our department, and we added it about 7 years ago" Hall said. "It's not often we get to add a new major. Right now, we're thinking about submitting a proposal for a Chinese major, but that wouldn't be approved for at least another year."

Only 30 universities in the United States offer Portuguese majors, the only one in Utah being Brigham Young University. According to Hall, the Portuguese language's popularity at Utah

State might be explained by the large number of students returning from Portuguese-speaking missions for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

“A lot of our students coming back from missions help to support that interest, which made it possible for us to create the major,” Hall said. “Especially for a school in a smaller town like Logan, this is a great opportunity for our community.”

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