

Italian Studies Regains Spot On the List of AP Courses

By TAMAR LEWIN

The Advanced Placement Italian Language and Culture program — which began in 2005 and was suspended last year because too few students were participating in it to warrant the cost — will be reinstated next year, and its AP exam will again be offered in May 2012.

“Thanks to the hard work of the Italian Embassy and the advocacy of proud Italian-Americans, the program is now fully funded,” said Gaston Caperton, president of the College Board, which runs the Advanced Placement program. “This is a great day for the Italian language, the Italian people and all of us who are enraptured by the culture of Italy and its beautiful language.”

Although French classes in American schools are in decline, Italian instruction is on the upswing. According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 77,650 students studied Italian in the 2007-8 school year, the latest for which figures were available, up from the 65,058 who studied the language in 2004-5.

Still, no more than 2,300 students took the Italian Advanced Placement exam in any year, compared with the hundreds of

thousands who take the tests in subjects like United States history and English literature.

In April 2009, the College Board said it planned to end its Italian, Latin literature, French literature and computer science AP programs — but promised to keep Italian going for another year if supporters could raise \$1.5 million. The fund-raising effort collapsed after the Italian government failed to renew its financial support, and all four of the exams were canceled.

This time, money for the Italian program — amounts were not released — came from the Italian government, Italian-American groups and the Italian Language Foundation, which was created for the earlier fund-raising campaign and is led by Margaret Cuomo, the daughter of a former New York governor, Mario M. Cuomo, and a sister of Andrew M. Cuomo, the governor-elect.

Ms. Cuomo said the Italian program now has financing “for the indefinite future.”

“If we’re living and breathing, we expect this program to continue,” she said. “Now our real work begins, promoting the study of Italian and coordinating with the Republic of Italy on trips for teachers and professional development workshops.”

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