

AP Italian is Back on Track

A.B. & M.D.M. (November 11, 2010)



Together at the Consulate General of Italy to celebrate the signing of the agreement that reinstates the Advanced Placement Program in Italian Language and Culture.

Italy has been an undisputed cultural magnet for generations of students. Considering the amount of material from this country that can be an object of study - its history, its art, its culture, and even its political situation and cuisine, it is not an overstatement to say that every single American citizen has studied, at least at some point, something about the Bel Paese.

The key to really understand a country and its culture, however, is not found in any of the subjects mentioned above, but rather in a much more common - and complex, some may say - realm: its language. Only through the understanding of its idiom, one can truly unlock the secrets of a culture,

immerse oneself in its literature, visit the place, and have a first-hand contact with its inhabitants.

If one agrees with these two concepts, one cannot help but be amazed by the decision, made in 2009, of suspending the [Advanced Placement Program](#) [2] *(AP) in Italian Language and Culture. However, beginning in the 2011-12 academic year, high school students will again have the opportunity to enroll in the AP.

On November 10, the Italian community as a whole gathered to celebrate.

At the [Consulate General of Italy in New York](#) [3], Ambassador Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata, Italy's Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs Honorable Vincenzo Scotti, Consul General Francesco Maria Talò, and President of the College Board** Gaston Caperton, partook in a formal ceremony during which they signed the agreement that reinstates the Advanced Placement Program in Italian Language and Culture.

The [College Board](#) [4]'s AP Program enables students to pursue college-level studies while still in high school, through over thirty college-level courses, each culminating in a rigorous exam. In 2005, AP Italian became the first new foreign language and culture programs instituted by the College Board in over fifty years. However, since student participation failed to meet projections and the costs to maintain the program became unmanageable, it was suspended after the 2008-2009 school year.

Since its suspension in 2009, however, the [Embassy of the Republic of Italy](#) [5] has coordinated the efforts to raise funds. Contributions have come from the Republic of Italy, Italian American organizations, individual donors and Italian companies, including the [American Association of Teachers of Italian](#) [6], [American Society of the Italian Legions of Merit](#) [7], [Coccia Foundation](#) [8], [Columbus Citizens Foundation](#) [9], Conference of Presidents of Major Italian American Organizations, [COPILAS](#) [10], Margaret I. Cuomo, M.D., Matilda Raffa Cuomo, [ENI](#) [11], [FIAT](#) [12], [Finmeccanica](#) [13], Frank Guarini, [Italian Language Foundation](#) [14], [Italian Welfare League](#) [15], [Luxottica](#) [16], [Mediterranean Shipping Company](#) [17], [National Italian American Foundation](#) [18], [National Organization of Italian American Women](#) [19], [Order Sons of Italy in America](#) [20], Berardo Paradiso, David Pope, Louis Tallarini, [UNICO](#) [21] and [UniCredit](#) [22].

The College Board's President, Governor Gaston Caperton (Governor of West Virginia from 1989 until 1997), thanked Mr and Mrs Governor Cuomo Sr, present at the event. He also acknowledged the role played by Dr. Margaret Cuomo, eldest daughter of the Governor, and Mr. Louis Tallarini (respectively president and chairman of the Italian Language Foundation) in the successful reintroduction of the Program. "They did just about everything possible to get the word out about the importance of teaching Italian to our youth. I have received many calls, letters, and encouragements from both of them; and I can tell you: you want them on your side." He added that the Italian language has "strengthened, comforted and sustained generations of Italians both at home and abroad; and today we have an Italian community with deep roots and many branches. AP Italian will allow new generations of students, with or without Italian heritage, to explore what it means to be Italian."

Ambassador Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata underlined the importance of this day for all those "who recognize the role that the Italian language plays in the development of a human society, economy, and culture. The role I am talking about is that of Dante's language, in literature; of Gaetano Filangeri's Italian in his correspondence with Benjamin Franklin about the US Constitution; the language of Federico Fellini, Roberto Rossellini, Pier Paolo Pasolini in modern cinematography; the Italian language of Valentino and Armani; the Italian in science and technology spoken by Enrico Fermi." He also stressed this clearly as "a success story of Sistema Italia at work. Italian government, major Italian American organizations, and some of the most important Italian corporations in the U.S. made it possible, and I think they deserve our gratitude and appreciation."

Anthony J. Tamburri, Dean of the [John D. Calandra Italian American Institute](#) [23], stressed the importance of this result for the status of Italian language which is now "back on top with the big languages, Spanish, French and German."

Riccardo Viale, Director of the [Italian Cultural Institute](#) [24] in New York, is convinced that "young



Americans can develop a deeper understanding of Italian culture thanks to the knowledge of the language”

Consul General Francesco Maria Talò defined the reinstatement of the AP Italian not only as a victory, but also as the beginning of a new exciting chapter. He also encouraged the Italian community to “keep on (working) for the shared goals, which are important but not easy to achieve.”

Italy’s Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Honorable Vincenzo Scotti, remarked how Italian is the only European language to have registered an increase in the American Education System. He also added, “Italian is the lingua franca for culture and art and what happens today will enable us to promote our language in thousands of schools and colleges throughout the US.”

At the moment of its interruption, more than 2000 students had enrolled in the AP Italian. According to Ambassador Giulio Terzi di Sant’Agata, the goal is for this number to increase by the hundreds every year and eventually reach ten thousand students. It is clear that this achievement is more of a start line than a finish line. The hope is that this will be one more opportunity for Americans to have a closer relationship and a deeper knowledge of Italy and its culture.

*** About the Advanced Placement Program®**

The College Board’s Advanced Placement Program (AP) enables students to pursue college-level studies while still in high school. Through more than 30 college-level courses, each culminating in a rigorous exam, AP provides willing and academically prepared students with the opportunity to earn college credit, advanced placement or both. Taking AP courses also demonstrates to college admission officers that students have sought the most rigorous curriculum available to them. Each AP teacher’s syllabus is evaluated and approved by college faculty from some of the nation’s leading institutions, and AP Exams are developed and scored by college faculty and experienced AP teachers. AP is accepted by more than 3,800 colleges and universities worldwide for college credit, advanced placement or both on the basis of successful AP Exam scores. This includes over 90 percent of four-year institutions in the United States. In 2010, 1.8 million students representing more than 17,000 schools around the world, both public and nonpublic, took 3.2 million AP Exams.

**** About the College Board**

The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of more than 5,700 of the nation’s leading educational institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success — including the SAT® and the Advanced Placement Program®. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators and schools.

For further information, visit www.collegeboard.com [25].

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[11] http://www.eni.com/en_IT/home.html

[12] http://www.fiat.com/cgi-bin/pbrand.dll/FIAT_COM/home.jsp

[13] <http://www.finmec.com/>

[14] <http://www.italianlanguagefoundation.org/>

[15] <http://www.italianwelfareleague.org/>

[16] <http://www.luxottica.com/en/>

[17] <http://www.mscgva.ch/>

[18] <http://www.niaf.org/>

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[23] <http://qcpages.qc.edu/calandra/index.html>

[24] http://www.iicnewyork.esteri.it/IIC_Newyork

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