

## Are languages at North Cross really global?

By Philip Schueler

A banner outside Willis Hall boasts that “90% [of North Cross students] Study a World Language,” but how well are these languages preparing students to participate in an expanding global community?

Of the three world languages that are taught at North Cross, French, Latin, and Spanish, not one originates from an area outside of Western Europe. If this is true, then how can our school advertise that its Language Department adequately prepares students to participate in a global community, when all three languages are confined to one part of the globe?

Although Spanish and French are spoken throughout much of Latin America and Africa, most students studying these languages concentrate their studies in Spain or France, obviously European countries. There are, of course, benefits to learning these languages: Spanish is widely spoken throughout the United States, which makes it very advantageous for any American to learn the language, French is used often in the diplomatic world, and Latin can be used to study the ancient Greeks and Romans as well as to provide an introduction to the plethora of Romance languages found throughout Europe. Although these languages are beautiful and useful, learning Spanish, Latin, and French limits not only students' academic studies, but also limits their ideas, values, and, indeed, very thoughts to the narrow, un-diverse views of the Western world.

According to the 2007 edition of *Nationalencyklopedin*, one of the most prestigious encyclopedias in the world, the top five languages most spoken in the world today are Mandarin, Spanish, Hindi, Arabic, and Portuguese, not counting English. French does not rank in the top 10, and Latin is not spoken at all. While one can find some justification for teaching Spanish, how is teaching French and Latin useful for students who wish to engage in a global community?

When asked about how well the World Language Department prepares students for this task, Dr. Christian J.

Proctor, headmaster, said that he believes the Department accomplishes it well.

“I do think [the World Language Department] prepares them well,” Proctor said. “That doesn't mean there's not an interest or reason to take a non-western language.”

However, North Cross does not offer a non-western language, so, if such an interest existed, North Cross would be unable to accommodate this desire. However, other schools in our area have made room for other languages, most notably Hargrave Military Academy, which has added Mandarin to its department, and is planning to add Arabic within the next few years. It seems that students who wish to study true world languages are better suited at institutions other than North Cross.

Wanda Finney, World Language Department Chair, was also asked about how the Department prepares students for the global community, however, she declined to comment.

Emmanuelle Greenwell, Upper School and Middle School French teacher, said that she believes more languages should be added to the curriculum, but languages such as Latin and French should remain.

“Well, I think that we are still teaching, we meaning the U.S. and Europe, these three languages because they are the connected base of everything; it's traditional,” Greenwell said. “I think we should have a Mandarin class, probably also an Arabic class; why not Russian also?”

While adding more languages would be ideal, each new language in the curriculum is an added cost on the school, which already has a constrained budget, as Dr. Christian J. Proctor explains.

“Every time we add another teacher with a whole new discipline,” Proctor said, “it's an added expense.”

While Spanish, French and Latin are incredibly beautiful languages and deserve a place in North Cross academia, they render much of the world inaccessible to students who are ignorant of languages such as Mandarin, Hindi, or Arabic, which are more important, and more “Worldly,” than the languages that are currently taught at North Cross. Perhaps if the school would begin teaching these languages, the banner outside Willis Hall could read: “100% Study a World Language.”

**Disagree with our opinions? Write a letter to the editor! See details in the staff box below.**

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Letters to the editor can be sent to the editors and must be signed in order to be included in the Herald.

## What new foreign language would you learn?



*“Portuguese, because I think it's going to become a really popular language soon.”*



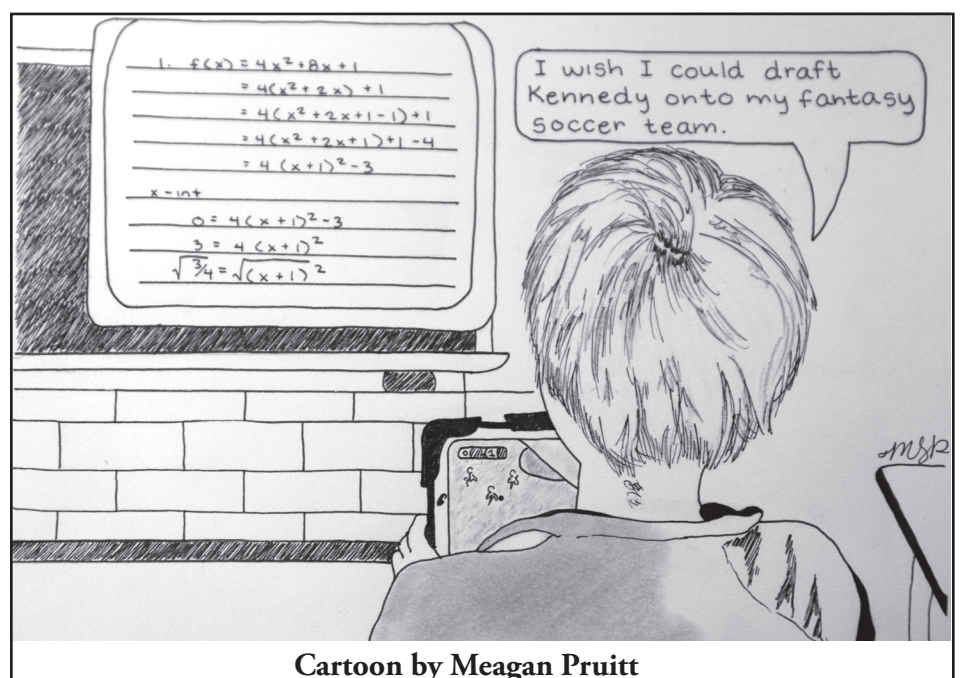
*“Swahili, because it seems unique and different.”*



*“I would choose Russian, because it would be a good skill to have to work with Russian officials.”*



*“German, because it's a European language widely spoken in Europe.”*



Cartoon by Meagan Pruitt

## Fantasy sports dominate lives of students, soc

By Tanner Smith

For those passionate about sports who do not have the physical abilities needed to play professionally, fantasy sports are the perfect outlet.

While sports are designed for the players, in contemporary times fans are just as big a part of the game as the players themselves. For some, wearing the colors of their favorite players and wishing them well is the only incentive they need to watch the games. For many fans who want to feel more as if they are part of the game and do not want to simply place money wagers, fantasy sports are not just games; they are obsessions.

The concept behind fantasy sports is very simple: pick a cool team name, draft your favorite players and enjoy competing against your friends. There are two basic types of scoring systems along with countless numbers of variations: rotisserie and head-to-head. In rotisserie, teams competed to see who could have the best statistics for each category. Point values are assigned based on each team's standing in each statistical category and the points are totaled up to determine the standings. However, in newer versions of fantasy sports such as basketball, football and some baseball leagues, head-to-head has gained prominence. This system allows fantasy owners to directly compete against their opponents in a weekly format. Instead of having a point total for the year, the standings are determined by week-to-week wins and losses, just like professional sports leagues.

While the nuances of the games are fascinating to those who play them passionately, the question remains why the casual fan or even the non-sports fan should care. As my colleague Philip Schueler ('16) points out, to those who do not play fantasy sports, they can seem like Dungeons and Dragons for jocks. Jack Cranwell ('16), who is currently playing in two fantasy football leagues and a fantasy basketball league has one explanation for why people play.

“It is a lot of fun,” he said. “It gives you something to talk about with your friends. It also gives you something to

do besides just watch the games.”

From my own personal experience, I know that fantasy sports can connect families. I have played in a fantasy baseball league with my dad and brothers for seven years now and it is always a cutthroat competition. There is nothing worse than losing to your family, a fact that drives me to always look for an edge to propel me to victory. Along with the competition, though, comes communication, as I talk with my two brothers who are currently in college about fantasy sports as much as anything else.

Within the Smith Family League I found a passion for the game of baseball and the analytics that go with it. Before 2008, I had little to no interest in professional sports, as I had no team allegiance nor interest in rooting. Convinced to play because my brothers and dad needed a fourth player to have a league, I had no idea what I was getting into when I named my team the Roanoke Dominators and entered my first draft. That year, I selected Phillies star second basemen Chase Utley to be a part of my team. When he hit 11 home runs in the month of April, I decided he was going to be my favorite player and the Phillies my team. That seemingly innocent allegiance has turned into an obsession, as Chase Utley posters now adorn my walls and his number 26 is now the number on the back of my jerseys. Along with a passion for Utley and the Phillies, I gained an appreciation for the nuances of the game and for its history, as I have now read countless numbers of baseball books along with a daily regimen of online baseball reading. Along with my original family league, I now play in three other fantasy baseball leagues and even one football and two basketball leagues this year. Anyone who knows me knows that is hard for me to even go through a conversation sometimes without referencing baseball in some way.

All of this has led to me wanting to pursue a career in the professional baseball industry. While Dungeons and Dragons may have its fans, fantasy sports can have so much more of an impact than simply rolling dice.