

# Foreign language department gets a new home

**Bethany DiOrio, Posted: 4/25/06**

President David P. Roselle and university faculty members celebrated the open house of the foreign language building, Jastak-Burgess Hall, on Old College last Friday.

Foreign language professor Carmen Finnicum said this is the first time all of the department's faculty are in the same building.

Before the professors were spread across campus in Smith Hall, Mitchell Hall and the Foreign Language Annex, Finnicum said.

"Our department has really grown," she said, "I think that we feel lucky and grateful to have been given such an outstanding building in which to work."

Finnicum said she is pleased with the new building since it is convenient and has attractive architecture. It also includes a conference room, lounge and media center.

Spanish professor Persephone Braham said the 62 new offices are comfortable and large, although she said she has not viewed the full interior of the building yet.

She said the new building was a necessary move since many students got lost in Smith Hall.

"The floor plan was very confusing," Braham said. "You could walk for a long time in the wrong direction trying to find your office."

Another advantage of the new building is its proximity to the parking lot and a Spanish-speaking bagel shop, which is located next to it, she said.

Senior Ben Black, a Spanish education major, said Jastak-Burgess Hall is nicer and cleaner than Smith Hall.

Black said he constantly had to juggle going back and forth between Smith Hall and Delaware Avenue.

"If I need to talk to someone," he said, "I'm not running around trying to find everyone."

Roselle said the renovated building was originally two fraternity houses, Sigma Nu built in 1929, and Sigma Phi Epsilon in 1922.

The land the fraternity houses were built upon was owned by the university, and the buildings were purchased when the chapters were suspended from campus, he said.

The architectural firm Anderson, Brown, Higley and Associates designed the foreign language building, and they established the buildings as a unified presence on a historical area of our campus, Roselle said.

French professor Bonnie Robb said plans for Jastak-Burgess Hall, which took two years to construct, were made not only by the architects, but by representatives of the university and several staff members.

"Everyone put input into what they needed in the building," Robb said.



Media Credit: [Meaghan Jones](#)

The renovated building was dedicated to Sarah Jastak-Burgess and Leslie Burgess to honor their gratuity to the university.

There is a plaque outside with information on the couple and a thank-you note. It reads: "Their generous gifts in support of this building and their numerous donations of art and artifacts ensure their place in the highest rank of university benefactors."

Leslie Burgess spoke at the ceremony to thank Roselle and others for the honor.

"This is an event of great importance to Sarah and me," he said. "We're honored and grateful to be associated with the University of Delaware."

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