Why a new language?

We want to hear from you! People choose to study a new language for many different and often varied reasons. So, why did you choose to study a language? Email your responses below to cla-llc_socialmedia@colostate.edu for an opportunity to be featured in our newsletter and on our social media!

I chose to study a new language because:
- It will help me in my workplace.
- Learning more about the language connects me to my culture and/or cultures around the world.
- Learning a language is fun.
- I want to study abroad.
The beginning of October is here; the weather is getting cooler, leaves are changing, and before we know it, homes will be decorated with gold and silver tinsel, spiders, and pumpkins as we prepare for Halloween. Around the world, there are other celebrations occurring to acknowledge the significance of the autumn season for many countries. The Mid-Autumn Festival, originally known as the Moon Festival, is a significant holiday in Chinese history dating back 3,000 years ago when the Chinese Emperors worshiped the full moon for providing a plentiful harvest. Each year, on the 15th day of the 8th month of the Chinese lunisolar calendar, families gather to reunite with one another and give thanks for a bountiful harvest during the Autumn season. Making and sharing mooncakes is another tradition of the Mid-Autumn Festival. The round shape of the cake represents wholeness and unity as the families enjoy the mooncake together. In addition to gathering with friends and family while enjoying moon cakes, lanterns of all sizes are brightly lit, carried, and displayed to signify prosperity and good luck for the future. Traditionally, the lanterns were often handcrafted and displayed historical figures. Today, the lanterns are typically made out of plastic materials and depict well known characters such as Disney characters.

There are several greetings to share for this auspicious festival, so please join us in wishing our Chinese classes a happy Mid-Autumn Festival!

This year, the Mid-Autumn festival begins October 1st and typically lasts for 3-7 days

The festival will be celebrated in China, Japan, Vietnam, Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore and Cambodia by millions of people.
I am a mechanical engineering major minoring in Chinese. I am a non-traditional older student, as well as the first person to go to school in my family. Before CSU, I lived in Europe and travelled to Central and South America. Each trip, I tried to find ways to connect with the different cultures but often had a hard time only knowing English. After reading about land preservation in the Amazon I wanted to live in Peru but, once again due to my lack of language skills, I had a hard time assimilating. It was in Peru that I decided to go to university following my passions of being an inventor and studying a language.

During my first semester at CSU, I needed 5 more credits and decided on a whim to take Chinese. Although starting Chinese was difficult, I fell in love with the language and culture. Once I learned there were scholarships to travel to China, I was determined to get one. After a lot of hard work, and help from great people at CSU’s education abroad, the writing centre, and Mary Swanson, I was awarded my first scholarship which paid for study in Beijing. In Beijing I had a great time and pushed myself to only speak Chinese.

After returning to CSU, I wanted to travel back to China again. I realized intensive cultural immersion was the only way to become fluent. So I set my sights on another scholarship. After working again with the great people who helped with the first scholarship, I was awarded the next scholarship and used it to study in Suzhou. It was there that I began to really feel like I was making progress. There, my hard work paid off and I started being able to hold longer and longer conversations within the community. Each time in China, I found I had made massive improvements in my Mandarin but I knew that to really achieve my goal of fluency, I would need to live in China for at least a year. To make this happen I worked towards the Boren Scholarship, which I was awarded, and plan on living in Kunming China.
It’s never too early to be thinking about scholarships, especially if you’re interested in traveling. CSU offers many great scholarships and resources that students such as Sidney Spiegel used to apply for and receive scholarships. 

On her experiences applying: I am really glad that I was a CSU student because there were so many good people that were willing to help me. I really want to thank both of my Chinese professors, Chuchang Chiu and Jun Xu. Both of these teachers are not only amazing at their jobs but they also worked incredibly hard to help me every step of the application process. I also got tons of help from everyone at the writing center, Mary Swanson, and the education abroad staff. I don’t think that without their guidance I would have been able to get these scholarships.

Pointers for applying: Start early. Writing a really good personal essay without errors takes a long time. Talk with language professors, education abroad, or people who have won scholarships to get advice directly from them. Once you have a good draft, give your essays to as many people as you can. I ended up having my entire family, friends of friends, and parents of friends read my essays. Each time they would find ways I could write something better. And they will find all your mistakes.

CSU Financial Aid website for Scholarships: https://financialaid.colostate.edu/scholarships/

Education Abroad Scholarships: https://international.colostate.edu/educationabroad/students/getting-started/scholarships/
Scholarship Tips, cont.

On scholarships: Not only did they dramatically improve my language skills, but they also helped me find work, internships, and research positions. After my first summer in Beijing, I was craving the immersive language environment and found a volunteer position teaching math in mandarin to bilingual fourth-graders right here in Fort Collins. This was a really humbling experience because even though I had been studying Mandarin for a year these kids would laugh when I spoke and correct my tones and grammar. It was while I was volunteering that I found another opportunity that ended up being a wonderful exchange: I could use my enthusiasm about math and science to tutor a high school student while also getting to practise Mandarin with his mother.

A positive message: To students who are seriously considering these competitive scholarships: Even if you don't think you are the best writer or the best at your chosen language it is possible to get these scholarships with the help of all the resources at CSU. Before college, I never considered myself a great student and I struggled with every class I took. It was only after I found things that I really cared about that I realized I had the fortitude to endure the challenges that would help me to excel. So if you are passionate about learning, take advantage of all the resources available to you and work hard to make your dreams come true because as hard as it seems, whatever you set your mind to can be accomplished.