

Language of love differs across cultures

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Amid the stuffed animals and candy hearts that characterize Valentine's Day, students in the Tulane International Society wanted to develop a deeper understanding of love and dating scenes across various cultures, so they sponsored a “Languages of Love” event on Wednesday (Feb. 12).



The Tulane International Society sponsors a panel discussion with students and faculty members to talk about love and dating on the global scene. (Image from Masterfile)

At the event, held in the Anna Many Lounge in the Caroline Richardson Building, a panel of international undergraduates, professors and graduate students fielded questions about love and dating in the context of their cultures, ranging from West Africa to the Middle East to Latin America.

The panel started with a question about the relevance of having a significant other, which varied between cultures depending on the value placed on family life and the prevalence of religious values. This discussion segued into the topic of “Westernization.”

[Isabel Carolina Caballero](#), a lecturer in Spanish and Portuguese, spoke to cultural norms in Cuba and Latin America, noting that “Westernization has affected the

dating scene significantly over the past decade.” The other panelists agreed that the phenomenon of globalization has changed the notion of dating and relationships in their respective cultures.

One student in the audience noted the growing prevalence of “hookup culture” in the U.S., and asked whether the panelists had seen something similar in their home countries.

Panelists who focused on Latin American culture noted that a similar trend exists in that region, but they also emphasized that the way in which Latin Americans express love and other emotions is distinct from its expression in the United States.

Other panelists said that they had never heard of the term “hookup culture” and that it did not exist to the same degree in their countries as it does in the U.S.

Through a diverse panel and an engaged audience, the "Languages of Love" event provided interesting insight into the world of love and dating in other cultures for consideration this Valentine's Day.

Hannah Dean is a first-year Newcomb-Tulane College student.