

Administrative Response
SLIP Program Review
June 4th, 2010

As the audience, participants and review team began assembling in the room, we had the benefit of witnessing real life, real time interactions between members of the deaf and hearing communities as they worked to arrange the room in a “deaf friendly lay-out”. Unintentionally, this helped set the stage for your presentation. First, thank you for a thoughtful, well organized review document addressing all of the items noted in the Program Review Guidelines. Your presentations were thoughtful, thorough and well organized. Your written review and presentation created a wonderful learning opportunity for us while stimulating important conversations.

We appreciate your concern about and attention to student success as indicated by your thoughts regarding enhanced pre-requisites, improved ASL exit competencies, and QE/EIPA testing. We understand the purpose is to more clearly define entrance requirements, thus helping ensure a better prepared student for the rigors of the program, as well as, to build on the already high level of skill attainment of our graduates. We do, however, offer the following concern. As you move in these directions, please consider first putting in place program improvements/systems before entrance requirements and exit standards are altered.

Additionally, in your materials and throughout parts of your presentation we noted several critical junctures at which assessment of student learning would be helpful in evaluating and addressing some of the concerns about program retention.

Students preparing for Work Experience are given the QE exam, which is intended to ensure that they can perform at a competent level and do no harm to clients in the field. Assuming that the QE exam maps to the competencies and the program outcomes, it seems an appropriate tool by which to assess both individual students program curriculum. One would hope that by the end of the program students can achieve an acceptable score. If not, why not? Analysis of elements are most often missed but should be captured and analyzed on an annual basis, and followed up by plans to support better success in these areas. The loop should be closed by assessing these same elements in subsequent years. Ideally, there will be improvement, but if not, other suggestions could be tried.

Transition from the first to the second year of the program is another critical juncture. If attrition represents a population of students who have not been successful in the first year, it would be good to do a systematic analysis of the key elements(competencies and/or outcomes) of the first year courses, to determine whether there are some that are especially problematic. The assertion that some people do not have aptitude for this work may be supported by this approach, but it is also possible that the exercise may reveal opportunities for improving student success.

Finally, entry into the program could be similarly approached by more systematic assessment in the courses that feed the program. The results of assessment should provide some direction when considering whether to alter the filter (by placement exams or prerequisites) or alter the teaching (as the SAC acknowledged in their plans to evaluate the consistency of standards in ASL courses).

Throughout the program, there are ample opportunities and even tools in place to let evidence drive program improvement, and these should be intentionally employed.

This response contains 4 sections: 1.) a listing of highlights from the review, 2.) areas for further consideration, 3.) response to recommendations/areas of SAC needs and 4.) closing comments

Highlights of your review and presentation:

- The brief history of sign language interpreting in America from 1965 through 2012
- Background placing SLIP in the broader context of the profession
- Examples helping to show the differences between languages (English and ASL)
- Discussions of high and low context and how they differ between languages and cultures
- The “Cultural Model of Deafness” rather than a medical or pathological model.
- Faculty commitment to ongoing professional development
- The introduction of the “Demand Control Schema”
- Explanations of how the program has changed
- Analysis of prerequisites and consideration to modify
- Ongoing connections to the Deaf Community
- Presentation of Labor Market Information citing more than one source
- Challenges of simultaneous interpreting
- Survey results for: students, graduates and employers
- Thoughtful, detailed recommendations
- Articulation agreement with Marylhurst enabling students with an AAS in Sign Language Interpretation to earn a bachelor’s degree
- Explanation of program strengths
- Explanation of Deaf Culture and how deaf people can identify with other cultures and the significance this has for understanding one another
- The use of specific sections of the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education Standards (CCIE) rubric to assess SILP

Areas for further consideration

“In order to be sure that the students will benefit from the internship and will cause no detriment to the Deaf students, we require that our students take and pass a “Qualifying Exam” as a prerequisite to entering internship.” *Your review provided some hard data on student pass rates for students who eventually passed this exam, but only indirectly for your general student population. We understand the importance of sending out students for an internship only when they are ready, but are concerned over*

what appears to be a low success rate. During your presentation it was stated that about 60% of first year students continue to the second year with an additional 60% of those who enter the second year graduating. Using these numbers, the overall success rate appears to fall in the 30-40% range. We recommend that you review the pass rates for all students who attempt this exam and, should it prove to be a barrier, explore options for making improvements.

One option might be to consider whether or not the QE is the best measure of students' preparedness for internship. Is it a sufficiently authentic assessment, and does it accurately measure a student's proficiencies as an interpreter? If not, then the QE could possibly be revamped, for example using live testers and raters, as you suggested. Another possibility would be to find a better existing assessment.

If, on the other hand, the QE turns out to be the best solution, then you will need to consider changes to the curriculum, both before entry and in the first year of the program, that will make success on the QE within reach for most SLIP students.

Regarding your Advisory Committee you noted, "The Advisory committee has been dormant for the past few years for a couple reasons." You went on to explain that frequent contact is maintained with Committee members, but through a one on one basis rather than as a full committee. Oregon State Regulations specify that, "State regulations require advisory committees to assist in the development of career technical education programs.* Advisory Committees provide current business, industry, labor and professional support and advice to existing programs. The Advisory Committee and the staff of the corresponding career technical education program are to work together to ensure that the program addresses current business, industry, labor and/or professional employment needs. Many Subject Area Committees (SAC) have benefitted from High School participation."

<http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/standards-practices/documents/A108April2010.pdf>

Additionally, PCC's Academic Standards and Practices Section 108 states, "The Advisory Committee and the staff of the corresponding Program work together to ensure that the Program is delivering learning that is current, up-to-date, and relevant to current business, industry, labor, and professional employment practices. Advisory Committees provide support and advice to academic programs. They may also assist in the development of new Career Technical Education programs. An ad hoc committee may be established for this purpose.

In addition to best practice standards, Federal Perkins grants and Accrediting bodies also identify the expectation that Advisory Committees are utilized to open a dialog of exchange with members of a broader society. It is further required that a description of the committee involvement and contribution to curricular and program development and assessment be periodically submitted with accreditation and/or other official college documents. The purpose of these committees is advisory in nature as members of the community provide external input into internal processes."

<http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/standards-practices/AcademicStandardsandPractices-AdvisoryCommittees.html>

Therefore, we ask that you formalize and document, in minutes, the meeting of and interactions with your Advisory Committee and hold meetings on a regular basis to address the roles and responsibilities noted above.

Under facilities you noted, “the fire alarms in both the classroom and the general office space are made accessible via strobe lights, however, the “lockdown” alarm is not accessible, and a faculty member in the closed office would have no access to either alarm.” *This was noted during past “lockdown drills” and was reported to Campus Public Safety and Facility Maintenance Services for correction. It has been reported again.*

You noted, though not as a formal recommendation that, “Still needed is a system that allows an instructor to distribute video to lab workstations, and to listen to individual sign-to-voice interpretation in the lab in real time.” *Again, we urge that you work closely with your Division Dean to cost out not only this equipment, but any structural changes to existing facilities that may be needed. With this information, your Division Dean and Campus Leadership will be able to look for potential funding.*

Recommendations/areas of SAC needs

I. Seek Accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education beginning in the 2010-2011 school year. This will be necessary to remain competitive.

We applaud you for anticipating the importance of seeking this accreditation and ask that you work with your Division Dean to estimate the associated costs and benefits. With this information, your Division Dean and Campus Leadership will consider options and be able to look for potential funding.

II. Increase the student success rate, by taking some or all of the following actions:

A. Improve instruction and exit standards for all prerequisite courses with an ASL prefix (ASL 101-203, 151-251, and 130) by holding faculty accountable for student success and providing them with ongoing supervision and in-service training, particularly in assessment and ASL linguistics

This is a laudable yet delicate goal. We encourage you to work through your program leadership and Division Dean to open these discussions.

B. Increase prerequisite requirements for students seeking to enter the SLIP by

We urge that as you move to more stringent prerequisites you remain mindful of the implications for access. The balance, of course, will be in designing prerequisites and other activities to support student success, but without unnecessarily limiting student access.

1. Developing an “ASL for Interpreters” course that reinforces language skills and fluency and increases vocabulary in preparation for interpreting.

We urge that as you contemplate additional courses, you remain mindful of the implications for access. The balance, of course, will be in designing

prerequisites and other activities to support student success, but without unnecessarily limiting student access.

2. Changing the English prerequisite from WR 121 to WR 185 or to a specifically developed “English for Interpreters” course

You’ve established sound rationale for this move. If you decide to move in this direction, please evaluate the implications of such a change on your degree. You might find it necessary to retain WR 121 for purposes of your degree while adding WR 185

3. Move some of the information currently provided in ITP 260 and ITP 270 into a “pre-interpreting” course to be taken before entering the program.

In your work with the Curriculum Office, be sure that any such courses are designated as a prerequisite for entry into your base level courses.

4. Improve entrance screening by including a live interview with a panel of Deaf and hearing screeners (in addition to assessing language skills this will allow assessment of readiness to face the standards and workload of the program)

Again, be mindful of the balance between improving success rates vs limiting access.

5. Add a required course(s) during the summer between first and second years in order to support students continued development of “dual-tasking” skills and increased speed of processing and production of message

Since “dual-tasking” has been identified as a barrier, we applaud your plans to develop a course addressing it. While the placement of the course between first and second years seems ideal, please consider alternatives in the event not all students will be able to attend.

- C. Continue and increase the provision of tutoring from professional interpreters; provide training and direction for ASL tutors on how to plan activities for and give feedback to students.

Yes

III. Improve communication and collaboration among faculty members

- A. “Cross train” so that all faculty is familiar with the content and expectations of all courses

This is an admirable goal and we applaud you for including it.

- B. Consider adding a “curriculum management plan” to continually evaluate the program to ensure that it meets accreditation standards, includes the most current information and

teaching methods, avoids duplication, provides current materials both in the classroom and in the library, and meets student needs for reaching competency.

This is an important function for any viable, healthy program. We encourage and support you in this effort.

IV. Improve staffing of program by hiring additional full time faculty

A. Assign one full-time faculty member to the supervision of the Sign Language Studies (ASL language courses) program and make sure that staff member's hours overlap with those of the part-time ASL instructors, most of whom teach in the evening.

B. Improve faculty to student ratio within skills classes in the program to approach CIT Standards. This lower faculty to student ratio is not unprecedented in college programs. The ratio in SLIP classes was 1:15 several years ago; some dental hygiene classes have a lower ratio (see Dental Hygiene Program Review, p. 24).

We understand the desire to add full time faculty, increasing the FT to PT ratio as well as enabling closer supervision of the ASL program. Given current budgetary constraints, few options for such additions are available. However, we urge you to have these discussions with your Division Dean, creating a place holder proposal. Should future funding for "New Initiatives" become available, your request would be evaluated along with all other request.

There may be creative solutions to the leadership problems in the ASL portion of the program short of adding full time faculty. Your Division Dean and Dean of Instruction will discuss this further.

V. Explore the relationship of success on the Educational Interpreters Proficiency Assessment and the National Interpretation Certification evaluation to completion of the program

A. Research the equivalence of EIPA scores to Qualifying Exam Scores

B. Research the equivalence of NIC scores to program graduation

C. Consider requiring students to pass the EIPA at a level of 3.5 in order to graduate

D. Consider using the EIPA as an alternative to Qualifying Exam testing or retesting.

As noted in your presentation, passing the EIPA with a 3.5 is required for an individual to work in the K-12 system; a level of expertise well above the normal graduates from the 2 year program. We are concerned that using this certification test, either as an alternative to the Qualifying Exam or in order to graduate could further reduce student success rates and run the risk of frustrating students in the process. We understand your commitment to excellence, but given

the comments about low levels of self confidence made by a student during the presentation, we have concerns.

VI. Reevaluate program attitudes and approach to ASL vs. English signing in light of job requirements and language use in the community. Although an emphasis on ASL is necessary, based on input from employers, graduates and students, an earlier introduction to English-like signing would ease the transition into internship and the workplace.

We applaud you for making wise use of feedback in helping shape your program.

VII. Revise the SLIP student database to enable efficient retrieval of information on Qualifying Exam completion, reasons for leaving the program, and graduation rates.

This will provide better access to important program information. We applaud your efforts in this area.

VIII. Revise SLIP program outcomes to include all items from the Entry to Practice Competencies that are included in courses but not specifically stated in the outcomes document.

With increased emphasis on assessment this is a critical step in completing the loop of gathering information, evaluation and making modifications if needed. Thanks.

“For recommendations that require additional funding, please identify those that are of greatest importance to the SAC

Of the recommendations (starred above) that require additional funding, the three that are of greatest importance are seeking accreditation (from the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education), adding one full time faculty position, and researching the use of the Educational Interpreters Proficiency Assessment.”

We understand the fiscal implications of adding a full time faculty. However, we are less knowledgeable about the costs of pursuing accreditation or researching the use of the Educational Interpreters Proficiency Assessment (notwithstanding our previous concerns about the possible use of the EIPA). We ask that you provide more details regarding the cost of these recommendations to your Division Dean, to enable him to work with campus leadership to consider options and identify possible funding .

In closing we want to thank you for your well organized, thoughtful review. We applaud your dedication to ethics, professionalism and continuous improvement.

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