**Sinclair Community College - Continuous Improvement Annual Update 2010-11**

**Program:** American Sign Language

**Section I: Trend Data**

1. **Program Trend Data**

The trend data indicates that the American Sign Language and Interpreting for the Deaf Associate Degree Program (ASLID) has experienced strong growth over the past five years. The ASLID program has two distinct populations of students: (1) students taking American Sign Language (ASL) classes only as a second language (for personal interest and/or to fulfill another degree gen. ed. requirement); and (2) students pursuing the full interpreting degree (which qualifies a graduate to interpret in Ohio public schools per the Ohio Educational Licensure law and to interpret in the community per the Americans with Disabilities Act. Both populations have shown growth.

Specifically, the number of students overall (of which the “ASL second language only” students make up a large proportion) has grown in the past five years from a total of 171 students in Fall 05 to a total of 225 students in Fall 10, i.e. a 31 % overall increase, The number of degree graduates over the past five years has also grown, from 13 ASLID graduates in FY 05-06 to 21 ASLID graduates in FY 09-10. We expect the number of graduates this academic year to increase further to approximately 25 ALID graduates.

Student success rates in the past academic year were strong, which is consistent with the previous four years. Of the 25 courses that comprise the ASLID degree program, the success rates in FY 09-10 were:

* 11 courses above 90%;
* 7 courses above 80%
* 5 courses above 70 %
* 2 courses were at 69%

The two courses at 69 % success rates were both introductory courses – ASL 101 (Orientation to Deafness) and ASL 111 (Beginning ASL I). We have introduced greater rigor for the introductory courses. But also the faculty have long had a sense that students with a second language requirement for their major will avoid other second language options in favor of ASL, because ASL is perceived less difficult. There is a perception that ASL lacks its own grammar distinct from English. These students are often surprised at the amount of study and practice it requires to begin mastering not only a different vocabulary, but also a completely new grammar distinct from English. This may explain, in part, the lower success rates in these two introductory courses.

1. **Interpretation and Analysis of Trend Data** *Suggestions of questions that might be addressed in this section: What trends do you see in the above data? Are there internal or external factors that account for these trends? What are the implications for the program or department? What actions have the department taken that have influenced these trends? What strategies will the department implement as a result of this data?*

The trend data indicates continued demand for both ASL as a second language and for students with the goal of becoming an interpreter. With regard to the first, we have hired new adjunct Deaf adjunct professors to teach the ASL language courses in order to accommodate the increased numbers of sections for ASL language courses.

With regard to student success, we have made a preference for hiring Deaf professors to ensure true immersion for the students and to ensure that the students are exposed to true ASL fluency in their language courses. (Hearing professors who have acquired ASL as a second language often have more or less of a “foreigner talk” aspect to their own ASL, a natural consequence of language interference from their native language of English). The exposure to native signing by Deaf professors at the early stages promotes student success for courses at the more advanced levels, especially for the interpreting courses.

With regard to increase in graduates of the full degree program, the ASLID faculty has been discussing the external constraint of saturation of quality practicum placements in the Dayton area. These placements must be monitored by a practicum supervisor, including at least two site observations for each student. If the number of graduates continues to grow, we may need to consider implementing a limit on the number of practicum students we can place per year. That may require the need for a waiting list. This is something we will be monitoring closely.

**Section II: Progress Since the Most Recent Review**

1. What was the fiscal year of the most recent Program Review for this program? 2006-2007
2. Briefly summarize the goals that were listed in Section IV part E of the most recent Program Review Self-Study (this section of the Self-Study asks “What are the department’s/program’s goals and rationale for expanding and improving student learning, including new courses, programs, delivery formats and locations”)?
3. Complete the articulation with the University of Cincinnati to offer students a second local transfer.
4. Establish a graduate tracking system to collect data on graduates to revise program accordingly.
5. Establish stakeholders’ survey to collect data for potential course development or revisions.
6. Proceed with program and general education outcomes assessment plan and revise program outcomes.
7. Work co-operatively with area high schools and universities to develop a seamless path from High School through and Associate degree and into a Bachelor’s program.
8. Have these goals changed since your last Program Review Self-Study?  If so, please describe the changes.

No

1. What progress has been made toward meeting any of the goals listed above in the past year?
2. The articulation agreement with the University of Cincinnati B.A. in Interpreting for the Deaf has been completed.
3. No progress on developing a graduate tracking device.
4. A stakeholders’ survey was completed. Dayton area interpreting agencies and public schools with Deaf students were surveyed. As a result, changes to the curriculum have been made (e.g. more vocabulary rigor was incorporated into the curriculum as a result of the feedback). We will be surveying our stakeholders again at the end of spring quarter.
5. We have revised our program outcomes and general education outcomes. These changes are reflected in the semester format of the ASLID degree program.
6. We have continued to work with area high schools. Area high schools with ASL language programs have been invited to be members of our Advisory Board. These include Beavercreek High School, Centerville High School, and Springfield High School. We began a partnership with Mound Academy this year as well whereby we offer ASL 111 and ASL 112 courses for college credit to their students. We have articulation agreements with Beavercreek and Centerville. We have articulations agreements with WSU’s ASL Interpreting BA Program and UC’s ASL Interpreting BA Program.
7. What Recommendations for Action were made by the review team to the most recent Program Review? What progress has been made towards meeting these recommendations in the past year?

* Improve documentation of actual program outcomes attainment to demonstrate that data-guided results are used to focus improvements.
* Encourage completion of certificates as well as degree programs by listing both on students’ program of studies in Colleague.
* Develop a formal process to track graduates.
* Work with the full- and part- time faculty to help them make explicit connections between courses and measurable general educational outcomes to improve assessment practices.
* Create a process to develop, sustain, and improve the quality of course delivery by part-time faculty members.
* Develop a plan to recruit part-time faculty from WSU and UC programs.
* Explore ways to increase the diversity of full-time faculty in these programs.
* Continue development of “seamless pathway” approaches by pursing possible tech prep and/or high school articulation opportunities in addition to exploring prior learning assessment/proficiency prospects for students.
* Conduct a needs assessment to determine possible opportunities of ASL in other languages (e.g. sign language for Spanish speaking individuals or “minimal language populations).

We have made significant improvement in our collaboration with our part-time faculty to ensure consistency of outcomes across courses and to improve the quality of course delivery. Our efforts in this regard include regular, required meetings with all adjuncts to:

* Discuss curriculum requirements for each course;
* Demonstrate teaching techniques and materials;
* Provide an overview of the program curriculum and how each class fits within the overall structure;
* Elicit feedback from the adjunct faculty.

These meetings have been very successful and the adjunct faculty have expressed their appreciation for the guidance and the sense of collegiality they feel as a result of these meetings.

The Deaf Studies Certificate and the ASLID Associate degree are now both listed separately for students.

We have continued our efforts to maintain and to expand the “seamless pathway” for our students. This is explained in the previous section.

We have not made significant improvement toward tracking our graduates nor for a deliberate plan for data collection, but recognize that both of these are opportunities for improvement that need to be implemented immediately.

Finally, we do not see the recommendation to attempt to hire part-time faculty from the WSU or UC programs as advisable. Likewise, we do not see recommendation for assessing the need for using sign language with Spanish speaking or minimal language populations as prudent. Aside from the fact that this is far a field of our mission, Hispanic immigrants have their own sign languages, depending upon the country of origin. Learning ASL grammar and vocabulary requires just as much study and length of acquisition as learning English. Hearing Hispanic immigrant would, therefore, be better served by learning spoken English.

**Section III: Assessment of Outcomes**

The Program Outcomes for this program are listed below. **At least one-third of your program outcomes must be assessed as part of this Annual Update, and across the next three years all of these program outcomes must be assessed at least once**.

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| **American Sign Language** Program Outcomes | In which courses are these program outcomes addressed? | Which of these program outcomes were assessed during the last fiscal year? | Assessment Methods  Used |
| **1)** Interpret entry level terminology commonly encountered in medical, educational, technical, legal, counseling and business settings. | ASL 211, 212, 261, 262,263 |  | * Simulations * Comprehension Exams * Performance Exams |
| **2)** Demonstrate basic conversational skills and use of appropriate American Sign Language vocabulary, fingerspelling, and numbers. | ASL 228, 229, 230,231,232233 |  | * Simulations * Comprehension Exams * Performance Exams |
| **3)** Explain the myths that have surrounded deafness throughout history. Articulate the legal rights of Deaf citizens in the United States. Articulate the ethics and protocol of professional interpreting. | ASL 101, 102, 103 |  | * Written Exams |
| **4)** Produce accurate, American Sign Language vocabulary and sentence types using correct grammatical structure. Articulate selected aspects of Deaf culture. | ASL 231, 232, 233, 261, 262, 263 |  | * Simulations * Comprehension Exams * Performance Exams |
| **5)** Articulate the historical changes in the interpreting profession. Explain the models of interpretation. Perform as entry level interpreter in a variety of settings using the technique of consecutive interpretation. | ASL 101, 102, 103 |  | * Written Exam |
| **6)** Explain the primary issues involved with Deaf, hard of hearing and Deaf-Blind persons and access to interpreting services, education, employment, health care, mental health and social services. | ASL 101, 102, 103,  116 |  | * Written Exam * Service Learning Project |
| **7)** Transliterate, at any level, spoken English into English related sign varieties and vice versa. | ASL 236, 261, 262, 263 |  | * s Simulations * Comprehension Exams * Performance Exams |
| **8)** Interpret accurately and effectively between English and American Sign Language consecutively and simultaneously. | ASL 202, 203, 204, 207, 261, 262, 263 |  | * Simulations * Comprehension Exams * Performance Exams |
| **9)** Recognize the difference between deafness as a culture of an American linguistic minority as opposed to solely a medical condition. Understand the unique characteristics, cultural norms, and processes of the Deaf community. | ASL 101, 102, 103, 116 |  | * Service Learning Projects * Written Exams |

a) For the assessment methods listed in the table above, what were the results? What changes are planned as a result of the data? How will you determine whether those changes had an impact?

An analysis of the role play simulation exams in the capstone courses (ASL 261, 262 and 263) indicated that some students continue to struggle during the practicum year with the cognitive processing skills necessary for fluent and accurate simultaneous interpreting. Our conclusions were the result of analyzing videotaped performances by practicum students in a variety of interpreting settings – sign-to voice; voice-to-sign; and consultative interpreting.

Once a student has develop the necessary language skill in ASL, the key to developing the cognitive skills necessary for simultaneous interpreting is hands-on interpreting practice. We concluded that the practicum itself, and the courses leading up to practicum, do not provide sufficient simulated practice, nor simulated testing, of these skills. Accordingly, we created interpreting simulations within our lab that utilize our Deaf role models. These simulations are both for practice and testing. They can be videotaped and evaluated by: the Deaf role model, the lab director (who is a nationally certified interpreter), the faculty member, and the student him- or her- self. These simulations are designed to incorporate all the requisite skills and professional behaviors that comprise our program outcomes. The students receive detailed feedback per a rubric that assess whether they met the targeted outcomes.

b) What other changes have been made in past years as a result of assessment of program outcomes? What evidence is there that these changes have had an impact?

Upon graduation of the ASLID program, many students sit of the national certification test administered by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). The exam includes a written portions and an oral portion, both of which require a student to go beyond mere recognition or recall of concepts. Instead, the RID exam requires application of critical thinking skills. For example, one portion of the oral exam requires students to quickly analyze ethical dilemmas using a very specific critical thinking paradigm. Students must be able to discern the ethical considerations in play and then resolve the ethical dilemma accordingly. Our existing ASL 103 exams were reviewed to determine whether the exams truly assess the requisite critical thinking skills necessary to be successful on the RID exam. It was found that they did not adequately assess whether the students truly possessed these skills. The existing tests were largely objective, recognition tests. Accordingly, the exams were revised to require students to produce and apply concepts to hypothetical questions. The new exam results indicated that well over half the students achieved over 90% accuracy on the examination, and eighty-five percent of the students achieved better than 80 % accuracy. Only 15 % of the students scored 72% or less. Less than 72% is not a passing grade, meaning the students must retake the course in order to move forward through the program.

c) Describe general education changes/improvements in your program/department during this past academic year (09-10).

As part of the move to semesters, we have adjusted our general education pre-requisites for ASL 112 and ASL 229. This shift requires that ENG 111 and 112 be completed much earlier in the program than what is currently required. This is important for improving student success in these courses since the ability to learn a second language requires a basic grounding in the syntax and use of one’s native language.

We also added a requirement for ENG 113 to be taken in the semester format of the ASLID degree program. The upper levels of the program require that students have the ability to use appropriate English syntax and vocabulary register when interpreting from voice to sign. We have noticed that this ability has often been lacking in our students advanced students. The result is that these students do poorly on those interpreting courses that require them to interpret for subject matter that is more complex.

**Section IV: Improvement Efforts for the Fiscal Year**

1. **FY 09-10:** What other improvement efforts did the department make in FY 09-10?  How successful were these efforts?  What further efforts need to be made? If your department didn’t make improvement efforts during the fiscal year, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the department over the last year and how the department plans to address them in the coming year.

* The Ohio Department of Education did a complete licensure review of the ASLID Program in May 2010. The program received commendations on each requirement for accreditation.
* Addition of a Nationally Certified Interpreter as CFE Lab Director (Gwen Owen)
* Addition of interpreting simulations in the CFE Lab:
  + Deaf role model used for each student role play simulation
  + Each role play simulation is evaluated by Lab Director ( a nationally certified interpreter) and/or Faculty
  + Role play simulations added as a requirement of ASL 221, 212, 202, 203, 204, 261, 261, 263
* Addition of Lab Work Plans required for all intermediate and advanced courses. This has provided more structure to students’ lab work with focus upon the targeted skills for each course.
* Incorporation into the curriculum of ASL 231, 232, 233, 261, 263 and 264 detailed self-assessments and improvement journals for: (1) acquisition of ASL grammar; (2) acquisition of ASL grammar; (3) productive interpreting accuracy and fluency; and (4) comprehension interpreting accuracy and fluency.

**FY 10-11:** What improvement efforts does the department have planned for FY 10-11? How will you know whether you have been successful?

A professional interpreter must have the requisite language and interpreting skills to interpret accurately (in terms of message, tone and nuance), as well as possess the requisite professional dispositions (ethical judgment, commitment to confidentiality, social skills, etc.). At times, certain students demonstrated the requisite language and interpreting skills, and yet do not possess the professional dispositions required to be successful in the field. Accordingly, the program is investigating how we might better measure professional dispositions to ensure that our graduates do possess the requisite professional and social skills.

Finally, the ASL program needs to develop a more deliberate approach to the collection of data. The ASL faculty does meet frequently to discuss curriculum and methods for improvement. But, the collection of data in an intentional and organized manner is absolutely necessary for a more data driven approach to our evaluation of outcomes and need for improvements.

Questions regarding completion of the Annual Update? Please contact the Director of Curriculum and Assessment at 512-2789 to schedule a time to review the template and ask any questions.