

Program Review

Executive Summary

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Western Oregon University:

ASL Studies Program of Deaf Studies and Professional Studies

Majors Reviewed:
ASL Studies

Minors Reviewed:
ASL Studies

Dates of Program Review: February 2019
External Reviewer Visit: April 22, 2019

Date of Executive Summary: October 28, 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: ASL Studies, Deaf Studies and Professional Studies

Brief overview of program review strategy including program leader, involvement of other program faculty and external review. Highlight sources of information, any strategies that worked particularly well and/or challenges faced with the review process itself:

Brent Redpath, prior ASL Studies Coordinator led on this Program Review Report. The following are a few things Brent reports that worked well and some challenges that occurred during the process.

- As a program leader, I was approved to have a course-release for one quarter to focus on this project and it was very beneficial to have the extra time to work on this.
- There was not much involvement of other program faculty for this report, however, I delegated a few items to help me complete the report such as program data, academic excellence and student success stories. I also received information from colleagues about other institutions with ASL programs to compare with WOU. My team assisted with program priorities and future strategic planning.
- External reviewers provided their knowledge and expertise on how to improve our ASL Studies program and we found several of their feedback beneficial according to their report. I found it helpful to have two external reviewers who came from institutions that also have 3-year ASL programs. As we, three, are the only institutions with 3-year ASL programs from my own current knowledge.
- The challenge I had was that there was no data provided by Institutional Research. We also did not receive communication we needed from IR. Even Sue Monahan tried to get ahold of them to collect data for us without luck.

Key findings including areas of alignment and misalignment to WOU mission and strategic plan (highlight student success and academic effectiveness):

Strengths shown in the report, highlighted below are examples of how the ASL Studies program aligns with the WOU mission and strategic plan including student success and academic effectiveness:

- A great array of elective courses to promote and increase competency in using ASL in interactive environments and knowledge in understanding culture values of the Deaf Communities and beyond.
- Student participation in Academic Showcase to highlight learning and projects done in ASL classes.
- Personalized support to students from faculty through Major and Minor advising.
- Small class sizes providing for more one-one-one and small group interaction and learning.
- Planned community events to encourage language and learning interaction among ASL students and Deaf community.

- “Overall, the strength of the program is the preparation for students to attend graduate programs and/or get a job that requires ASL skills and knowledge of deaf culture.” (Program Summary Report, p. 2)
- “It’s been a privilege to see the ASL Studies program evolve from its inception in 2007 to the present. I was a student at Western when the program first opened. I was fortunate to become one of the program’s first students and be part of the first graduating class in 2010. I returned to WOU in 2014 as faculty of the very same program, teaching some of the very same classes I took as a student. It has been incredible to witness the growth in the ASL Studies program where it has grown so much; both in students taking more interest in ASL as a language and the diversity that Deaf Culture and Community brings to WOU”. (Program Summary Report, p. 3)

The program review emphasized the following programmatic strengths:

- Students enjoy topics of elective courses offered
- Many electives available
- Quality of ASL Instructors
- Faculty work hard to develop and continuously improving curriculum.
- WOU is unique, one of only three Universities in Nation offering 3rd year ASL classes
- Curriculum is strong on spiral instruction
- Monthly events for ASL Students
- We prepare students for beyond graduation
- A Sign of Respect curriculum for ASL core classes

The following challenges were identified:

- Recruitment of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students
- Transfer evaluation policy changes
- How to measure overall competency in ASL classes
- Mission Statement is outdated

The following opportunities for improvement were suggested:

- See below for improvements suggested that have been turned into short and long term goals.

Summarized overview of recommendations and priorities based upon the review:

During the Fall 2019 ASL Studies team retreat, the team reviewed the American Sign Language Studies Academic Program Review that was submitted in February 2019 and the Program Review Report submitted by the External Reviewers in April of 2019. The team discussed strengths, challenges and feedback of the program that was shown in the reports. This allowed us to establish some short term (one year) and long term goals (three years) to lead us in the right direction. The following is our goals outlined:

Short Term Goals (to be completed by Fall 2020)

1. Revisit National Standards, including 5 C's for ASL Studies courses.
(Note: information on 5 C's can be found in link provided below
<https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/publications/standards/World-ReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.pdf>)
2. Re-evaluate the mission statement and all three program learning outcomes to reflect a more current model especially from global perspective as recommended by program reviewers. (Program Summary Report, p. 5)
3. Creation of checklist to follow for each ASL core courses to keep us on track for assessment purposes
 - a. National Standards (5C) Revisit
 - b. Social Justice & Privilege content
 - c. General Content

Long Term Goals (to be completed by Fall 2022)

1. Look at how to measure overall competency for ASL core courses (ASL 101-301)
3 year plan:
2019-2020: Training on PRVAB assessment (Tie Burcham/Brian Peet - lead)
2020-2021: Assess all core courses to include overall competency.
2021-2022: Re-visit for validity and student improvement in competency.
2. Recruitment of Deaf Students
Ongoing:
2019-2020: Research (budget doesn't permit for active recruitment this year)
2020-2022: Begin recruitment activities to Deaf schools
3. Development of more ASL online courses
3 year plan:
2019-2020: Research platforms/course templates/questions
2020-2021: Develop online curriculum content
2021-2022: Online courses pilot/implementation

Brief summary of current status of program and reflection on review experience:

The ASL Studies program currently consists of 5 full-time Non-Tenure track and 1 full-time Tenure-Track faculty who carry the load of teaching ASL Studies courses and serve on plethora of department, division, college and University wide committees. Our faculty at times also teach in other departments within our division. We also have 2-4 part-time adjuncts who support us in covering ASL courses as needed. Our program is unique in our field, being one of the few in the United States that offer 3rd year ASL core classes (ASL 301-303) and focus and

depth on the study of language (ASL Linguistics courses such as Introduction to ASL Linguistics, ASL Phonology, ASL Morphology, ASL Syntax, Sociolinguistics in the Deaf Community). This program also is recognized for the wide selection of electives including several course titles that discuss cultural topics within Deaf Communities (ASL 320 Deaf Women: Sociolinguistic, Historical and Contemporary, ASL 340 Introduction to the Deaf Latino Community and more). We are also proud to be the first in the Nation to offer ASL 360 Black Deaf Culture and ASL 460 Black ASL courses. Currently to our knowledge, these two classes are not offered at any other college/university.

The review process gave us the opportunity to reflect on our strengths and confirm the challenges we have experienced and continue to experience. Through discussions with the reviewers, they affirmed many items that are challenges to our program, are also challenges that other Deaf/ASL Studies which some are common to the field and some unique to WOU. We received several commendations on the support we receive from our chair and dean. It was also mentioned that our program draws strength from the number of Deaf faculty members within the program and division-wide. The ASL Studies program has experienced and high-skilled faculty very involved in our work and in the Deaf community. Several have given presentations at local and national conferences.

The challenges that were highlighted by the report and reviewers, also gave us an opportunity to look at our priorities and goals that has helped us set several short and long term goals for our program (outlined above on page 2). The challenges and feedback, some we already knew or were intuitive were confirmed. However, we also got great and insightful feedback that we will include in our program goals in the coming years. We are grateful and appreciate the opportunity to be the first to complete the program review process on campus. We will be happy to share our experience with other programs who are beginning theirs.