

MEMORANDUM

TO: Katherine Schmidt, President, Faculty Senate
FROM: Elisa Maroney and Amanda Smith, Co-Coordinator, ASL/English Interpreting Program
DATE: January 20, 2010
SUBJECT: MA in **Interpreting**

We propose a 47-credit Master's degree program in **Interpreting**. The program will be delivered in a hybrid format (online with face-to-face components). The primary goal of the MA program in Interpreting is to provide professional interpreters with the opportunity for growth and development (via practice, research review, and the development of new research) beyond the undergraduate level. There is currently no such program offered at the graduate level at any institution in the west. Western Oregon University has a long-standing history of preparing students to work with Deaf, hard-of-hearing and Deaf-Blind individuals. The Regional Resource Center on Deafness has been housed at WOU since 1973 and WOU has been training ASL/English interpreters since 1976. This MA program is a natural extension of WOU's investment in serving this unique population.

The program consists of courses on advance interpreting process, professional ethical practice, and research within the field of interpretation (generally and specific to ASL/English interpreters). Working in collaboration with Communication Studies, two communications courses for interpreters were designed. Further, Division of Teacher Education program faculty were consulted about the impact of additional students taking the existing research. They see the addition of these students positively. There is sufficient FTE for a full load for a faculty member on a 9-hour load. There would be a need for adjunct FTE for supervising the students in internships and practica. A full-time faculty line is unlikely to open up for this program. Due to the distance nature of the course work, the program has the opportunity to invite national content experts to teach online courses.

Rationale

Currently, there is only one graduate program in interpreting in the entire nation. This program is at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. The current graduate program at Gallaudet prepares interpreters for entry-level work thus differing in intent than the proposed MA degree at WOU, which is designed to advance interpreting practitioners. The development of a graduate program in Interpreting demonstrates WOU's commitment to promoting high standards and responding to employment market trends. By offering a master's degree, WOU seeks to address the nationwide need to increase both the quality and quantity of interpreters available.

In May 2008, a survey of WOU graduates and members of the Oregon Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf was conducted using *Survey Monkey*. One hundred people replied to the survey. Fifty of the 100 respondents indicated that they would be inclined to attend an MA program in interpreting or teaching interpreting. Eighteen more said that they would if the program were offered on-line. A larger sample was gathered in August and September 2008. Through this second survey targeting a national audience, 263 of the 470 (66%) individuals responded that they would be interested in attending a graduate program in interpreting and/or teaching interpreting if the College of Education at WOU were to offer such a program. About 48%, or 126, of the 263 interested in a Master's degree would like a graduate program in both interpreting and teaching interpreting, while about 32%, or 85, would like a program in Interpreting.

Thank you for your attention. Please let us know if you have questions, suggestions, and/or concerns.