

**BLOOMSBURG UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**Department of Exceptionality Programs**

**ASL/English Interpreting Program**

**Stakeholders Focus Group**

**In attendance:**

Alumni: Theresa Whitebread, Alexa Cantalupo, Ashley Roszkowski, Andrea Lepore

Interpreter/Mentor: Alicia Pittman

Agency Representatives: Jody Longo

Deaf Community: Jeff Yockey, Grace Shirk-Emmons PSAD Member-at-large

Faculty: Jessica Bentley-Sassaman, Tracy Knight, Jay Pittman

**Date:** December 16, 2017

**Minutes:**

The meeting opened with discussions of the suggestions from the stakeholders from the June 3, 2017 meeting. The professor's responses to the stakeholder's suggestions were given.

**Mentors:**

- Matching consumer, "not one size fits all" **this is addressed in the curriculum and Advanced Simultaneous Interpreting course focuses on this more in depth.**
- Soft skills – **the importance of having good soft skills are discussed, attitudes of individuals need to be changed by the individual.**
- Understanding discourse – **This is being emphasized more and more targeted instruction on discourse will be taught in Pre-Interpreting Skills and Translation starting the fall of 2017.**

- Limited life experience and world knowledge. Students are encouraged to watch the news. Starting the academic year 2017 -2018 current events will be required in ASL 5 and Practicum Seminar. Also a new course Internship in Education is required and that is a course where students work in an interpreting agency, school for the Deaf or Deaf run organization, observe working interpreters and attend Deaf events. We hope that they increase their world knowledge through this internship experience.
- Appropriate self-care (mental health specifically) This is discussed in multiple classes within the framework of the Demand-Control Schema – what controls they have including coping strategies; and specifically taught about in Practicum Seminar (take the spring of the senior year)
- Teaming supports. This is taught in Consecutive, Simultaneous and Advanced Simultaneous Interpreting as well as Practicum Seminar (specifically how to communicate with mentors about teaming needs)
- Authentic learning opportunities. Students are given real-world situations to practice interpreting in while at BU such as having real professionals come in and do their job in an interaction. Also the students go into a classroom and interpret a lecture in Advanced Simultaneous. The real and authentic learning which we can never replicate happens during Practicum.
- Commitment to professional development (in person or online). This is something we talk to our students about, however it is up to the individual as to how they want to pursue professional development.
- Social justice & understanding of social systems. This is taught in Intro to Interpreting and again in Practicum Seminar.
- Altering message if cultural beliefs are different than the consumer. Students are taught about cultural mediation in Intro to Interpreting, Translation, Consecutive, and Simultaneous Interpreting.
- Accepting constructive feedback and incorporating it in to future interpretations. Students are taught the importance of accepting and incorporating feedback, it is up to the individual to make this decision.
- Act 57, NIC, EIPA requirements and what each means for the students. This is taught in Practicum Seminar and reviewed at the final debriefing meeting for the Practicum course.
- Improved lexicon and language use. ASL 2, 5 and 6 are being revised to incorporate more vocabulary.
- Ability to adapt register based on context. This is taught in Translation and Consecutive Interpreting.
- Understand how to manage the flow of communication. This is taught in Consecutive and Simultaneous Interpreting.
- Access to portfolio of potential mentees. Students are required to make a portfolio and are told to share it with their mentor. Whether they do or not is up to the mentor's request.

- Mentor guidelines and training. A video was made in 2017 that will be sent via a link to mentors to help them in understanding the mentoring process as well as the University Requirements.

### Alumni:

- 5.3 & 5.4 Entrance processing (cognitive) exam. During the mock ASLPI we have added (started in 2016) in a cognitive processing activity for them to do and they are given feedback on it.
- Possible exit re-test to monitor progress. We are not allowed to have a re-test like the ASLPI for students to exit the program.
- 7.0 Interpreter tutors and personal networking opportunities. We will be setting something up starting in the fall of 2017
- Start mentorship search in the fall with more chance for interpersonal matches & more times for meetings added to practicum seminar with mentor. Students are now required to identify their practicum placement in the fall starting in 2017.
- More authentic situations/exposure- specifically Black culture, Asian culture, mannerisms, norms, and affect... We are working on infusing more diversity into our classes. The authentic learning can never be fully replicated in class and that happens during the Practicum.
- 6.1 Mental and physical self-care; “vicarious trauma”- explaining processes and ways for students to deal with this in the future. There is a lesson that has been taught on this in Practicum Seminar – what it is and coping strategies. Student also learn about vicarious trauma starting in Intro to Interpreting.
- Invite interpreters to come and speak about their personal experiences and how they handled vicarious trauma. We still set up an interpreter panel in Practicum Seminar starting in the Spring of 2018
- Encourage students to self-edification both with skills/ experiences. Students are encourage to be lifelong learners and to assess their work and identify areas for improvement. This starts in Consecutive Interpreting and is in Simultaneous, Advanced Simultaneous Interpreting.
- Read about different topics, watch more shows and news. This is encouraged for students to do and there will be current events incorporated in the curriculum.

### Deaf Community:

- Host by Interpreting Students and partner up with organizations i.e.; PSAD, DHCC, North Central (Williamsport),
  - Deaf Trivia Student clubs can be encouraged to set this up

- Fundraising It is not the students' responsibility to fundraise for Deaf organizations. If the organization set up a fundraiser, they can invite students to participate
- Allow first-second year work with junior-senior into working creating deaf events in each areas is; Wilkes-Barre, Scranton, Williamsport, etc. Student clubs can be encouraged to set this up however many students do not have transportation so it would make sense for the Deaf community to set up events in these areas and invite the students to them
- Silent weekend with PSAD – PSAD will need to set this up and then the students can attend
- Deaf Awareness week is; each day (7 days) across campus by inviting different history/culture Student clubs can be encouraged to set this up
- Develop pool of ASL tutors We do have a list of Deaf ASL tutors that students can use. If people want to get on the list, please contact Dr. Jessica Bentley-Sassaman at [jbentley@bloomu.edu](mailto:jbentley@bloomu.edu)
- Re-create/modify Image Club to be more Improv style (comedy and include deaf performers) This is a decision for IMAGE to make
- Dorney Park and Hershey Park need bring back Deaf Day with interpreters The Deaf community in Allentown can work on setting this up if there are shows that need to be interpreted we can work on setting up mentoring opportunities for the practicum students, please contact Dr. Jessica Bentley-Sassaman at [jbentley@bloomu.edu](mailto:jbentley@bloomu.edu)
- Family Learning Weekend for Deaf-Blind children in Hershey Park Dr. Jessica Bentley-Sassaman reached out to PaTTAN about this and this is not an annual event, it does not always happen as the conference is not always in Hershey.
- Diversity for interpreters to learn about LGBT This is in ASL Literature and an interpreter panel will be coming o Practicum Seminar.
- Bring in regional signs from Philadelphia and Pittsburgh This can be taught as a workshop, but will not be incorporated into the curriculum as half of our students are not from Pennsylvania.
- How to teach interpreters to wear appropriate clothing around deaf people This is taught from freshman year on, we provide a manual with what to wear and what not to wear. We cannot control what they wear when they are out on observations and at events.
- Fingerspelling need increase speed: difference between conversational vs. interpreting We are working on adding a fingerspelling and numbers class into our curriculum – target start date academic year 2018-2019
- English vocabulary (spelling needs to be advanced and clear) This will be incorporated into the Fingerspelling and numbers class – related to spelling
- Use professional standard vocabulary to match deaf background (vocabulary builder) We do incorporate activities for vocabulary and will be incorporating more starting the academic year 2017-2018

- Academic and Social ASL **ASL Literature teaches Academic ASL**
- Deaf-Heart in terms of attending to deaf events **This is taught in ASL 1 and in Deaf Culture class**
- Interpreters need to know how to use their role in medical, legal, and other settings, It is not black/white or by the book, everyone needs to make proper judgments to make sure deaf needs rather do the “job” or for the “money” **This is discussed in Topics in Interpreting class.**
- Field trip to Scranton School for the Deaf **We have reached out to Scranton School (August 2017) and are working on getting something set up. This may be part of the ASL LC.**
- Be comfortable with touching deaf people without fear **This is taught in ASL classes and Deaf Culture**
- Graduates should know the difference between HIPPA and CPC how to answer questions to medical field workers. **This has been taught previously, but will be emphasized more starting in the fall of 2017 in Topics in Interpreting.**

### Agency

- 5.6: need generalized knowledge, know current news/events i.e.; local, regional, national, world **As previously stated above, current events will be incorporated into several courses. Students are encouraged to watch the news.**
- GEN X/Y/Z knowledge and old generation **generational differences are discussed, but will be emphasized more in Practicum Seminar**
- 6.1: grads have good “book knowledge” about interpreter theory, need more real-world practical application, and networking **Students are able to network at the Interpreter club conferences and by identifying the mentor earlier, they may have more opportunities to network with professional interpreters. The real world application happens during Practicum.**
- 6.2: Community involvement happens when they are students, need to continue after graduation, find formal and informal mentors, and boundary flexibility. **We can encourage this and we do in Practicum Seminar, but after graduation we have no control over what graduates choose to do.**
- 6.3: Graduates seem to have good knowledge about multi-cultural communities and need to find ways to become familiar with sub-culture groups. **This is something students learn about on observations and will learn more about while on Practicum.**
- 6.4: Graduates have good knowledge of CPC, certifications, laws, etc., need to develop practical knowledge of implications and interpretations of principles, and ability to talk about the work. **Students are learning the Integrated Model of Interpreting (Betty Colonomos) where they are learning how to talk about their work. This starts in Translation and is continued in Consecutive, Simultaneous, and Advanced Simultaneous Interpreting.**

- 7.2: need the ability to understand meaning/intent of source language, always expand vocabulary, consult deaf community i.e.: new signs, and knowledge of signs among older deaf people/community **Students are required a number of hours of interaction with the Deaf community and it is there that they learn the new signs. Meaning and intent of the message are discussed in Translation, Consecutive, Simultaneous and Advanced Simultaneous Interpreting.**
- 7.3: they know the “jargons” and become comfortable seeking feedback from consumers/colleagues, avoid being devastated or over-inflicted. **We cannot control the reactions of the students when listening to feedback, but we do teach them the importance of feedback and incorporating the feedback for their skill development.**

Comments from alumni:

It is important for students to understand the purpose of the discourse. Specifically for the EIPA, if students understand the purpose, it will help not only scores but skills. Discussion about interpreting register for children and adapting the register.

Constant feedback that it isn't only about watching the signs but also how to add things related to different content areas.

Students need to understand the register and how signing styles change to fit the register. More formal signing versus informal signing styles.

Like the idea of setting up the practicum earlier and develop a relationship with the mentor. The mentor can have the student do an on-the-spot interpreting used to gauge what their skill level is currently prior to practicum.

After graduation, working in teams provides opportunities for learning and asking for my teams.

Comments from the Deaf Community:

It is important that they get involved with community and that will connect them with different Deaf individuals and interaction.

How to get students involved with the Pennsylvania Society for the Advancement of the Deaf.

Comments from the Agency:

New interpreters must continue to work with feedback and that process of asking for feedback.

The meeting ended with the discussion of another meeting in the summer of 2018 to follow up on what has been implemented and if any further feedback for program improvement.