

Interpreting and Accommodation Services Program Review July 2007

Program Description and Scope

The Interpreting and Accommodation Services Department provides services which ensure equal access to academic programs and extra-curricular activities on the Ohlone College campus for Deaf, hard of hearing, and all other eligible disabled students registered with the DSPS (Disabled Students Programs and Services) Department. Interpreting Services and accommodations are also provided for all Deaf, hard of hearing, and disabled faculty and staff of Ohlone College for all employee-related activities. The services provided by the Interpreting and Accommodation Services Department are administered in direct accordance with all state and federal laws governing disabled access to public education as outlined in the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1974, and Title 5 of the California Community College Chancellor's office requirements.

The services provided by the Interpreting and Accommodation Services Department include, but are not limited to:

- Sign Language Interpreting
- Tactile/close-range interpreting for Deaf-Blind students/staff
- Deaf relay interpreting
- Real-time captioning
- Classroom aides and scribes
- Readers
- Note-taking services
- Distraction-reduced/extended time test proctoring
- Enlarged printing
- Liaison with instructors and other service providers on campus
- Educate and assist faculty and management to ensure compliance with laws regarding captioned-media
- Provide assistance to DSPS with any technical or logistical needs of students and staff

On average, Ohlone College serves between 100 and 300 Deaf and hard of hearing students and community members each semester. An average of 60 to 80 students are enrolled in mainstream classes, while others are enrolled in Deaf program classes and require services in other aspects of campus life, outside of the classroom. At the time of the last program review, in the 2001-2002 academic year, 80 mainstream students were served. Current statistics for the Spring semester of 2007 are as follows:

- 60 mainstream Deaf and hard of hearing students served
- 636 (approx.) workload hours/week for interpreters in the classroom (2 interpreters per class)

- 84 (approx) workload hours/week outside of the classroom (2 interpreters scheduled for any assignment over 30 minutes)
- 710 total interpreting hours/week

The disabled student population at Ohlone has grown rapidly in recent years. Interpreting and Accommodation Services has seen nearly a 300% increase in DSPTS students utilizing services. At the time of the last program review, in the 2001-2002 academic year, accommodation services were provided for 28 DSPTS students. Current statistics for the Spring semester of 2007 are as follows:

- 88 DSPTS students served
- 245 testing accommodation requests processed
- 50 note-takers utilized
- DSPTS as a whole currently serves 400 (approx.) students who are eligible to request accommodations at any time

The staff of the Interpreting and Accommodation Services Department has grown and changed to incorporate more full-time CSEA positions, and has attempted to significantly reduce dependency on interpreting agency contractors. Current interpreting and Accommodation Services staff is as follows:

- Interpreting/Accommodation Services Supervisor, 12 month, 100% position
- 17 staff interpreters, 10 month positions:
 - 8 Level II (Skill level: RID/NIC certified equivalency)
 - 8 Level I (Skill level: below RID certified equivalency)
 - 11 at 40 hours/week (100%)
 - 5 at 30 hours/week (75%)
 - 1 position, Level I/II, 40 hours/week (100%), open until filled
- 12 Other Hourly interpreters (hours range from 1 to 40+/week depending on need)
- Outside contractors from interpreting service agencies cover 100 (approx.) hours/week
- 2 Staff Real-Time Captioners (10 month, 100%)
 - 1 Level II (certified)
 - 1 Level I (non-certified)
- 2 Other Hourly Real-Time Captioners (hours range from 1 to 40+/week depending on need)

Relationship to Ohlone College Mission and Goals and Support of Student Services Curriculum

The Interpreting and Accommodation Services Department embraces the Ohlone College Mission, Goals, Core Values and Student Services Curriculum. Discussion of these concepts and how to incorporate them into our work is a priority. The Interpreting and Accommodation Services Department has shown adherence to these guidelines in the following ways:

Ohlone College Goal #1: Promote appreciation for and understanding of diverse races and cultures by expanding the diversity of college personnel, international education offerings and exchanges, cross-cultural curricula, and ethnic/cultural events.

The Ohlone College Interpreting Services Department has spent the Spring 2007 semester serving as hosts and mentors for students enrolled in the Interpreter Preparation Program at Douglas College in New Westminster, British Columbia. The program has provided Ohlone interpreters with an opportunity to share their knowledge, skills, and the cultural richness of the Ohlone Deaf community with the next generation of interpreting professionals from a different part of the world. The students have brought with them a spirit of enthusiasm, cooperation and love of learning that all of our Interpreting staff, Deaf students and faculty have enjoyed.

Ohlone College Goal #4: Provide continuous learning for all personnel associated with the District and promote an organizational structure that is adaptable, collegial and supportive of the Learning College model.

The Ohlone College Interpreting and real-time captioning staff have spent the 2006-2007 academic year working on a group professional development project which has allowed them to study the Code of Professional Conduct set forth for Interpreters by the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. The 7 tenets of the Code of Professional Conduct: Confidentiality, Professionalism, Conduct, Respect for Consumers, Respect for Colleagues, Business Practices and Professional Development outline the standards and best practices for the Interpreting profession. The Interpreters and Captioners have analyzed and studied the CPC and how it relates to their work at Ohlone and how it can be utilized to serve the students and staff at Ohlone in the best way possible.

Ohlone College Goal #6: Promote and maintain an accessible, clean, safe and healthy college environment through continuous engagement of students and college personnel in campus preparedness, wellness, beautification, universal design, and environmental sustainability.

The Ohlone College Interpreting and real-time captioning staff have recently begun a series of training sessions provided through the American Red Cross. The goal is for our interpreting and accommodations staff to be fully trained to respond in an emergency that may affect the Ohlone campus. Being trained in first aid and disaster preparedness will allow our interpreters and accommodations staff to not only prepare themselves for an emergency, but to ensure that the needs of the Ohlone Deaf and disabled community will be met.

Ohlone College Core Value #1: We provide life-long learning opportunities for students, college personnel and the community.

Student Services Curriculum – Responsibility: Student Services helps students develop personal responsibility for their lives, and their learning skills such as time management, budgeting, and ability to meet deadlines. Students learn self sufficiency, responsibility and accountability through the co-curriculum processes of on-line admissions, assessment, orientation, Financial Aid, Transfer Career Center Services, individualized counseling, and personal health services.

Life-long learning opportunities are provided everyday as Deaf, hard of hearing, and disabled students learn to request, utilize, and assess services they will need far beyond the college experience, as their need for access extends to all other aspects of their future workplaces and day-to-day lives.

Ohlone College Core Value #2: We open access to higher education and actively reach out to under-served populations.

Student Services Curriculum – Respect: Student Services provides the co-curriculum of respect of self and others through a myriad of student development opportunities designed for learning about differences and commonalities. Participation in competitive sports, and the opportunity to understand one’s own and other’s learning abilities and disabilities are components of respect. Student Services focuses on building a diverse learning community that demonstrates the value of each individual through trust, cooperation and teamwork in an environment of civility.

Opening access to higher education, serving under-served populations and promoting diversity and inclusiveness is the backbone and everyday mission of DSPPS and Deaf Services at Ohlone. Interpreting and Accommodation services staff participation in activities such as Deaf Awareness week, Disability Awareness week, and unity week is a small example among many of supporting these College-wide values.

Ohlone College Core Value #4: We maintain high standards in our constant pursuit of excellence.

Student Services Curriculum – Leadership: Student Services is in the role of providing leadership skill building opportunities through student development workshops, classes and one-to-one mentoring. Campus activities, associated students, clubs, student ambassadors, and launching leadership workshops series are all fundamental components of teaching students leadership skills.

The Interpreting and Accommodation services Department staff works very hard to promote skill-building and professional development. Interpreters study course materials and vocabulary, work together to analyze various ways to translate/interpret lectures, practice with videotapes, attend workshops and continually evaluate their skills to assure that constant pursuit of excellence is always maintained.

The Interpreting Services Department works hard to make sure all ASOC, and student leadership opportunities are accessible to Deaf, hard of hearing and DSPPS students. Students receiving services through the Interpreting and Accommodation Services office are actively involved on campus in many ways, including holding office in student government, forming/joining clubs and volunteering their time to participate and organize campus activities. The excellent services provided by the Interpreting and Accommodation Services staff makes student participation possible.

Ohlone College Core Value #5: We value trust, respect and integrity.

Student Services Curriculum – Integrity: Student Services helps students develop their honest of character through awareness and intervention. The student code of conduct is built in tandem with the academic dishonest regulations. The lack of gossip is encouraged.

Interpreting and Accommodation Services plays a major role in helping students to develop honesty of character. Utilizing only the services students need to level the playing field, and not taking dishonest advantage of the systems in place to do so, is a lesson all students must learn. In turn, the staff of the Interpreting and Accommodation Services Department maintains strict confidentiality, respect, integrity, and handles all matters of academic accommodations in full-accordance with the Ohlone College dishonesty policies and the law.

Student Service Learning Outcomes (SSLO'S)

Students will demonstrate responsibility by independently submitting requests for interpreters and adhering to posted guidelines for advanced notice. (Fall 2007 – Fall 2008)

- Current database program will be utilized to record percentage of student requests satisfied/denied in comparison to the amount of advanced notice received.
- Data will be collected/reviewed to record percentage of students utilizing priority registration and satisfaction with interpreting services provided. Student Evaluation of Interpreters (attachment #1) will be utilized.

Students will demonstrate responsibility by following posted guidelines for testing accommodation requests. (Fall 2007 – Fall 2008)

- Current database program will be utilized to record percentage of students to follow established guidelines. Data will be recorded to note procedural inconsistencies, problem areas and successes. Guidelines will be reviewed/alterd accordingly.
- Accommodation Services staff will report findings to DSPS counseling staff to assist with support of DSPS program goals of student self-advocacy and responsibility.

Students will demonstrate respect by following established guidelines for notification to the Interpreting and Accommodation Services Department of late arrival to classes, planned absences, course adding/dropping, and note-taking need adjustments. (Fall 2007 – Fall 2008)

- Data will be collected to establish the number of absences and course add/drops compared to the number of notifications received. Financial/budgetary impacts will be noted.
- Student files will be noted and review of services to be suspended based upon guidelines not being followed, will be discussed with student's counselor.

Assessment of Improvement Since Previous Program Review

SSLO's were not a part of the program review process at the time of the previous review (2001-2002), however, goals and needs for the program were outlined. The following program needs were stated and updates on the current status/relevance of these goals are explored below:

Paid Qualified Note-takers – completed

Note-takers remain peer volunteers, however a handbook has been developed, a contract is discussed and signed between the note-taker and the Interpreting and Accommodation Services office, and a \$100.00 stipend is paid per semester to each note-taker.

Increase the number of months staff interpreters and real-time captioners work from 10 to 12 months – Not completed.

Staff interpreters and captioners currently work 10-month positions. The Interpreting and Accommodation Services Department continually has a large number of requests for services year-round. Currently, most of the staff interpreters and captioners tend to work year-round, however, 2 months out of each fiscal year, their status changes to Other Hourly. Because the Interpreting and Accommodation Services Staff members are not required to work as Other Hourly, they could instead choose to be “off” or work only a few choice hours 2 months out of the year, it is often a challenge to keep services consistent for students year-round.

Increase the wages of Other Hourly interpreters – Not completed

In 2002, an other hourly wage increase proposal was written and submitted by the previous Interpreting Services Supervisor. I have updated that proposal and submitted it for review (attachment #2) The staffing situation has changed from 3 full-time staff to 18, however, we still employ up to 20 other hourly interpreters and captioners per semester, as well as 100 hours of contract work given to agency employees. A pay increase for Other Hourly workers would significantly reduce agency dependency/cost and attract highly-skilled interpreters and captioners to Ohlone.

Establish a mentor/mentee program – completed

Due to recent salary increases for Staff interpreters with RID/NIC certified-equivalent skill levels, we now employ 8 staff interpreters who are able to mentor other interpreters who are still working on reaching that higher level of skill and/or RID/NIC certification. Study groups have been formed amongst the interpreting staff to prepare for the written portion of the national certification exam. Laptops were purchased to assist with the in-class recording/collection of vocabulary and concepts for preparation and skill-building outside of class. As a rule, more experienced interpreters are paired with newer interpreters whenever appropriate to make the best use of this resource.

Larger/Additional office space – not completed

The Interpreting and Accommodation Services office is not currently meeting the needs of students or staff. 18 full-time staff and 12 other hourly employees share a space designed to fit 3-4 staff members. This is problematic in that staff members do not have space to work, meet, or rest. Privacy and confidentiality is a constant struggle. The ability to communicate about our work and scheduling is constant in our department. This requires staff members to be in the office anytime they are not in classes or at another assignment, which means overcrowding is a daily issue of mental and physical health and safety. Storage space is a significant concern as well. Space for personal belongings is insecure and materials needed for work are not readily available due to “creative” storage methods. We currently have one small room to provide testing accommodations, which is distraction-reduced, rather than distraction-free, which requires staff members to make little or no noise in their own workspace while a student is testing, this impedes communication and teamwork, as well as being inappropriate for students. More space for Interpreting and Accommodation services is desperately needed.

Program Needs Implementations and Timelines

Increase number of months staff interpreters work from 10 to 12

Suggested completion date: August 2008

Estimated cost (approx.): \$14,325/month (9 Staff Interpreter I positions at Range 41 step 3, 9 Staff Interpreter II positions at range 46, step 3)

Increase wages for hourly interpreters and real-time captioners

Suggested completion date: August 2008

Estimated cost: See attachment #2

Larger office space

Suggested completion date: Fall 2007

Estimated cost: \$0

Wireless communication devices for all staff interpreters and captioners

(Currently, Staff uses personal pagers and cell phones to receive office communication regarding scheduling changes and assignment-related information while on campus. Supervisor is available in the office 8am – 5pm, Monday – Friday; whereas, services are provided 7am – 10pm, Monday – Saturday. Communication devices would allow continuous communication access at all service hours.)

Suggested completion date: Fall 2007

Estimated cost: Unknown

Attachment #1

Student Evaluation of Interpreters

Class: _____ **Semester:** _____
Interpreter: _____

Dear Student:

Your feedback is important to us. We would appreciate it if you could respond to the questions below with your comments.

1. Does your interpreter sign clearly?
2. Does your interpreter fingerspell clearly?
3. Is your interpreter's mouth movement clear?
4. Does your interpreter use appropriate facial expression?
5. Does your interpreter keep up with the teacher?
6. Does your interpreter voice well for you when you ask a question or give a presentation in class?
7. Does your interpreter arrive to class on time?
8. Does your interpreter dress appropriately?
9. Does your interpreter conduct herself/himself in a professional manner with your instructor?
10. If you have two interpreters working in your class, does she/he work demonstrate professional teamwork?
11. Would you like to work with the interpreter again next semester?

Thank you for your time and help.
Please return this form to the "COMMENT BOX" next to Interpreting Services.

**Attachment #2:
Wage Increase Proposal
Other Hourly Interpreter/Real Time Captioner**

I. The current wages for Ohlone College Hourly Interpreters are as follows:

Non-Certified

| | |
|------------|------|
| Level I: | \$10 |
| Level II: | \$15 |
| Level III: | \$20 |
| Level IV: | \$25 |

Certified

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Level V (day): | \$30 |
| Level VE (evening): | \$35 |

II. The last time these wages were increased was September 1999. The wages at that time were as follows:

Non-Certified

| | |
|------------|------|
| Level I: | \$7 |
| Level II: | \$11 |
| Level III: | \$15 |
| Level IV: | \$19 |

Certified

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Level V (day): | \$25 |
| Level VE (evening): | \$30 |

III. A wage increase would benefit the Interpreting/Accommodation Services Department in the following ways:

- Ohlone employs an average of twenty Other Hourly Interpreters/Real Time Captioners per semester.
- Approximately 100-hours a week are assigned to contract workers through interpreting agencies at the rates of \$170 for the first hour and \$85 for each additional hour.
- A wage increase would significantly reduce dependency upon agency contractors.
- A wage increase would aid in recruitment of highly skilled Interpreters and Real Time Captioners at Ohlone College.

VI. The new rates I would like to propose are as follows:

Non-Certified

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| Level I (day): | \$15 |
| Level IE (evening): | \$20 |
| Level II (day): | \$20 |
| Level IIE (evening): | \$25 |
| Level III (day): | \$25 |
| Level IIIE (evening): | \$30 |
| Level IV (day): | \$30 |
| Level IV (evening): | \$35 |

Certified

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Level V (day): | \$40 |
| Level VE (evening): | \$45 |

IV. When Interpreters are hired, they take a video assessment skill test. The test is a total of thirty minutes long, broken up into 3-ten minute lectures given by Ohlone Faculty (Hearing and Deaf). Also included are some Deaf students giving short presentations. The lectures consist of various levels of Math, English, Sciences, Arts/Cultures, and Humanities.

The Interpreter/Accommodation Services Supervisor assesses the prospective Interpreter's skills to determine which level s/he should best be placed. After six months of employment, the Interpreter can request to be tested again to see if s/he can move to the next level. If the skill level indeed has been improved, s/he can move up to the next level.

Interpreting is a skill-based profession which means skill improvement is the only way one can advance on the pay scale. The length of time that one has been employed at Ohlone College is not a determining factor of pay rate.