**What would the Interpreter Training Program look like?**

The best instructors will likely be Deaf or hard of hearing, and while the program will employ hearing interpreters for some classes, I recommend a majority of the instructors be native/fluent signers.

We propose a four-year Baccalaureate program. First two years of education will include general requirement, plus a focus on Deaf studies, Special Ed, or Speech Pathology; but must include ASL 1-6 and the passage of a minimum proficiency test. Interpreter training encompasses the third and fourth year of the degree program and bestows a Bachelors degree in either Arts or Applied Sciences, depending on where the program is housed.

**Where would it be housed?**

UNR -  *possibilities…*

1. Health Sciences, partnering with Speech Pathology (ASL classes are hosted here now)

2. College of Education, partnering with Special Education

3. College of Liberal Arts, as an interdisciplinary program incorporating Communication, Education, Health Sciences, and diversity courses from a number of schools on campus

4. College of Social Science, partnering with Gender, Equity and Diversity programs.

We can begin with 12 students per year, giving us a total of up to 24 at any given time.

We follow the “cohort” model; everyone goes through the program together, full time, from start to finish. We create a bonded community out of each class that can support each other in the field.

**What does the curriculum look like?**

**Interpreter Training Program**

B.A.S (52 credits)

*Concentration (22 credits):*

**Level 1 Theory and Practice** (4)

Consecutive training

Working Memory

Grasping concept

Objective level message analysis

**Level 2 Theory and Practice** (4)

Consecutive training

Working Memory practice

Conceptual equivalency

Detailed message analysis

Conveying tone

**Level 3 Theory and Practice** (4)

Simultaneous training

Memory skills/Lag time

Conceptual equivalency

Conveying tone and content

Complete message analysis

**Level 4 Theory and Practice** (4)

Simultaneous training

Lag time development

Conceptual equivalency

Conveying tone and content

Complete message analysis

**Applied Skills 1 (internship)(3)**

**Applied Skills 2 (internship)(3)**

***Content Courses (21 credits):***

Deaf Culture/History (3)

Comparative Linguistics (3)

Ethics & Issues (3)

Creative Uses of ASL (3)

Special Settings 1 (3)

Special Settings 2 (3)

Professional entry Prep ‘Capstone’ (3)

***Electives (9 credits from this list):***

Intro to Acting (3)

Public Speaking (3)

\*Deaf-Blind interpreting (3)

Intro to Audiology (3)

Fingerspelling Focus (3)

\*Interpreting for MLC, SLLs, or multi-disabled Deaf (3)

\*CDI (Certified Deaf Interpreter) training (3)

The Deaf Learner, (or 1st and 2nd language acquisition in Deaf students)

\*pending the availability of suitable instructors

**ITP Class Descriptions**

***Theory & Practice***

These classes are at the core of our curriculum, they are hands-on classes, where students learn by doing and receive immediate feedback on their efforts. Interpreting is less about the absorption of a body of knowledge, and more about the acquisition of a very specific skill. In this way it is more like tennis than history. In order to succeed, a student must practice constantly. Repetition, immersion, and constant challenge, are the hallmarks of a successful language program.

Simultaneous interpreting is a very special skill, best taught in stages. The brain must be trained to do a particularly tricky task, and do it well. Training needs to start at the most foundational level. Theory and Practice courses, therefore, start at the beginning and build on each other. For this reason T&P classes must be completed consecutively, and without interruption. Momentum is vital to push students over the learning hump and into language fluency.

All T&P classes have an English to Sign component and a Sign to English component.

**Level 1**

Objective level message analysis is the first step. Students will listen to verbal information, or watch signed information then summarize the overall content and tone of the message. Other methods for developing working memory will be introduced to aid students in their comprehension and retention skills. When students can easily grasp messages at the objective level, they will begin to analyze incoming data for additional details.

Interpreting begins in a consecutive manner: The message is presented in its completion then the student has an unlimited time to craft a translation.

**Level 2**

Students continue to develop working memory as longer and longer messages are presented, and students are given shorter periods of time to produce a translation. Interpreting practice is still taught consecutively - where the complete message is presented, and then the students work out a conceptually equivalent message in the target language. In level two, message analysis must now become more detailed, therefore, students are expected to remember the main points and most supporting details. The translations produced must convey the appropriate tone and use conceptually accurate word/sign choices.

**Level 3**

Simultaneous interpreting begins: Students are presented with a continuous message and must produce the interpretation in real time without pause. Further memory skill enhancement leads to the development of lag time, the length of time in which interpreters can hold information in their working memory. Focus on word/sign choice, and conceptual equivalency increases in level three. Students learn to convey the complete message with supporting details, in both tone and content.

**Level 4**

Students continue to practice simultaneous interpreting, with messages of increasing duration and complexity. Lag time development is important to succeed at level four, students must push themselves to increase the working memory space. Conceptual equivalency will be emphasized with regards to idioms, colloquial usage, slang, and humor. Students are expected to achieve complete message analysis, and faithful transmission of that message to the target language. They are expected to interpret.

***Applied Skills (internship courses)***

Students must complete 90 hours (3 credits) per semester of interpreting practice under the supervision of a mentor. Applied Skills is required during the last two semesters of the program. These internships will be arranged through local campuses pairing our seniors with more seasoned interpreters. Students must keep a reflection journal, and record all feedback from their mentor. Progress can be monitored through periodic meetings with supervising faculty.

***Deaf Culture/History***

Deaf Culture/History is a diversity course, an indepth examination of Deaf culture and history. The course makes a case for the validity of a Deaf culture and identity, that perceives itself as a linguistic minority. This course is required in order to understand the population that graduates will go on to serve. It also works as sensitivity training for interpreters as they interface with Deaf individuals at all stages of life. (All the best Deaf culture courses are taught by Deaf people themselves, usually someone with knowledge and stature in the community. While the instructor for this class should always be Deaf, a fluent interpreter will also be vital to ensure that all information is accessible, even to those who aren’t skilled in ASL.)

***Comparative Linguistics***

This course explores the differences and similarities between ASL and English. The brass tacks of the language are unpacked, discussed, assimilated, and embedded in the students understanding. Successful interpreters must be armed with a clear understanding of the framework that lies beneath all variations of American sign, so that they may accommodate the wide range of signing systems, and pigeon signs, that exist.

***Ethics & Issues***

Interpreting is a field that is wrought with ethical issues, and as such it is subject to strict legal parameters. The certification body that oversees our profession has a code of conducts that all interpreters must follow to avoid harm and liability. Ethics and issues will examine the evolution of the profession itself and how it was shaped by the Deaf community’s needs and responses over time. Interpreting protocols, best practices, and laws that apply to our field will be thoroughly discussed, so that the ramifications of our behavior can be completely understood by students entering the field.

***Creative Uses of ASL***

ASL is a visual-spatial language that makes use of the whole body to communicate, and like any other language it has an artistic side. The beauty of ASL poetry, and Deaf theater will be studied, and practiced. Students will have a chance to play with the language, to explore the boundaries of its linguistic plasticity. Play stimulates an understanding of how language rules can be bent in creative ways, which leads to a better grasp of its semantic forms.

***Special Setting 1 – Educational Settings***

This course looks at interpreting in K-12, as well as post-secondary settings. Classroom protocol, campus policies, special ethical considerations, and the challenges of working with youth will be discussed. (Because most new interpreters start out in educational settings, it is very important that we prepare them for this kind of work. The program will work closely with WCSD to ensure that our grads are suitable to their needs.)

***Special Settings 2 – Community Settings***

This course will conduct a thorough examination of different types of community interpreting, but primarily medical and legal settings. Protocol, best practices, ethical considerations and challenges will be discussed. Students will be given a clear explanation of the nature of interpreting work inside of community settings. The professional and legal responsibilities inherent in this type of work will be emphasized.

***Professional Entry Prep***

This course will be offered the final semester of the program for all graduating seniors. It will assist students in preparation to take the R.I.D. written exam, and/or the E.I.P.A (Educational Interpreters Performance Assessment), before the end of their graduating year. The instructor will also assist final semester students in the creation of a resume, and strategies for gaining employment.

\*\*\* Electives \*\*\*

Interpreting students must take at least 9 credits from this list

**Into to Acting (3)**

This class is strongly recommended for all interpreting students. Effective and engaging sign always incorporates acting/theater techniques.

**Public Speaking (3)**

This class is strongly recommended for all interpreting students. Sign interpreters must give Deaf people a voice in the hearing world. Speaking on behalf of the Deaf person, in every imaginable public circumstance, is part of an interpreter’s responsibility. Strong public speaking skills ensure that we give the Deaf community a clear and strong voice.

**\*Deaf –Blind interpreting (3)**

This class may be offered on occasion if a suitable instructor is available. Tactile interpreting is a rare and valuable skill, but one that is essential for meeting the needs of Deaf-Blind individuals.

**Intro to Audiology (3)**

Interpreting students who wish to work in audiology, or other related medical fields may benefit from a one semester survey of hearing loss and its mechanisms.

**Fingerspelling Focus (3)**

Fingerspelling, and specifically receptive fingerspelling is arguably the hardest part of learning to interpret. Many students, and working interpreters can benefit from a class devoted to this difficult to master skill.

\*Interpreting for MLC, SLLs, or people with multiple disabilities (3)

The Truckee Meadows is an area with a large percentage of Deaf who are Second Language Learners (SLL), who may have Minimal Language Competancy (MLC), due to their status as foreigners or undocumented immigrants. There are also Deaf individuals with multiple disabilities, who pose unique challenges for any interpreter. This course will be offered for students who plan to work in social services, or mental health settings.

**\*CDI Training (Training for Deaf Interpreters) (3)**

Certified Deaf Interpreters are valuable in their ability to more easily communicate with SLLs, MLCs and Deaf with multiple disabilities. Without the services of CDIs, our most vulnerable and isolated populations will never be reached. CDIs are of great value to mental health facilities, and at every level within the justice system – from police stations, to court rooms, to prisons, probation, and transitioning back to the community. The use of a CDIs can improve comprehension in the most difficult of circumstances.

 \*pending the availability of suitable instructors