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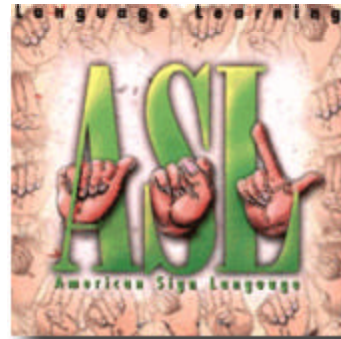
Will Debut this Fall

State Approves New Major in American Sign Language-English Interpreting

KEUKA PARK, N.Y.—Keuka College has received approval from the New York State Education Department to offer a new major in American Sign Language (ASL)-English Interpreting.

The bachelor of science degree program will debut in the fall 2005 semester.

“Our program will prepare students to become professional interpreters who facilitate communication between deaf and hearing people in a variety of settings,” said Joanne Desotelle, professor of English and chair of the Division of Humanities and Fine Arts. “It will also provide students with the academic preparation needed to pass Level 1 of the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf or the National Association of the Deaf interpreting certification exam.



Keuka currently offers a major in ASL, but the ASL-English Interpreting major offers a different emphasis, according to Desotelle.

“Our current major is ASL as a foreign language, like learning Spanish or French,” said Desotelle. “The purpose of that major is just to know and speak a foreign language. The process of interpreting is something entirely different in that it requires the interpreter to process what is being said in one language and simultaneously transcribing it into another language. People who know two languages—but are not interpreters—can listen to one person, and then re-state what they said to another person, and work back and forth that way, but an interpreter listens and ‘speaks’ at the same time. He or she becomes the ‘voice’ of the deaf person, and the “speaking hands” of the hearing person. It is a specialized skill over and above being proficient in the two interpreted languages.”

Keuka’s ASL-English Interpreting curricula will include the Demand-Control Schema for Interpreting Work, developed by Dr. Robert Pollard and Robyn Dean.

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“Drawing upon the College’s 60 years of leadership in education, the program features an interpreting practicum; a full-semester, supervised interpreting internship; and many opportunities for observing, shadowing, and working with professional interpreters,” said Desotelle.

Graduates of Keuka’s program “will be bilingual and bicultural, that is, able to communicate with above average proficiency in both ASL and English, as well as knowledgeable about deaf and non-deaf cultures in order to render culturally based linguistic and non-linguistic information appropriately,” explained Desotelle.

Employment opportunities for interpreters have increased dramatically as a result of state and federal legislation.

According to the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), there are 28 million deaf and hard of hearing Americans who are entitled to “qualified interpreters” under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act requires all health care providers receiving federal aid to provide language services to non-English speakers, including deaf people.

“Currently, the demand for qualified interpreters far exceeds the number of trained professionals in the field,” said Desotelle.