

Undergraduate Degree Program Assessment Progress Report

Degree(s): **AA and BA degrees in Interpretation: ASL/English**

For Calendar Year: **2012**

Date submitted to college committee: **March 15, 2013**

By: **Dr. Linda K. Stauffer**

Date posted on college assessment website: _____

Overall Rating: _____

Respond to all six parts following the “Degree Program Assessment Progress Report Instructions.” (NOTE: Parts 1 through 4 can be copied from the relevant sections of your assessment plan.) Attach additional pages as needed.

(1) Student learning goal(s) addressed this year:

- Goal #1: **Language Proficiency** Students will acquire language proficiency in conversational American Sign Language, written, spoken and signed English, and in the contact language varieties used by persons who are hearing, deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing.
- Goal #2: **Knowledge and Application of Knowledge in Interpreting** Students will demonstrate knowledge and application of the unique body of knowledge related to the field of sign language interpretation including the history of current practices, interpreter role and responsibilities, theories and models of interpretation, ethics, certification, business practices, management of physical settings and commitment to and use of technology.
- Goal #3: **Message Transfer**. Students will assess and apply different modes of interpreting and transliterating (simultaneous and consecutive) and different target language forms (e.g., ASL, spoken or signed English, tactile language) in order to transfer a message from the source language into the target language without distortions, additions, omissions or undue influence from the source language for multicultural consumers of varying ages in a variety of community and governmental settings (schools, agencies, government, rehabilitation, hospitals, etc.)
- Goal #4: **Ethical and Cultural Competence**. Students will demonstrate ethical and cultural competence and multicultural sensitivities when interpreting between and among users of ASL and English in one-on-one, small group, and large group settings and cross-cultural interactions.
- Goal #5: **Professional Attitudes, Dispositions and Skills** Students will demonstrate the attitudes and skills expected of professionals including knowledge of research protocol, ability to analyze research studies and apply results to interpretation practice, ability to plan for lifelong learning, and participation in professional organizations.

(2) Learning outcomes/objectives for those goals addressed this year:

Student Learning Goal #1: Language Proficiency

- *Objective #1: Language Competency in American Sign Language (ASL) and English: Knowledge of the two languages involved in the interpreting process with the following observable outcomes: a) to understand the two languages and b) to express oneself correctly, fluently, and clearly in the two languages.*

Student Learning Goal #2: Knowledge and Application of Knowledge in Interpreting

- *Objective #3: History and Theory of Interpretation: Knowledge and understanding of the history and current practices of the profession as it relates to professional and technical competence, including interpreter role and responsibilities, theories of interpretation and translation, professional ethics, certification/licensure and business practices, and dynamics of cross-cultural interaction, with the following desired outcomes: a) to apply the profession's code of professional conduct in a variety of settings and with a variety of consumers, b) to apply sound professional business practices, c) to manipulate the physical setting (e.g., equipment, seating, lighting, etc.), d) to obtain professional credentials/certification, and e) to identify the major historical milestones in the field of interpretation.*
- *Objective #4: Methodological Competency: Ability to assess and then apply different modes of interpreting and different target language forms, with the following observable outcomes: a) to use different modes of interpreting, (i.e., simultaneous or consecutive) and choose the appropriate mode in a given situation, b) to use different target language forms (ASL, signed English system) and choose the appropriate target language form according to audience preference.*

Student Learning Goal #3: Message Transfer

- *Objective #2: Transfer Competency: Ability to transfer a message from the source language (i.e., from ASL or English) into the target language (i.e., to English or ASL) with the following observable outcomes: a) to understand source language discourse, b) to produce target language without distortions, additions, or omissions, and c) to transfer a message from the source language into the target language without undue influence of the source language.*

Student Learning Goal #4: Ethical and Cultural Competence

- *Objective #5: Bicultural/Multicultural Competency: Competency: Knowledge and appreciation of the cultures and diversity underlying the working languages, with the following observable outcomes: a) to identify the basic beliefs, values, experiences and behaviors characteristic of source language users and target language users and b) to identify and demonstrate an appreciation of cultural differences and diversity among language users.*
- *Objective #6: Subject Matter Competency: Broad general knowledge in several fields, and a specialized knowledge in one or more disciplines, required to understand the content of a message being interpreted, with the following observable outcomes: a) to interpret general discourse covering several fields and b) to interpret more specialized discourse in one or more disciplines.*
- *Objective #7: Techniques and Logistics: Knowledge of technology and environmental logistics, with the following observable outcomes: a) to manage the physical setting and b) to select and use appropriate equipment.*

Student Learning Goal #5: Professional Attitudes, Dispositions and Skills

- *Objective #8: Research: Values research on interpretation and interpreter education, with the following observable outcomes: a) to analyze studies related to interpretation, b) to identify essential components of a research protocol, c) to apply research results to interpretation practice, and d) to write a research paper.*

- **Objective #9: Practicum and Internship:** Ability to carry out professional responsibilities, with the following observable outcomes: a) to apply knowledge and skills in working with various groups across the life-span, b) to identify and accommodate various language preferences, and c) to apply various service delivery models reflective of current practices in the profession.

(3) Courses & activities where assessed:

Standardized Benchmark assessments are given as follows:

ASL IV – Students take the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI). (See Section 4 below: assessment of interpreting competence under objectives #2 and #3).

Final Courses for AA degree – AA students in their last triad courses, *Sign to Voice, Voice to Sign, and Interpreting in Specialized Settings*, take the Mid-America Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST). (See Section 4 below: assessment of interpreting competence under objectives #2 and #3).

BA students in their advanced courses, Advanced Transliteration and Advanced Interpretation, take the Mid-America Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST). This a standardized interpreter screening test administered by several mid-America states. During Internship, students take the national Educational Interpreting Performance Assessment Test (EIPA).

Internship – Students take the national standardized exam, the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA)

- **Objective #1: Language Competency in American Sign Language (ASL) and English:**
 - Assessed by classroom written, receptive and performance tests in ASL I, II, III, IV, MCE, Fingerspelling, Comp I, Comp II
 - Assessed by the SCPI with a benchmark of *Intermediate* to continue with interpreting courses
- **Objective #2: Transfer Competency**
 - Assessed in Sign to Voice, Voice to Sign, Deaf-blind Interpreting, Oral Interpreting, via written and performance skills tests.
 - Assessed by the Mid-America QAST with a benchmark (*a standardized test that serves as a basis for evaluation or comparison*) QAST level 1/1 for AA graduating students, and QAST level 3/2 or 2/3 for BA students entering internship. Students are assessed on proficiency or performance levels in areas of interpreting and transliterating.
- **Objective #3: History and Theory of Interpretation**
 - Assessed in Introduction to Interpreting, Interpreting Theory and Practice via classroom exams.
 - QAST Written Exam
- **Objective #4: Methodological Competency:**
 - QAST Written Exam
- **Objective #5: Bicultural/Multicultural Competency: Competency**
 - Deaf Culture written exam
 - Assessed in Sign to Voice, Voice to Sign, Interpreting in Specialized Settings, Interpreting for persons who are Deaf-blind, Oral Transliterating, via written and performance skills tests.
 - Practicum and Internship
- **Objective #6: Subject Matter Competency:**

- Assessed in Sign to Voice, Voice to Sign, Interpreting in Specialized Settings, Interpreting for Persons who are Deaf-blind, Oral Transliterating, via written and performance skills tests.
- QAST Written and EIPA written exam

- Objective #7: Techniques and Logistics:
 - Assessed in Sign to Voice, Voice to Sign, Interpreting in Specialized Settings, Interpreting for Persons who are Deaf-blind, Oral Transliterating, via written and performance skills tests.
 - Practicum and Internship
 - QAST and EIPA Performance Exam

- Objective #8: Research:
 - *Practicum, Advanced Interpretation, Advanced Transliteration, Ethics*

- Objective #9: Practicum and Internship:
 - *Practicum and Internship On-site Supervisors' Evaluations*

(4) Methods Used:

Methods, and Reliability and Validity of Measures used to Assess Student Learning Outcomes. The learning outcomes for A.A. degree students and B.A. degree students are congruent with the knowledge base and competencies assessed by the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI), the Mid-America Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST), and the national interpreter certification (NIC) tests offered by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) and the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) developed by Boys Town National Research Hospital EIPA Diagnostic Center and recognized by RID. The curricula content of the program is congruent with the standards and competencies established by the Conference of Interpreter Trainers *National Interpreter Education Standards* (CIT-NIES) for the field of interpreter education. The degree programs are aligned with the national standards which address five (5) global sets of competencies: 1) Liberal arts, 2) Social and behavioral sciences, 3) Professional education, 4) Research and 5) Practicum and Internship.

Assessment of Language Competency under Objective #1:

Upon completion of the ASL 1 through ASL 4 language sequence students were required to take the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI), with the Program benchmark set at the *Intermediate* level.

Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI). The SCPI was constructed by the Rochester Institute of Technology/National Technical Institute for the Deaf (RIT/NTID) according to psychometric industry standards to assure content validity and reliability. It is a standardized tool used nationally to assess competency in conversational ASL using the following scales/ratings: *No Functional Skills, Novice, Novice Plus, Survival, Survival Plus, Intermediate, Intermediate Plus, Advanced, Advanced Plus, Superior, and Superior Plus.*

Glenn Anderson prepared and scheduled ASL IV students for the SCPI assessment at the end of the Fall 2012 semester. An SCPI trained deaf interviewer conducted the assessment interview portion. Through a reciprocal agreement with the Arkansas School for the Deaf (ASD), their SCPI raters assessed UALR students and UALR IEP faculty is available to assess ASD employees. The SCPI Rating Team Chairperson reported the results to the Program Coordinator.

Assessment of Interpreting Competence under Objectives #2 and #3:

Upon graduation students are required to take the Mid-America Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST), with the Program standard set at the *Beginners QAST Level I/I for A.A. graduates*, and an *Intermediate-Advanced QAST Level II/III or III/II for B.A. graduates.* The state of Arkansas sets a QAST

Level I for entry-level interpreters. BA graduates were assessed with the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA), both written and performance, at no cost to the students. Upon graduation students are expected to meet the standard of EIPA 3.5, the same level recommended by the Arkansas Department of Education. The Interpreting Program set this standard in 2010 after collecting student results for 3 years.

The Mid-America Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST). The QAST is a regional standardized test used to assess competencies in interpretation and transliteration, and is the state-recognized test of entry to advanced level interpreting ability required for employment in Arkansas. This tool has been used since 1984 by the state of Arkansas. Arkansas worked with two states in the region (Kansas and Oklahoma) to update and validate testing materials. Additionally, since 2005, QAST level interpreters in Arkansas must earn 10 Continuing Education Units (CEU) per year to maintain their QAST credentials.

QAST Written Knowledge Test. Upon completion of the respective A.A. and B.A. degree level courses students enrolled in the beginning Sign to Voice Interpreting and the Voice to Sign Interpreting courses (A.A. program) and the Advanced Interpreting and Advanced Transliterating courses (B.A. program) must pass the Written Knowledge Test to be eligible for the Performance Tests. Via a long-standing cooperative agreement, the QAST Chairperson reports the results of the Written Knowledge Test to the Program Coordinator.

QAST Performance Tests. Upon passing the Written Knowledge Test, special testing dates are arranged for UALR interpreter education students by the program faculty with the QAST Chairperson. The QAST Chairperson reports the performance results in writing to the Program Coordinator within two weeks of testing. Results are compared to the Program standards of QAST Level I or II (A.A. degree) and QAST Level II/III or III/II (B.A. degree). A mathematical percentage is calculated of students who a) met each standard, b) who exceeded each standard and c) who fell below each standard. Numerical percentages are compared to past years' results to identify any trends, both positive and negative, which then are discussed by Program faculty for possible Program improvements.

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Certification Tests. Since 2005, the RID and NAD offer a joint NAD-RID developed certification testing system known as the National Interpreter Certificate (NIC) examination. Additionally RID conducts the Oral Transliteration Test (OTC), the Legal test (SC:L) and the Certified Deaf Interpreter Test (CDI). The certification tests are national tools used to assess professional level competencies in interpretation and transliteration. The national certification tests are not required by the Program since, per industry standards, students generally are not expected to pass them upon graduation without first having several years of interpreting experience. However, because the UALR-IEP serves as a national "supersite" for the administration of the current RID Certification Tests, there is easy access to these written and performance examinations once students are ready. These tests are recommended for students and recent graduates who have passed a Generalist Written Examination, and have the high probability of passing the NIC and/or the OTC Tests. The NIC assures reliable and legally defensible written and performance tests which meet industry standards for validity and reliability. A professional psychometric firm oversees the development of test materials and procedures and performs ongoing rater reliability studies and rater training with results reported periodically in the RID professional newsletter, *VIEWS*.

The Educational Interpreting Performance Assessment (EIPA). The EIPA is a psychometrically sound assessment tool that evaluates the skills of interpreters who work in the elementary through secondary classroom using videotape stimulus materials and a procedure that includes a comprehensive rating system. It is not limited to any one sign language or system. This certificate is issued to interpreters who work with students and teenagers who use predominately American Sign Language (ASL), Manually-Coded English (MCE) and Contact Language Varieties (CLV). Holders also demonstrate proficiency in the voice-to-sign and sign-to-voice interpreting skills of interpreters who work in the elementary and secondary school classroom setting. As of the Fall 2006, RID began to recognize individuals who passed the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) written and performance tests at the level of 4.0 or higher as certified members of the association.

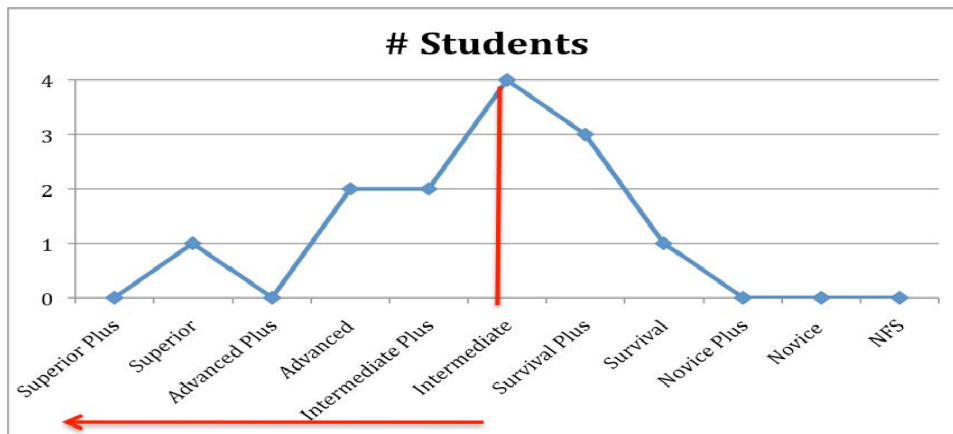
(5) What are the assessment findings? How did you analyze them?

Results of Assessment of American Sign Language Competencies (Objective #1) on the SCPI

Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI). The minimum requirement by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) for interpreter aide positions in schools and by the Arkansas School for the Deaf (ASD) for student teachers and interpretation practicum students is an *Intermediate* level on the SCPI. After multiple years of assessments, the Program determined that a student should be able to attain an *Intermediate* level after completing a two-year sequence in American Sign Language courses. Effective with the fall 2004 semester, the Program required an *Intermediate* level on the SCPI as a benchmark prior to enrollment in the three co-requisite, beginning interpreting courses for A.A. degree.

SCPI Results: During 2012, thirteen (13) students took the SCPI. Of the 13, nine (9) students (69%) met or exceeded the benchmark of *Intermediate*. Four (4) students (6%) fell below the benchmark.

SCPI Benchmark	Intermediate
Student 1	Intermediate
Student 2	Survival
Student 3	Intermediate
Student 4	Survival Plus
Student 5	Advanced
Student 6	Advanced
Student 7	Survival Plus
Student 8	Intermediate
Student 9	Intermediate
Student 10	Superior
Student 11	Intermediate Plus
Student 12	Intermediate Plus
Student 13	Survival Plus



Interpretation: Four of 13 students (31%) scored at the benchmark of *Intermediate*. Five of 13 students (39%) scored above the benchmark. A total of 9 of 13 students (69%) scored at or above the benchmark. The one student who scored below the benchmark of *Intermediate* is not an interpreting major and rarely interacted with the Deaf Community. Two of the four below the benchmark received a “C” or below as a final grade in the course indicating lack of readiness to progress. The fourth student indicated she has severe test anxiety. More than two-thirds of the students met or exceeded the benchmark.

Results of Assessment of Interpreting Competencies (Objectives #2 and #3) on the QAST, RID, and EIPA

Mid-America Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST). The minimum standard for employment in Arkansas is a QAST Level I (scale of I to V, V the highest). Program expectations for A.A. graduates are a QAST I or QAST II, with a minimum of a QAST I/I to progress to the B.A. level phase of the program. B.A. graduates are expected to earn a QAST II/III or III/II. Program faculty found that of the A.A. and B.A. degree graduates who earned grades of “B” or better in ASL and subsequent methods courses generally meet the Program and the Arkansas standard.

QAST Performance Assessment Results: During 2012 a total of 34 students were assessed with the QAST. Fourteen (14) students took the QAST as part of the *Sign to Voice* and *Voice to Sign* classes (A.A.) during spring 2012. Ten (10) students took the QAST as part of the *Advanced Interpreting* and *Advanced Transliteration* classes (B.A.) during spring 2012. An additional ten took the QAST or national certification testing in Tulsa as part of our Tulsa cohort.

Of the 14 A.A. students, eleven (11) students (79%) met or exceeded the benchmark of QAST I/I by taking the QAST one or more times. For the 20 BA students, four (4) students (20%) met or exceeded the benchmark of QAST II/III or III/II.

QAST	AA	QAST	BA
Benchmark	1/1	Benchmark	2/3, 3/2
Student 1	1/1	Student 1	1/1
Student 2	2/1	Student 2	2/2
Student 3	0/0	Student 3	2/2
Student 4	3/3	Student 4	2/2
Student 5	1/1	Student 5	2/1
Student 6	0/1, 1/1	Student 6	3/3
Student 7	1/0, 1/1	Student 7	1/1
Student 8	1/1	Student 8	1/1
Student 9	0/1	Student 9	1/1
Student 10	0/0, 1/1	Student 10	1/1
Student 11	1/1	Student 11	1/1
Student 12	1/1	Student 12	EPA 3.4
Student 13	1/0	Student 13	1/2
Student 14	2/2	Student 14	1/2
		Student 15	CI/CT
		Student 16	NIC-Adv
		Student 17	2/2
		Student 18	1/2
		Student 19	2/2
		Student 20	2/2

Interpretation:

AA: Eleven of fourteen (79%) A.A. students met or exceeded the benchmark of QAST I/I with three (3) of the students reaching the benchmark on a second testing in Fall 2012. Of the three remaining students

below the benchmark, individual remedial plans were developed for two students and the third is repeating the sign to voice course during spring 2013. All three students will test with the spring 2013 cohort.

The benchmark is appropriate as students are expected to work as interpreters in the community during their BA course sequence. The benchmark of QAST I/I to move from the AA to BA ensures that students meet the minimum requirement to work professionally in the community.

BA: Ten students (10) students repeated the QAST during the Advanced Interpreting and Advanced Transliterating courses, and ten (10) students in Tulsa took the Oklahoma QAST or held national certification (exempt from the QAST). **Four of 20 (20%)** met or exceeded the benchmark; however, all twenty (100%) earned a state QA level or national certification thereby meeting the state qualifications to interpret professionally.

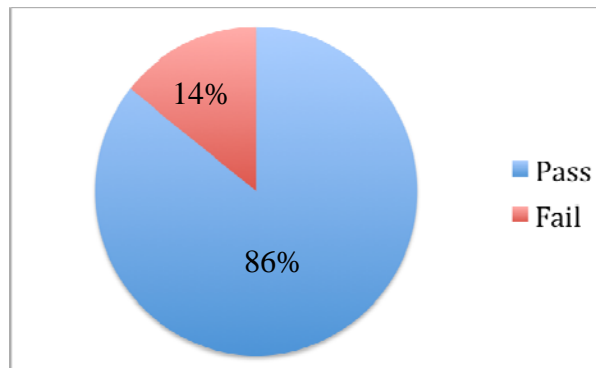
The low number of students meeting the benchmark is disappointing. In response, two changes have been made:

- a) With the introduction of the A.S. degree in *American Sign Language Studies*, the rearrangement of the B.A. courses to the 3000-4000 level and the QA to the 3rd and 4th years of study, it is anticipated that students will have a stronger language base before beginning the interpretation sequence. This should positively affect student's QA scores
- b) During 2013, the prerequisite for declaring the B.A. degree will become ASL 3 with a "B" or better (up from ASL 2 with a "B" or better) ensuring that students have stronger skills and grades to enter the BA program.

Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) This test is being given to B.A. students during their last semester, Internship. The Arkansas Department of Education is recognizing a benchmark of 3.5 (scale is 0-*no skills* to 5.0 *native-like*). The RID recognizes any test-taker scoring a 4.0 or above on the Performance Assessment and passage of the Written Assessment as nationally certified for K-12 interpreting. Based on three years of data, the IEP formally adopted an EIPA 3.5 as the benchmark.

EIPA Assessment Results: During 2012, UALR offered the national Educational Interpreting Performance Assessment (EIPA) to students completing Internship during their last semester of the BA degree. In order to offer the test, Ray James received national training in order to be a local test administrator. The OSEP grant paid all expenses for UALR IEP students to take this assessment.

Written Exam: During 2012 twenty-two (22) B.A. students took the Written EIPA exam (75% or above to pass). Nineteen (19) students (86%) passed the Written exam. Passage of the Written exam is not required take the Performance Assessment. All three who failed will repeat the Written Test.



Performance Exam: Ten (10) students took the performance exam in December 2012. Results take up to 120 days to receive. No results have been reported to date. These will be reported

during the 2013 Assessment report to be submitted Spring 2014. Ten more students will take the Performance Exam in Tulsa, OK during May 2013 at the end of the Internship. Additional students completing internship during Summer and Fall will take the Performance exam during December 2013.

The most recent data is from the December 2011 EIPA Performance Test. Three (3) students took the performance exam in 2011. Students scored between a low of 3.4 and a high of 4.4. Of those, two (2) student met or exceeded the score of 3.5 benchmark set by the Program and also meets the Arkansas and Oklahoma Departments of Education benchmark for educational interpreters. One student exceeded the 4.0 score to be recognized as nationally certified. One (1) student met below a 3.5 by .1 (3.4). No student scored below a 3.0 on a scale of “0-no skills to 5.0 native-like skills.”

Interpretation: Nineteen of 22 students (86%) passed the EIPA Written Exam. The EIPA Written scores were sent directly to the students. The IEP requested that they retain the scores and send to the IEP. To date, the Arkansas Department of Education is proposing a 3.0 on the EIPA to meet proposed state licensure. Although December 2012 testing scores are not available, 100% of all students tested on the EIPA Performance Test to date have met or exceeded the 3.0 proposed state standard.

The IEP believes the EIPA Performance is an appropriate national exam for B.A. degree students to take during their Internship (capstone) experience. The IEP will continue to monitor the proposed state benchmark of 3.0 for the EIPA Performance Exam for its graduating B.A. students.

National Certification. The UALR Interpreter Education Program serves as a “supersite” for the RID certification testing system. Although students are not required to take any RID certification test while a student, we do track former students who become certified. During 2012, **seven (7) graduates of the program received national certification:** all seven earned the RID National Interpreting Certificate (NIC).

Results of Assessment of Knowledge Base (Objectives #4 - #8) on Methodological, Bicultural/Multicultural, Subject Matter, Techniques and Logistics, and Research Competencies

The Program’s strength is in its ability to monitor student progress within a spiraling curriculum throughout the students' course of study. Students were assessed on their knowledge base in course exams, participation in Deaf Community events, service learning projects, reflective response papers, literature reviews and lab assignments. Students enrolled in methods courses in interpretation (beginning to advanced) were involved in simulated interpreting experiences that enabled faculty to assess student learning and application of interpreting techniques in a culturally appropriate manner. Students’ problem-solving and critical thinking skills were assessed during these courses by observing their ability to: a) meet the language and communication needs of persons who are deaf, deaf-blind or hard of hearing; b) apply communication assessments in making decisions regarding language use in the interpretation process; and 3) interpret a variety of subject matter and content. All majors must earn a “C” or better in each interpreting courses

Knowledge Base Results: During 2012 (Spring, Summer, Fall), nineteen (19) graduates (B.A.) met the respective degree requirements. Eleven (11) students met the A.A. degree requirements. Eight (8) students met the B.A. degree requirements. One student met the new A.S. degree requirements.

Results of Assessment of Practicum and Internship Placements (Objective #9)

Regular contact was maintained between Program faculty, the *Practicum* and *Internship* students, and the respective onsite supervisor via mail, email and telephone correspondence. Feedback was collected from onsite supervisors and monitored for any developing problems or concerns. The Program supervisor and onsite supervisor(s) evaluated students’ communication and interpreting abilities, strengths and weaknesses, adherence to the respective agency or site policies, the interpreting field’s Professional Code of Conduct, and

disposition, which were documented on mid-term and/or final evaluation forms. The Program Practicum or Internship supervisor received students' bimonthly reflective journals on their communication interaction and/or interpreting. Internship performance samples were also collected via video and assessed by the Internship Instructor. A final grade was assigned based on observations, students' reflective journals, and summative evaluation forms.

During 2012, fourteen (14) students completed field experiences: six (6) in practicum** and seven (7) in internship. Practicum sites included Arkansas School for the Deaf, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Administrative Office of the Court (AR), and Tolleson Elementary School (AR). Internship sites included PRIDE, Inc, Goodwill, Program SOAR (John Brown University), UALR Basketball Camp, Merritt Interpreter Services (Dallas, TX), Communication Plus+ Interpreter Services (Little Rock), Good Shepherd Retirement Center, Pulaski Technical College, North Mesquite High School (TX), Huntsville Primary School (AR), and Wright Elementary School (Tulsa, OK).

** Spring 2012 was the last semester to offer Practicum as summer 2011 was the final semester to accept A.A. majors. The A.S. degree in *Sign Language Studies* began Fall 2013.

Students received high evaluations from onsite supervisors especially in those areas related to dispositions such as preparation, professional demeanor and collaboration. **Internship students during 2012 received an average score from their site supervisor of 4.55** (1-5 scale with 5 = high).

Semester	Student Eval Average	Semester	Student Eval Average	Semester	Student Eval Average
Summer 2012	4.96	Summer 2012	4.52	Fall 2012	5.0
Summer 2012	4.71	Summer 2012	4.92	Fall 2012	n/a
Summer 2012	4.55	Summer 2012	4.0	Fall 2012	n/a
Summer 2012	4.15	Summer 2012	4.12		
Summer 2012	4.15	Fall 2012	5.0		

Results of IEP Alumni Surveys One-Year and Three-Year Post Graduation (Objectives #1-9)

Alumni Survey Results: Graduates One (1)-Year-Out (2011):

During 2012 only the BA graduates were surveyed given the discontinuation of the AA degree in Interpretation. Only two students graduated with the BA degree in 2011. Of the two, one student responded to the survey. Therefore, employer surveys were not distributed for this year.

The one respondent was employed part time as an interpreter through a community interpreter referral service, and was also pursuing a Masters degree. This alumni held both a QAST level 3/2 and an EIPA level 3.5.

Strongly Agreed / Well Prepared / Excellent

The IEP prepared me to communicate between ASL and English
Utilize knowledge about professional certification and credentialing
Educational Experiences – IEP courses
Educational Experiences – ULAR core/elective courses

Agreed / Adequately Prepared / Outstanding:

The IEP prepared me to apply my language skills to the interpretation process.
The IEP prepared me to perform my job responsibilities in a professional and ethical manner.
The IEP instilled in me the value of lifelong learning through membership in interpreting-related professional organizations and associations.
I would recommend the IEP program to other prospective students.
Competently utilize technology

Somewhat Prepared / Average:

Understand and apply to RID Code of Professional Conduct in professional settings
Apply critical thinking strategies in a variety of professional situations and ethical dilemmas
Utilize knowledge of professional issues in the field
Participate in professional organizations
Develop life-long learning goals and plans
Educational Experiences – Practicum

Inadequately Prepared / Below Average / Poor:

Understand pay issues and working with referral services
Mentoring & Service Learning Opportunities & Experiences
Educational Experiences – Lab Assignments

No Opinion:

The IEP prepared me to apply my cross-cultural skills to the interpreting process.

Selected Comments:

What features or aspects of the IEP do you consider to be its strengths?

“our faculty and staff. They make themselves so available to us and that is truly phenomenal. Also the connection between our classrooms and the real world?”

Additional Comments:

“The faculty and staff are wonderful, personable, qualified, brilliant people. The curriculum was above average. The only true glaring problem I see is the school to work gap. And that is something the entire field is addressing. Keep up the good work, this is an excellent program.”

Interpretation: It is difficult to interpret only one respondent’s comments. With that said, the IEP’s strength is its faculty. The IEP should investigate adding information related to professional issues such as pay scales and working with referral opportunities; increase service learning and mentoring opportunities; and reassess lab assignments.

Alumni Survey Results: Graduates Three (3)-Years-Out (2009):

During 2012 six (6) BA graduates from 2009 were surveyed. Of the six, three students (50%) responded to the survey. Employer surveys were not distributed for this year. Of the three respondents, 1 has completed a degree post BA graduation.

Employment Status. *Educational interpreting* was the most common employment setting (100%) followed by *private practice or contract interpreting* (67%) and *position other than interpreting, but deafness-related* (67%). Two of the three (67%) were employed full time (TX and AR) and two pursuing graduate education.

Credentials. Of the 6 respondents, two (2) held a QAST level (3/3, 3/2), Three (3) held an EIPA level (3.0-4.6), and two were RID certified (NIC), and one held the Texas BEI-Basic. Interpreters could hold more than one credential.

1. *The IEP prepared me to communicate between ASL and English:* 100% strongly agreed.
2. *The IEP prepared me to apply my language skills to the interpretation process:* 100% strongly agreed
3. *The IEP prepared me to apply my cross-cultural skills to the interpreting process:* 67% strongly agreed, 33% agreed.
4. *The IEP prepared me to perform my job responsibilities in a professional and ethical manner.* 100% strongly agreed.

5. The IEP instilled in me the value of lifelong learning through membership in interpreting-related professional organizations and associations. 100% strongly agreed.
6. I would recommend the IEP program to other prospective students. 100% strongly agreed.
7. Understand and apply to RID Code of Professional Conduct in professional settings: 67% well prepared, 33% adequately prepared.
8. Apply critical thinking strategies in a variety of professional situations and ethical dilemmas: 33% well prepared, 67% adequately prepared.
9. Utilize knowledge of professional issues in the field: 67% well prepared, 33% adequately prepared.
10. Participate in professional organizations: 100% well prepared.
11. Utilize knowledge about professional certification and credentialing: 100% well prepared.
Understand pay issues and working with referral services: 33% well prepared, 33% adequately prepared; 33% somewhat prepared.
12. Develop life-long learning goals and plans: 67% well prepared, 33% adequately prepared.
13. Competently utilize technology: 100% well prepared.
14. Educational Experiences – IEP courses: 67% outstanding, 33% excellent.
15. Educational Experiences – Practicum: 67% outstanding, 33% average.
16. Educational Experiences – Mentoring & Service Learning Opportunities & Experiences: 33% excellent; 33% outstanding, 33% average.
17. Educational Experiences – Lab Assignments: 33% excellent; 33% outstanding, 33% average.
18. Educational Experiences – UALR core/elective courses: 33% excellent; 33% outstanding, 33% average.

OPEN ENDED:

1. What features or aspects of the IEP do you consider to be its strengths:
 - Comprehensive curriculum
 - Service learning project with the deaf-blind class
 - Superior preparation for the workplace
 - Faculty is constantly looking to improve
 - Faculty have an open-door policy
 - Faculty level of expertise and passion
 - Deaf-blind, oral theory, ethics, and educational interpreting courses
2. What features or aspects of the IEP do you recommend be strengthened or improved:
 - More in-depth experience with mentoring at an earlier level
 - Ethics course prior to taking the QAST
 - More interactive video practice better understanding of agencies and their protocol
 - A deeper look at the diverse populations within the field.
3. Which IEP classes were most helpful in preparing you for employment after graduation?
 - Specialized Settings
 - Ethics

- Advanced Transliteration
 - Interpreting for Persons who are Deaf-Blind
 - Interpreting Theory and Practice
 - Educational Interpreting
 - Manually Coded English
4. Which IEP classes were least helpful in preparing you for employment after graduation?
- Fingerspelling – only because it could be completed in less than a semester
 - All my classes were helpful for my employment
5. If employed, either full or part-time, what do you consider to be the most challenging about your work as a professional interpreter?
- I think the stamina required to work full-time at a university is a challenge.
 - Maintaining momentum during a longer assignment.
 - Properly matching various consumer preferences.
 - Working with teams and other colleagues that are resistant to teaming, debriefing, change, new teaming techniques.
6. What suggestions do you have for ways the IEP can better prepare its graduates for professional careers as interpreters?
- I think that students should have more professional development opportunities to “grow up” in the profession before graduation. These development opportunities might include in-depth workshops or seminars about professionalism, teamwork, and research.
 - During internship, require more feedback opportunities instead of just letting students go somewhere without observations.

All responses were shared with full-time and part-time IEP faculty and will be shared with the stakeholders during the Spring 2013 Stakeholders Meeting.

Interpretation: Students overall appear to feel well prepared by the Interpreter Education Program to begin work professionally in the field. Faculty and curriculum were highly praised. Areas for further address include professionalism, more feedback during the capstone experience (internship), and stressing the stamina required to do the job.

(6) What conclusions were drawn and what decisions were made as a result? How were stakeholder groups involved?

Accreditation

In 2011, the IEP was accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE). By the end of 2012, UALR Interpreter Education Program is only one of nine accredited B.A. programs in the country.

Stakeholders Meeting

The IEP holds at least one meeting of stakeholders each spring. On May 12, 2012, twelve (12) stakeholders met on the campus of the Arkansas School for the Deaf. Shareholders expressed strong support for the program including:

- Hearty praise for the Deaf-Blind Interpreting students and their work as Support Service Providers and Interpreters during the service-learning experience.

- Satisfaction with the interpreting skills of IEP graduates
- Praise for students' demonstration of respect and understanding of Deaf culture.

Conclusions:

1. The IEP program and faculty are meeting the rigorous standards as set forth by the interpreter education profession and the national accreditation standards.
2. The variety of stakeholders from consumers to employers and agency personnel are generally well satisfied with the quality of our students and graduates.
3. Alumni one-year-out (1 respondent) was generally pleased, there is a need to focus more on the professional aspects of the business of interpreting. Alumni three-years-out (3 respondents) were well satisfied with their preparation for practice in the field and to pursue graduate education.
4. The benchmark exams are set at an appropriate level for students to succeed in the program.
5. Some areas to be addressed include:
 - a. expand service-learning and mentoring opportunities (*see below for 2013 plans*)
 - b. increase hands-on practice (*see below for 2013 plans*)
 - c. revisit the use of the Language Lab assignments (*on 2013 IEP retreat agenda*)
 - d. provide the Ethics class prior to the QAST (*will be revisited during 2013*)
 - e. create stronger feedback component to Internship experience (*Internship revised to include bi-weekly meetings with site supervisor and 1-3 teacher observations*)

The IEP will continue / or implement the following changes in 2013:

1. Implementation of A.S. degree in American Sign Language Studies and Revised B.A. degree in Interpretation: ASL/English

The Fall 2012 semester saw the offering of the new A.S. degree and courses and the revised B.A. degree courses. This change was made in response to: a) Act 747 reducing programs for 120 hours. (Previously the A.A. was 63 hours, and the B.A. was 131 hours); b) State Legislature requirement that all 2-year degrees contain the state 35-hour general education core and that A.A. degrees only be offered in general studies. (the A.A. in Interpretation had 15 hours core); c) the professional requirement beginning July 1, 2012 that all candidates for national interpreter testing hold at a minimum a bachelor's degree.

The B.A. degree was reorganized with all the language, culture and state minimum core offered in the first two years, and the interpreting courses and the remaining UALR 9 hours of core offered in the last two years. The A.S. was reduced to 60 hours, and the B.A. was reduced to 124 hours. The faculty believes that this will increase the sign ability of students prior to the introduction of interpreting coursework.

2. Strengthen our ties to the ASL program at PTC

UALR hosts monthly joint meetings of PTC and UALR-IEP faculty (full and part-time) to better standardize teaching approaches, testing, grading, and common concerns. UALR also donated videotapes to PTC to start their library as we replaced materials with DVDs. Due to the success of the UALR Sign Language Club recruiting members from PTC sign language students and holding

meetings on both campuses, PTC has set up their own Sign Language Club. PTC students are invited to use the UALR IEP Language Lab. The IEP participates in recruitment fairs targeting PTC students.

3. Student participation in Undergraduate Research.

In 2011, Dr. Glenn Anderson mentored, via an independent study, students who are interested in conducting research. One student investigated *socio-linguistic variation among the Black Deaf Community* and won first place in the undergraduate category of the Student Research Expo. **This student's work was accepted for publication in the first refereed *Journal of Undergraduate Interpreting Studies*.**

The IEP is also encouraging students to participate in Study Abroad programs. **One student** completed his Internship Summer 2011 in Graz, Austria. As part of his Internship requirements, he conducted an approved research project investigating understanding of professional ethics by students and deaf consumers in both the U.S. and Austria. Mentored by Dr. Linda Stauffer, he is **presented during the graduate portion of the Student Research Expo during 2012.**

4. Sign Language Club (SLK – Sigma Lambda Kappa)

Students have taken a strong lead in the student organization for sign language and interpreting students. Activities include Silent Dinners, hosting get-together information session for students, ASL “flash-mob” at UALR, participation in planning and presenting “See-A-Song”, participation and volunteer interpreting for the “Race for the Cure” as well as activities at the School for the Deaf and Deaf Awareness Week. SLK board members serve as representatives to the state professional interpreting organization, the Arkansas Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. SLK is mentored by IEP faculty member, Dr. Glenn Anderson. **SLK won the “student association of the year” award for 2012.**

IEP Plans for 2013

Revision of UALR IEP Assessment Plan. During 2013 the new A.S. degree Assessment Plan will be written and the B.A. degree Assessment Plans will be revised.

Revise IEP webpage, brochures, print information for perspective students, bulletin board. All forms of advertisements are being revised to reflect the new program and B.A. changes as well as status as an accredited program.

Infuse more community based learning into the program. During Fall 2012, the Interpreting 1 course (new) was offered. The goal is to take interpreting learning and practice into the community. Ray James forged an agreement with UAMS whereby their residents-in-training are working with our interpreting students. These residents work with deaf “trained” patients while our students interpret the “session.” These interpretations are recorded and evaluated with both the residents and interpreting students receiving feedback. In this way, future doctors are learning how to give exams and diagnose illness from persons who are deaf AND learning how to work with interpreters. Interpreting students are providing real interpretation for the deaf “patients” and are also learning how to work with doctors. The deaf “patients” give feedback to both the doctors and the interpreting students. This model will be repeated in 7 other settings.

Additionally, the IEP will look at developing a continuum of student involvement in the deaf community from: community exposure → community participation → service learning → supervised professional practice via Internship → work.

Seek Hard Money Funding for all of the fourth faculty member position. To date three hard money positions exist in the IEP (one 12-month and two 9-month). A fourth position has been funded at approximately 33% for the last 10 years by the college with the remaining 66% funded by a federal grant. Given the increase in the number of majors and the increased uncertainty regarding grant funds, it is imperative that the IEP seek hard money support for the entire fourth position.

Submit an application for another OSEP grant to begin January 2014. The current grant expires the end of 2013.

Collaborate with the Arkansas School for the Deaf (ASD) and increase service-learning. UALR IEP has been approached by ASD to collaborate in several ways. 1) For the IEP to offer “signing to families” replicating a program in Texas. Advanced Students will use a prepared curriculum to teach/mentor sign language to parents who live outside of Little Rock and who have a child attending the Arkansas School for the Deaf. This program will begin as a pilot during Spring 2013 and is offered for credit as an Independent Study. 2) A request was presented by ASD for interpreting students on Internship to consider placement at ASD to interpret, under supervision, with teachers in the Middle School who do not sign or do not sign well.

Collaborate with the University of Northern Florida (UNF) for student mentoring and course development.

The UNF program offers a master’s degree in interpreting and interpreter pedagogy. During the Spring 2013 semester, UNF graduate students, who are taking a class to learn to mentor, will mentor UALR fourth-year BA students. The UNF students will be supervised by his/her instructor who is a master mentor. The UALR students will be supervised by the IEP instructor of the Advanced Interpreting class. Additionally, a student in the UNF master’s pedagogy class will assist (under supervision) Dr. Anderson in developing content for the new *Comparative Linguistics* course. Both programs will be reviewed and evaluated by both university faculties and students at the end of the semester.

End/lks