



April 6, 2019

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased and proud to write in strong support of the ASC Service Learning Grant proposal submitted by Marla Berkowitz and Kristin Wickham-Saxon. The purpose of the proposal is to develop a robust field experience course to complement and consolidate our existing ASL offerings.

Marla and Kristin propose to develop a new ASL course: **Field Experience in ASL Studies**. Through intensive field experience (a total of 75 hours), students in this course will have the opportunity to align their ASL skills with their chosen field of practice and also to serve as cultural ambassadors for Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Signing communities in the Central Ohio area. The proposed course is structured around seven well-defined learning objectives that converge on the development of outstanding intercultural communication and competence. These objectives include the development of advanced receptive and expressive abilities in ASL, identification of advanced ASL grammar and vocabulary, understanding of American Deaf history, recognition of power, privilege and oppression in the Deaf community, collaboration, outreach and critical thinking. Marla and Kristin have identified important community partners to assist in the implementation of this course including Columbus Colony Elderly Care, Cornerstone Supported Living, Deaf World Against Violence Everywhere, the Ohio School for the Deaf, and Girls on the Run.

The proposed course will have a significant impact on the ASL program overall. We have now developed, proposed and piloted four upper division beyond the 1103 level, which together can represent a minor in ASL studies. We are currently submitting a proposal for approval of an ASL minor. The addition of this proposed course will significantly strengthen our proposal because it provides a unique capstone experience that consolidates previous knowledge and skills in ASL while at the same time providing opportunities for expansion of ASL skills into a variety of allied fields including education, psychology, speech and hearing sciences, etc.

I can attest to Marla and Kristin's commitment to curriculum development both individually and as a team. Marla and Kristin have emerged as leading voices in our ASL community by developing, teaching, and promoting new courses. They have also team taught 4189S for the past three years with great success.

Because of the unique contribution of this course to our current ASL offerings, its potential impact on our students and our community, and my unwavering confidence in these two outstanding colleagues, I strongly support this proposal and urge the committee to review it



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favorably. If I can be of any further assistance on Marla and Kristin's behalf, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Glenn A. Martínez, PhD MPH  
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April 2, 2019

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Dear Dean Fink,

As the interim director of the ASL Program under the Center for Languages, Literature and Cultures, I am writing to confirm my absolute support for the ASL 4589S "ASL Studies: Field Experience" course and course development grant proposed by Marla Berkowitz and Kristin Wickham-Saxon.

The mission of the OSU ASL Program is to create a challenging and safe learning environment that develops student communication skills using ASL and foster positive relationships among our students and instructors. As diverse, dedicated and talented educators, we share our passion for ASL and the culture of American Deaf community and strive to positively impact society by developing communication skills, increasing acceptance, and spreading awareness. In fulfilling our mission, this service-learning field experience course will be another gateway for OSU students to become cultural ambassadors while simultaneously applying their classroom learning with their field of study through service within the deaf, hard of hearing and/or signing communities.

Our ASL Program is rapidly expanding with the addition of several courses which support the soon-to-be ASL Studies minor. This new course will be a key to strengthening our program's visibility, OSU students' opportunities for hands-on exploration utilizing ASL complemented by their chosen field of study, and our retention of well-established relationships with several central Ohio community partners. ASL 4589S will be an elective course for the ASL Studies minor in which students must earn 12 credits comprised of three required courses and one elective course.

Berkowitz and Wickham-Saxon's vision for the course aligns with our departmental efforts to utilize this course to formulate and foster existing cross-departmental initiatives to expand student field placements as emerging professionals in various fields including Communications, Occupational and Physical Therapy, Psychology, Public Health, Pre-medicine, Pre-law, Social Work, and Speech and Hearing Science. In addition, the proposed service-learning course is well-situated to leverage existing resources and local community partnerships based on the past three consecutive years of offering ASL 4189S, "The Intersection of American Sign Language, Deaf Culture, and the Deaf Community," and our existing relationships with faculty from Speech and Hearing Science, the College of Education, Disability Studies, and other foreign language departments.

The ASL Program is committed to offer the proposed course on a continuing yearly basis. Our support for Ms. Berkowitz and Ms. Wickham-Saxon to co-teach this field experience course as well as 4189S is rooted in our passion to educate our students and provide a model of how deaf and hearing people interact as allies utilizing ASL while learning the perspectives of deaf and hard of hearing people in signing environments. Through this course, OSU students will not only deepen their knowledge of ASL and Deaf culture, they will expand their network of professional contacts for career opportunities. Furthermore, this course reinforces our value of giving back to the deaf and hard of hearing community with our students as resource for the crucial work our community partners do.

I appreciate the consideration of this course development grant proposal. Awarding this grant will have a significant impact, not only on our students, but for the proposal of ASL Studies as a minor. Furthermore, the work of the field experience students supports the OSU ASL Program's desire to champion the work of our deaf, hard of hearing and signing community partners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tia Jones", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tia Jones  
Interim ASL Director and Program Coordinator

## **1. Working Title: ASL 4589S: Field Experience: ASL Studies**

## **2. Applicant Information:**

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## **3. Course Description:**

ASL 4589S *Field Experience: ASL Studies*\* will be a full-fledged service-learning course designed as a complement to the existing ASL 4189S course. The field experience is designed to:

1. Provide a multifaceted approach of hands-on study, research and practice of students' existing American Sign Language (ASL) skills aligned with students' field of specialty.
2. Equip students to become "cultural ambassadors" for deaf, hard of hearing and/or signing communities with emphasis on bilingual and bicultural activity-based pedagogy designed to support ASL/English and Deaf-Hearing reciprocal relationships.

\*The proposed course syllabus will be sent to ASC for approval within the next few weeks.

## **Course Objectives and Learning Objectives:**

The current ASL 4189S service-learning course, *Intersection of American Sign Language, Deaf Culture, and the Deaf Community*, introduces the foundation of service-learning within the deaf and hard of hearing community and will serve as an elective for the ASL Studies minor.\*\* Like ASL 4189S, this new service-learning course, *Field Experience: ASL Studies*, will have ASL 1101 as a pre-requisite.

\*\* The ASL Studies minor proposal will be submitted to the ASC Curriculum Committee in the very near future.

During this field experience, students will complete 75 hours of service within the local deaf, hard of hearing and/or signing communities with a specific focus on utilizing American Sign Language (ASL) and students' field of study such as ASL Studies, Athletic Training, Biology, Business Administration, Communication, Criminology, Disability Studies, Education, Exercise Science, Gerontology, Health and Human Services, Human Development and Family Sciences, Human Nutrition, Human Resources, Interior Design, Marketing, Medical Dietetics, Non-Profit Management Studies, Nursing, Physical Education, Pre-Medicine, Pre-Occupational Therapy, Pre-

Physical Therapy, Psychology, Public Health, Public Policy Analysis, Rehabilitation Sciences, Sexuality Studies, Social Work, Sociology, Speech and Hearing Sciences, Sport & Physical Activity, Wellness Innovation in Healthcare, Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and Visual Communication Design. Not only will students interact with members of the deaf and hard of hearing communities (comprised of deaf, deafblind, deafdisabled, hard of hearing and/or late-deafened), but also with hearing people who may know sign language and are also members of the signing community.

The primary student population for this field experience will be undergraduates with intermediate to advanced ASL skills. The course would serve as an elective for the soon-to-be proposed ASL Studies minor. Students will increase their existing ASL competency in real-world contexts involving social justice, social relations, education pedagogies and other forms of cultural expression within the deaf, hard of hearing and signing communities. Furthermore, students will reflect on social and educational implications of language acquisition and/or language deprivation, cultural representation, and society's views on people with disabilities as they discover and analyze their own power, privilege and accountability to demystify misconceptions and myths about deaf and hard of hearing people. As emerging professionals, students will become agents of change while collaborating with community partners through course-based requirements to implement change with a specified outreach project.

The application and utilization of both ASL and interpersonal skills would fulfill the Center of Language, Literature and Cultures' (CLLC) mission to increase an understanding of diverse cultures, while expanding and shaping students' academic mastery of language and career readiness. The OSU ASL Program also promotes an understanding about the history of and current issues within the American d/Deaf community to honor and celebrate diversity and authenticity. By way of their involvement with local agencies and organizations, students will also develop professionalization skills in communication, cultural mediation, project design, and project implementation in collaboration with community partners.

Within the ASL Program curricular map, this course will be proposed as a three-credit hour, 4000-level elective course for ASL Studies minor concentration under the CLLC and request designation as an elective undergraduate core course meeting the requirements of the new General Education area focusing on Intercultural Competence.

Sustainability of the field experience course within the ASL Program and through community collaboration is ensured through the range of ASL faculty members who can teach this service-learning field experience course based on their expertise, existing relationships with ASL 4189S community partners, and clear course placement within the ASL Program's curricular map.

**After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:**

**Goal A: Develop advanced receptive and expressive linguistic abilities** in American Sign Language (ASL) through practice and study in collaboration with community partners.

**Goal B: Identify advanced ASL grammar and vocabulary** as evidence of increased language fluency and cultural awareness.

**Goal C: Develop an understanding of 150 years of American Deaf history** related to educational, technological, linguistic and cultural events impacting deaf and hard of hearing people's lives today.

**Goal D: Recognize and assess attitudes including the power, privilege and oppression** experienced within the deaf, hard of hearing and signing communities.

**Goal E: Collaborate and work side-by-side** with deaf and/or hard of hearing professionals of community partners while making connections between academic concepts and community-based work.

**Goal F: Develop a Final Outreach Project** applying personal assets and evaluating the impacts of service activities involving ASL, one's chosen area(s) of study/discipline, and the deaf, hard of hearing, and signing communities.

**Goal G: Educate the public and apply critical-thinking skills** by utilizing one's new-found identity as culture ambassadors.

Nearly 60 students have enrolled in ASL 4189S, *Intersection of American Sign Language, Deaf Culture, and the Deaf Community*, during the past three consecutive Spring semester offerings. Meanwhile, its two ASL faculty, Berkowitz and Wickham-Saxon, have maintained solid professional relationships with eleven community partners based in the fields of human services, advocacy, child care, elder care and/or deaf education. The addition of this new service-learning field experience course will not only offer strengthened connections with the local deaf community for the ASL Studies minor, it will highlight the potential for ASL, as a visual, gestural language, to bridge communication gaps and reveal complex issues of power and social justice within real-world settings.

The interactive opportunity for students to work onsite, side-by-side with community partners' deaf and/or hard of hearing professionals (who use ASL in their respective fields) will literally provide hands-on experiential learning. Students will navigate their way toward comprehending the language in real-world environments where diverse communication methods and challenges exist. The students' final outreach projects will outline a clear vision of their new identity as an ally and/or as an ambassador about ASL and Deaf-related issues.

The impetus for creating this course stems from the growing ASL student enrollment and interest in continued ASL studies in addition to:

1. Strong annual growth in student enrollment in the OSU ASL Program courses.
  - a. 2015-2016: 1275 students
  - b. 2016-2017: 1289 students
  - c. 2017-2018: 1452 students
  - d. 2018-2019: 1620 students (this estimate includes the expected Summer 2019 enrollment numbers)
2. Offering of ASL 4189S, *Intersection of American Sign Language, Deaf Culture, and the Deaf Community*, (three consecutive Spring semesters and Autumn 2019 semester) as an elective toward the proposed ASL Studies minor.
3. Offering of ASL 2104 (three consecutive semesters) course as an elective toward the proposed ASL Studies minor.
4. Offering of ASL 3105 (first offered in Spring 2019) course as an elective toward the proposed ASL Studies minor.
5. Offering of ASL 3350, *American Deaf Arts and Literature*, (three consecutive Autumn semesters), as an elective toward the proposed ASL Studies minor.
6. Fourteen years and counting of OSU students and faculty signing the National Anthem and Carmen Ohio during home football and basketball games.
7. Three years and counting of the student-created and student-led Deaf-Hearing OSU Club.
8. Students' desire to communicate with deaf and hard of hearing family members and colleagues.
9. Students' chance encounters with deaf and hard of hearing people while working in domains such as banking, childcare, elder care, food and beverage service, medicine, pharmacy, and retail.

The first three weeks of the course will entail the core foundational content and framework for the Final Outreach Project with the remainder of the course focusing on service, project research, project implementation, documentation and assessment concluding with the Final Outreach Project.

### **Course Overview:**

#### **Module 1:** (Week 1): Foundations of Service-Learning

- a. Overview of Service-Learning
- b. Overview of four service-competency themes: Citizenship, Intercultural Competence, Community Accountability, and Taking Action/Implementing Change

#### **Module 2:** (Week 2): Introduction to the American Deaf Community, Power, Privilege, and Oppression, and Social Justice

- a. Overview of American Deaf History including the impact of language acquisition and language deprivation on deaf and hard of hearing individuals
- b. Reflections on the Power, Privilege, and Oppression (PPO)
- c. Reflections on social justice within marginalized communities



**Module 3:** (Week 3): Transition from Theory to Practice, Overview of Outreach Project

- a. Introduction to the activities-based decision-making processes involving deaf-hearing relationships
- b. Exploration of how allies can support taking action and implementing change
- c. Overview of the Final Outreach Project

**Module 4:** (Weeks 4 – 14): Service-Learning Field Experience\* with Community Partner

- a. Develop and implement Final Outreach Project\*\*
- b. Regular reflections, assessment, and feedback

\*Timing of service may vary depending on community partner schedules and needs.

\*\*Final Outreach Project and activities will vary depending on assigned community partner agency/organization needs.

**Module 5:** (Weeks 15 – 16) Final Outreach Project

- a. Final reflection with community partner
- b. Post-field experience reflection

**General description of service-learning component of the course**

The field experience course's overarching focus includes the:

1. Anticipation for a mind-frame of deaf-hearing dynamics, issues, questions and insights during service-learning.
2. Development of professionalism, respect for language, cultural sensitivity, autonomy, and effective communication through the joint-outreach project.
3. Fostering of understanding and engagement with individualism, collectivism, and systemic attitudes at respective community partner sites through activity-based approaches.
4. Use of instructor-student conferencing to assess, re-align, and track student progress toward creating the Final Outreach Projects in alignment with the community partner's needs, interests, circumstances, and resources.
5. Fostering of periodic mutual feedback and reflection between students, community partners, and course instructors to maintain ongoing dialogue.
6. Upon the completion of the course, students submit proposals of best practices for community partners to carry on their outreach project's mission, including documentation and recommendations for their work/projects to be carried on.

**How service-learning activities will contribute to course goals:**

1. The need for face-to-face communication and interactions in a visual language will inherently lead to students' improved ASL receptive abilities, ASL expressive fluency, and understanding of more advanced ASL grammar. (See Goals: A, B, & E.)

2. Deaf, hard of hearing, and signing communities are the front-lines for students' awakening of power and privilege based on their hearing status. (See Goals: C, D, E & G.)
3. Controversial issues derived from Deaf history entail different educational pedagogical philosophies, language deprivation, resistance to ASL and Deaf cultural engagement, elements of potential bias, prejudices, cultural misunderstandings, misconceptions, and stereotyping of deaf and hard of hearing people. (See Goals: C, D, E, F & G.)
4. Provide a forum for creativity and overcoming obstacles and building alliances among deaf and hearing people. (See Goals: F & G.)

#### **4. Community Focus and Reciprocity**

The deaf community is a relatively small minority of society yet vastly diverse with a wide range and type of agencies, organizations and educational institutions within the central Ohio area that serve the deaf, deafblind, deafdisabled, hard of hearing and/or late-deafened service recipients. The ASL Program's course curricula supports retention of students with diverse backgrounds and interests, thus presenting a pool of passionate students wishing to "make the world a better place" in the name of social responsibility.

Based on positive feedback from community partners about the high-caliber ASL 4189S students, the ASL Program has chosen to retain partnerships with the following agencies, organizations and state-funded entities. The Ohio School for the Deaf (OSD), an exemplary community partner, recently sought out the OSU ASL Program to customize a year-round afterschool tutorial program for their deaf and hard of hearing school-aged students. The field experience students could serve in this tutoring capacity. To formalize the tutoring partnership, a meeting with the OSD Superintendent and Student Life Department is planned for May. The remaining community partners have three years of established connection with the ASL 4189S and have been identified as trusted partners to support and accommodate the field experience students. The planned offerings of ASL 4189S in Fall 2019 and ASL 4589S *Field Experience: ASL Studies* during Spring 2020 (submitted as a new course) will further streamline OSU students' academic, experiential and career learning experiences.

Numerous disciplines/majors are likely to align with multiple partner sites, so there is great flexibility in determining student placements. The following agencies, organizations and educational institutions were selected for the following reasons:

1. A signing environment exists where deaf and hearing people regularly interact, thus promoting students' ASL and intercultural competency skills.
2. There is a strong commitment to fostering knowledge, patience with ASL learners, and an intent to enrich the lives of deaf people. One of the key principles of serving is not to *help* or *fix* these "lesser unfortunates" marginalized in society. Rather students have the opportunity to *serve with* marginalized

people, thus planting the seed for budding friendships with an initial foundation of respect and compassion for one another as human beings.

3. Students can develop career networks and ongoing relationships with administrators, service providers, and youth leaders in their respective fields.
4. These community partners have extensive experience working with volunteers, interns, and practicum students from other colleges and universities in which roles and expectations are mutually entrusted for collaboration.
5. Public transportation and carpool options ensure these central Ohio locations are accessible to OSU students.

The community partners and potential related disciplines follow:

**Columbus Colony Elderly Care:** This Westerville-based skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility is owned by Ohio School for the Deaf Alumni Association and serves deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing residents. An appropriate placement site for students interested in advocacy, ASL studies, business administration, communication, disability studies, gerontology, health and human services, human nutrition, human resources, interior design, marketing, medical dietetics, non-profit management studies, nursing, pre-medicine, pre-occupational therapy, pre-physical therapy, psychology, public health, public policy analysis, social work, sociology, speech and hearing sciences, wellness innovation in healthcare, women's, gender, and sexuality studies, and visual communication design.

**CornerStone Supported Living:** A center serving independent living for deafdisabled residents. An appropriate placement site for students interested in advocacy, ASL studies, communication, education, disability studies, human development and family sciences, non-profit management studies, psychology, public health, rehabilitation sciences, social work, and women's, gender, and sexuality studies.

**Deaf Services Center:** As the largest provider of services in Ohio (with satellite offices throughout state), DSC promotes access to communication, services, and events in the community. Its mission is to empower the communities they serve to have access to full participation in the community by providing ADA education, direct case-management, foreign language and ASL interpreting, and vocational services. An appropriate placement site for students interested in advocacy, ASL studies, criminology, disability studies, education, human resources, interpreting, marketing, non-profit management studies, psychology, public health, public policy, rehabilitation, social work, sociology, women's, gender, and sexuality studies, and visual communication design.

**Deaf World Against Violence Everywhere:** An anti-violence agency focused on empowerment and equality through advocacy and education of deaf, deafblind, deafdisabled, and hard of hearing individuals. An appropriate placement site for students interested in advocacy, ASL studies, communication, criminology, disability

studies, education, human development and family sciences, non-profit management studies, psychology, public health, public policy analysis, sexuality studies, social work, sociology, speech and hearing sciences, women's, gender, and sexuality studies, and visual communication design.

**Ohio School for the Deaf:** A state-funded residential school for deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, deafdisabled, and late-deafened Ohioans whose ages range from infant to high school and career-transition students. Programs include pre-school through secondary academic learning, after-school recreation activities, training for independent living, and summer camps. An appropriate placement site for students interested in advocacy, ASL studies, child and youth studies, disability studies, education, human development and family sciences, human nutrition, human resources, non-profit management studies, physical education-sport-physical activity, psychology, public health, public policy, social work, sociology, speech and hearing sciences, women's, gender, and sexuality studies, and visual communication design.

**Girls on the Run and Heart and Soul:** National organizations comprised of small teams to teach elementary and middle school girls life skills through empowering and dynamic interactive lessons and running games. The curriculum includes understanding of self, valuing of relationships and teamwork, and understanding how girls can connect with and shape the world at large. The Ohio School for the Deaf has teams during the spring and fall seasons. An appropriate placement site for students interested in advocacy, ASL studies, athletic training, child and youth studies, disability studies, education, exercise science, human development and family sciences, non-profit management studies, physical education-sport-physical activity, psychology, public health, public policy, social work, speech and hearing sciences, women's, gender, and sexuality studies.

### **Community partner participation in the development of the service project:**

Advanced planning and coordination with the community partners' administrators will streamline the pre-service requirements such as background checks, placement needs, explanation of course requirements to students' supervisors, and establishing scheduled check-ins on students' progress. Partners will complete a survey to identify their schedule availability, needs for student ASL communication capabilities, and the personal skills and assets they seek in student(s). The number of students assigned to a given community partner and the timing of student placement will depend on the partners' needs and availability of site supervisors able to work with students. Site supervisors will provide feedback on students' progress through in-person and phone/video conferencing and online evaluations. Site supervisors will also evaluate the field experience program's effectiveness and impact on their agency/organization. Outreach projects implemented by students will be a primary focus to support the needs of community partners as they carry on their work.

## **Final Outreach Project to reflect the priorities and stated goals of community partners and collaborative planning by all partners**

The identified community partners operate on tight budgets with revenue provided in part by Medicare, Medicaid, grants, donations and/or state tax dollars. The additional labor and support provided by a field experience student(s) will not only address partners' understaffing issues but can also mutually benefit both the community partners and students as they achieve the agency/organizations' missions by completing specific projects together. For example, student participation in community partners' development and planning of local events, workshops, and retreats relevant to their specific area of expertise is an application and reflection of service-learning practices including citizenship, community accountability, intercultural competency, and taking action/implementing change. Partners can seize the opportunity to utilize students' fresh eyes and energy for new perspectives and creativity, shaping students to be effective ambassadors using real-world application tools, and strengthening alliances. Students' experience using ASL and cultural savvy in conjunction with their area of study may serve as a gateway to successful employment opportunities in their chosen fields.

## **Anticipated community benefit and impact of service project**

Historically, resources are limited within marginalized communities such as the deaf, hard of hearing and signing communities. Students' day-to-day opportunities to practice ASL in authentic environments is also scarce. The Deaf-Hearing OSU Club (founded by students in Spring 2017) strives to address this scarcity as there is no language lab or centralized location where deaf and/or hard of hearing students and ASL students can meet and mingle. The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits the ADA Office from disclosing the names of students with disabilities, thus restricting their possible recruitment to the DH-OSU Club. This service-learning field experience course will provide a platform for regular opportunities for OSU students to utilize ASL and build alliances within the deaf, hard of hearing and signing communities on OSU's campus.

When students meet and engage with deaf people outside of the classroom, deeper understanding brings heartfelt and profound awareness about the lives of deaf people. Instead of *talking about* deaf people as a linguistic-cultural group, students are encountering and developing relationships *with* these people while utilizing the language and cultural knowledge skills they learned from their ASL classes and reframing their perspectives of deaf people perceived as "other." Students will also introduce creative strategies and approaches to foster a cultural shift from dependency to autonomy among service recipients. There is a greater need for abled members of the majority to step out of their comfort zone and work side-by-side with marginalized groups to foster independence and belief in their own capabilities.

Students' interdisciplinary connections with their area of study and the ASL Program together present community partners with top-notch, motivated students who bring energy buoyed by their new-found identity as allies of a marginalized group while

simultaneously tapping into their wealth of networks. As one would expect, students will naturally take on the role of cultural ambassadors, relaying to others and applying what was learned during their experiences with deaf and hard of hearing people.

The result of *Field Experience: ASL Studies* will be the identification of clear and explicit connections between OSU students' career paths and the deaf, hard of hearing and signing communities through reflection-based assignments, class discussions, research, final outreach projects and students' budding relationships with their community partner supervisors, on-site colleagues, and clients. Consultations and conversations have been initiated with OSU ASL faculty, OSU Service-Learning Office faculty, ASC Center for Career and Professional Success, the Director of CLLC, and potential community partners' educators, specialists, service providers, and clientele to provide a well-rounded support system reinforcing students' interest in pursuing their area of study. The growth and sustainability of students' success in this ASL-related field experience is evident based on the booming interest in ASL learning, which is now the 3<sup>rd</sup> most studied language in higher education.

## **5. Letters of Support**

Please see attached for letters of support from:

- a. Dr. Glenn Martinez, Director of Center of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
- b. Tia Jones, Interim ASL Director and Program Coordinator