

Discontinuation of Deaf Education and American Sign Language Courses College of Education

The College of Education recommends discontinuation of Deaf Education Teacher Certification within Special Education and five American Sign Language courses.

Deaf Education:

In planning for budget reductions, the College of Education reviewed all programs and made decisions with regard to each program: to grow, sustain, reduce, eliminate, or restructure. The College used multiple criteria in making these decisions including for example: enrollment over a five-year period, demand (applications), total enrollment, graduation rate, and external research funding per T/S faculty member compared to university and college average.

The decision to discontinue deaf education as a certification area in special education does not mean we are eliminating special education. Special education remains a high priority area, and in fact, we want to invest in those emerging areas where there is high demand and high shortage (i.e. autism). We eliminate endorsement areas based in large part because of declining enrollments related to the broader environment (e.g. incidence rates, shortages).

Deaf education as a teacher certification area is not a shortage area in the state of Michigan and is only listed as a high need area in 12 states (<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/pol/tsa.html>). The demand for teachers in special education exceeds the supply but not in deaf education. High demand areas include, for example, autism, multiple & severe disabilities, learning disabilities.

The demand and enrollment in our deaf education certification area are low averaging about 10-12 students who apply for certification a year. Thus, course enrollments are very small, and faculty have recruited students from Hawaii (taking the course on-line) to "fill" the classes.

In the state of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University has a deaf education certification program. Their basic philosophy is oral communication but "students are exposed to manual communication during their course of study." EMU has 28 faculty members in special education and 3 faculty members in the hearing impairment program. EMU has the largest special education program in the state also with a Speech and Hearing Clinic. Their hearing impairment program is also with small enrollment which they would like to increase.

The cost of delivering any teacher certification area is expensive with required practica and internships. Thus, we need to be selective in the certification areas we offer. In addition to deaf education, we are also closing the certification in emotional impairment in special education and in the process of closing certification in physical education.

In addition to the low enrollment at the undergraduate level, there are no applicants and no enrollment in the master's or doctoral program in deaf education, although there is graduate enrollment in other areas of special education.

Changes in area of deaf education accelerate every year with scientific and technological advances. For example, deafness is now identified at birth and cochlear implants make auditory and oral communication possible. These changes enable these children to be mainstreamed in regular classes upon entering school.

Deaf education and American Sign Language are not synonymous. The deaf education field itself has become philosophically divided between those who focus on American Sign Language vs. those who emphasize Auditory/oral communication, or both.

Although we will eliminate deaf education as a certification area, we have asked the faculty (two tenured faculty) in this area, if they choose to stay at MSU, to offer an on-line concentration in deaf education as part of the all-college Master's in Education on-line program. This on-line program enrolls students from around the country and thus may enable a larger draw. The on-line program will not offer certification but will offer a content specialization for teachers or others who wish to learn about deaf community, culture, and policy.

Students admitted/enrolled in Deaf Education over four-year period:

	FS06	FS07	FS08	FS09
Juniors	7	8	11	11
Seniors	20	15	13	13
Interns	11	14	11	10

Communication w/students and advisors about phase-out of deaf education

Date	Method	Group
11/09	ESAF	Freshmen with declared majors in DE
11/09	ESAF	Students in current applicant pool
11/09	ESAF	Juniors, Seniors, Interns in Deaf Education
11/09	Email	Student Affairs advisors and staff
11/09	ESAF	Students university-wide who have taken CEP 441A or 441B (ASL courses)
11/10	Listserv	University-wide advisor listserv (those who will advise students taking ASL courses)
11/10	Meeting	Students in current DE applicant pool, DE faculty, Special Ed Advisor, Director of Student Affairs
11/18	Email	ASL students in CEP 341

(ESAF refers to Electronic Student Academic Folder)

American Sign Language (ASL)

American Sign Language is not an academic major nor is it required by any major in the university except those seeking certification in deaf education.

The College of Education offers a sequence of five ASL courses taught on campus. ASL may be used to meet a foreign language requirement in some majors on campus which requires the entire sequence of five courses.

None of the ASL courses are taught by T/S faculty in the College of Education as the deaf education faculty members are only sufficiently proficient to teach the first course in the sequence, an introductory two-credit course. Because there are no graduate students in deaf education who might contribute to the teaching, the courses have been staffed by outside community members who are hired and paid from the College of Education general fund. We wish to reallocate these funds – partly as part of the budget reduction but also to invest in shortage areas in special education.

Lansing Community College offers the equivalent of our 5 course ASL sequence. In addition, there are 13 community colleges and 5 universities in the state of Michigan that offer signing courses that have already been approved for direct transfer in lieu of our courses. LCC offers a Sign Language Interpreter Program. and in fact, those who are hired to teach ASL for us are also employed by LCC in their Sign Language program. Also in the state of Michigan, Central Michigan offers a sign language minor to prepare interpreters, translators, and other types of instructors. The University of Michigan offers a 5 course sequence in ASL in the Department of Linguistics and Madonna University offers a similar sequence in the College of Arts & Humanities. At many institutions, ASL is seen as language and culture study and thus, is not in a College of Education but located instead in a Department of Languages or in an Arts and Sciences academic unit.

Students at MSU who are interested in ASL can (and, in some cases as in College of Arts & Letters, are encouraged to) take the sign language courses at LCC because of greater availability and access.

The enrollment in the two advanced courses is quite low. In 2008-09, only 41 students completed the entire five-course sequence and 12 of them were majors in deaf education. The remaining students (14 in Arts & Letters) presumably completed the sequence to meet a foreign language requirement.

Summary:

We will accommodate all students who are sophomores in the current applicant pool who have declared deaf education as their major as long as they meet all of the admissions requirements and have taken CEP 430 which is taken in their sophomore year. Our advisors met with these students and reviewed the progression toward their degree that would be necessary to complete the course work and field experience in the time frame prescribed to close out the program. All students who are currently in the program (juniors, seniors and interns) have been advised of the time frame by which they must complete the program. Current freshmen have been informed of the pending moratorium and discontinuation of the program and offered advising to change their major or make other decisions.

Also, all students who have taken ASL courses (CEP 341, 441a or 441B) have been informed of the pending phase-out of the courses so they can complete the courses while they exist.

College of Education

Process of Consultation Re: Academic Program Changes and Budget Reductions

- **August 26, 2009** **All-College Faculty Retreat**

Faculty in each academic program area reviewed data related to quality and productivity, responded to questions about data and measures, & outlined strategies to address weaknesses. Data included enrollment & graduation rate over five-year period; research funding per T/S faculty member; quality and reputation indicators of program and faculty within, connectivity and contributions to other programs in college and across campus
- **Sept. 9, 2009** **Dean convened joint meeting of Administrative Staff, Department Chairs and College Faculty Advisory Council***

Reviewed reports from program areas, outlined areas for improvement, and made recommendations to sustain, grow, reduce, eliminate, restructure
- **Sept. 23, 2009** **Dean convened joint meeting of Department Chairs and College Faculty Advisory Council**

Based on previous meeting, Dean presented set of programmatic changes and budget reductions for discussion and consideration
- **Oct. 1, 2009** **Based on previous consultation, Dean prepared summaries of reviews and recommendations for improvement related to each academic program--distributed to college and invited feedback**
- **Oct. 6, 2009** **Dean consulted with College Faculty Advisory Council**

Discussed final recommendations related to academic program closures, discontinuation of specific areas of teacher certification, and budget reductions
- **Oct. 12, 2009** **Dean consulted with Department Chairs**

Discussed recommendations related to academic program closures, discontinuation of specific areas of teacher certification and budget reductions
- **Oct. 16, 2009** **Dean submitted recommendations related to academic program closures and changes and budget reductions to Provost**
- **Oct. 1-30, 2009** **Dean met with individual faculty, as well as academic program areas and departments to discuss final recommendations**

***Note:** Each Department has two representatives on the College Faculty Advisory Council