



Association of
Visual Language Interpreters
of Canada

Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission
Attn: Mr. John Traversy, Secretary General
Les Terrasses de la Chaudière - Central Building
1 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau, Québec
J8X 4B1

via: on-line submission to the CRTC¹

November 14, 2013

Re: Notice No. 2013-155; File No.: 8665-C12-201303536 & 8665-C12-200807943
**Final Submission & Additional Responses to Questions Asked to AVLIC by
the CRTC at the Hearing on Issues Related to the Feasibility of Establishing
a Video Relay Service In Canada**

Dear Mr. Traversy,

The Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC), the national membership organization for professional signed language interpreters in Canada, would like to thank the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) for providing interveners an opportunity to submit additional supporting information following the October 21 – 25, 2013, Hearing on Issues Related to the Feasibility of Establishing a Video Relay Service In Canada, File Numbers: 8665-C12-201303536 and 8665-C12-200807943. AVLIC was granted the opportunity to appear before the Commission and we would like to take advantage of this offer and revisit some of the questions posed to AVLIC during our oral presentation given on October 22, 2013.

Availability of Interpreters ²

Since there are already a large number of AVLIC members providing ASL-English interpretation services to a Video Relay Service (VRS) company currently operating in Canada, we are confident that if the CRTC moved forward with a Canadian VRS system and tapped into this existing resource, there would be a sufficient number of ASL-English interpreters to sustain the service. This is supported by the comments presented to the Commission by Ms. Giroux during the Sorenson oral presentation, where she notes that Sorenson, “have opened call centres from coast to coast... it has encouraged the highly qualified interpreters who reside in Canada to stay here through meaningful employment...”³ Additionally, interpreters who have chosen not to work in the VRS setting on the premise that the service is not currently provided to Canadians, may be interested in undertaking VRS interpreting work knowing that the service will now be available for the benefit of the communities we serve in Canada.

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AVLIC is unable to comment on the numbers of available LSQ-French interpreters who might be available to work in VRS centres. However, we suspect there will, in fact, be an increase in the number of both ASL-English and LSQ-French interpreters due to the supply and demand theory. This is supported by information gathered from the Interpreter Education Programs (IEPs) currently operating in Canada. As you can see in the letter from Douglas College (Appendix E), Ms. Palmer notes, "With improved advertising about interpreting as a career, and more full-time, permanent job opportunities, we believe more people would be interested in becoming interpreters." This sentiment is echoed in the other letters from IEPs attached.

Interpreter Education Programs in Canada

During the question and answer period following the AVLIC oral presentation, AVLIC was asked about our website references to Interpreter Education Programs and the reason for two lists⁴. In our response we explained that the first list consists of IEPs currently operating in Canada; the second list are either former programs which are no longer offered and/or international programs which have been reviewed and deemed to meet AVLIC standards for the eligibility of AVLIC membership requirements. We assert that these lists, and the likelihood that more international programs will be added to the second list, will be able to provide sufficient numbers of interpreters to fill the demand for VRS as well as community interpreting assignments.

As a follow up to overall questions about IEPs and the ability for them to train additional interpreters to meet VRS and community demands, AVLIC commissioned responses from the current Canadian IEPs. Those responses are attached below (Appendix A-F). Some highlights from their responses included:

- **Nova Scotia Community College**, NS (Appendix A): NSCC has partnered with the local VRS provider in the past and is on record as being open to developing this part of the curriculum in the existing AEIP and/or adding stand-alone courses that address specialized VRS skill
- **Université du Québec à Montréal**, QC (Appendix B): À notre avis, l'intégration d'un SRV à la palette de services offerts par les interprètes visuels pourrait avoir un effet bénéfique sur la visibilité de la profession, la reconnaissance de la formation et du programme, et par conséquent sur l'augmentation à la fois des admissions et des diplômés
- **Red River College**, MB (Appendix C): Our program is presently in discussion with a local video relay interpretation service provider to collaborate in student training. We are hopeful that our students will begin practicum placement at their facility in the near future.
- **Lakeland College**, AB (Appendix D): Lakeland College is committed to expanding programming and student capacity to accommodate the growing needs of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Communities, and is looking ahead to what might be required when VRS becomes a Canadian reality.
- **Douglas College**, BC (Appendix E): Considering how to prepare interpreters to work in VRS, we feel that those who have good interpreting skills, an understanding of Deaf culture, and are ethical professionals will be able to adapt easily to the challenges of interpreting in the Video Relay setting.
- **George Brown College**, ON (Appendix F)

Social Service vs. Entrepreneurialism ⁵

A question was raised in the question and answer period following the AVLIC oral presentation as to whether or not interpreters are a social service or a business. We are a very unique profession

because we are so closely tied with our “consumers.” To learn a signed language, we must be taught by Deaf people who are native sign language users. To become interpreters we must intimately understand Deaf culture to be able to convey message equivalence. The latter means we have a tangible relationship with the Deaf community, which has to be fostered by Deaf people willing to let us into their culture.

While we support full access for the Deaf and hard of hearing communities, we recognize that in order for Deaf individuals to be full participants during interactions with the general public and businesses, those individuals and businesses must make their services accessible. To have equal access they must hire interpreters. Interpreting is a business. Our service is social. We will forever fight along side the Deaf and hard of hearing communities for accessibility and we will forever educate non-Deaf people of their obligation to make their services accessible. As a result, interpreters will make a living providing a specialized service to those businesses that do not have the expertise to fully comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In the field of interpretation, however, there are individuals and businesses that provide video interpreting services. These are similar to pre-arranged appointments with the main difference being that the interpreter is only present via video. This is a different scenario than VRS though and could be more likened to a ‘live’ meeting.

Further to that, interpreters are trained language specialists. We are not necessarily business majors nor entrepreneurs, so business development on the scale of VRS is beyond the scope of average interpreters. While some might have those skills, to ask why individual interpreters have not implemented such services would be a better question asked to telephone service providers: why have they not implemented VRS services yet?

We believe that question comes down to ‘*who will pay for the service?*’ If an individual were to set up a VRS service, it would be dependent on the end users to pay to cover the cost of the service. As we know from the Mission Consulting Report and from the presentations made, the infrastructure costs would put the service out of reach by most individual users. It would be onerous on Deaf individuals to have to pay for such accessibility accommodations and members of the general public might find it an unnecessary cost and therefore refuse to participate – negating the business model.

Unfortunately, the Deaf and hard of hearing communities must wait for businesses to make their services accessible even though there is a long standing law, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, that affords the right to equal access. We stand beside the Deaf and hard of hearing communities during this process and will continue to provide the CRTC with any information needed to assist in the implementation.

The Role of Interpreters for the Implementation of VRS

The premise behind the hearing is the feasibility of VRS in Canada. However, a foundational point that was not emphasized enough during the hearing is that VRS is the solution but the goal is to mandate telephone service providers to make their service accessible to all Canadians. The crux of the issue is that the current text-based system is not accessible to all Canadians. Companies, including telephone service providers, have an obligation under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms⁶, to make their service accessible to all Canadians. The only solution to this issue is to implement VRS.

Qualified interpreters are the method in which VRS is based upon. AVLIC members are qualified to provide such a service and we would be more than pleased to assist the telephone service providers in making their service accessible to all Canadians.

Regardless of the structure the CRTC chooses to implement VRS, we urge that AVLIC membership be requirement for interpreters working in the VRS setting. AVLIC is the only national association representing visual language interpreters in Canada and its members uphold the highest standards of professional integrity, competence and ethics⁷.

AVLIC's Role in the Future

Mention was made of establishing a consortium comprised of community members and financial stakeholders. Since VRS cannot be implemented without interpreters, it must be identified that AVLIC members are also stakeholders in this process and must be included in the process of implementing VRS. AVLIC would be happy to be involved and provide a representative for the consortium.

Respectfully submitted,



Christie Reaume
AVLIC President, 2010 – 2014

cc: BC VRS Committee
Ontario VRS Committee
Alberta VRS Committee
Canadian Association of the Deaf
Frank Folino CAD President
Doug Momotiuk, CAD Past President
Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf
Vincent Chauvet, CCSD President
AVLIC Affiliate Chapter Presidents:
ASLIA (Alberta) – Debra Flaig
AVLI-NB (New Brunswick) – Ginnie Black
MAPSLI (Nova Scotia) – Tanya Frank Scholten
MAVLI (Manitoba) – Mandy MacDonald
NAVLI (Newfoundland & Labrador) – Shelia Keats
OASLI (Ontario) – Courtney Cockburn
SLINC (Ottawa) – Karen Hennig
WAVLI (B.C.) – Caroline Tetreault
Canadian Interpreter Education Program Coordinators:
Nova Scotia Community College - Denise Smith
Université du Québec à Montréal - Anne-Marie Parisot
George Brown College – Phyllis Beaton-Vazquez
Red River College – Rick Zimmer
University of Manitoba – Terry Janzen
Lakeland College – Jody Morrison
Douglas College – Cheryl Palmer

¹ <https://services.crtc.gc.ca/pub/ListeInterventionList/Default-Default.aspx?en=2013-155&dt=f&lang=e>

² <http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/transcripts/2013/tt1022.html> - transcript reference: line 2997

³ <http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/transcripts/2013/tt1024.html> – transcript reference: line 4619-4620

⁴ <http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/transcripts/2013/tt1022.html> - transcript reference: line 3023

⁵ <http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/transcripts/2013/tt1022.html> - transcript reference: line 3137

⁶ <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html>

⁷ AVLIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct: <http://www.avlic.ca/ethics-and-guidelines>

Appendix A

Nova Scotia Community College **ASL/English Interpretation Program (AEIP)**

NUMBERS

- Established in 1993
- Two year Diploma Program
- Part of NSCC’s School of Applied Arts
- 3 semesters each year: Fall and Winter, 15 weeks each; Spring, 5 weeks
- Three different work practicums during second year, including opportunities for video relay service practicum in final placement.
- Pre-requisite for AEIP: 3-semester certificate program, Deaf Studies (DSP)
- Pre-requisite for DSP: minimum of 120 hours of ASL instruction
- Maximum of 16 seats each year in AEIP
- Maximum of 32 seats in DSP (two sections of 16)
- Usually have a class of 8 to 12 in each cohort of AEIP
- 2013, ten graduates. 2012, six. 2014 projection: eight

RECRUITING occurs:

- In ASL part-time classes
- At job fairs in the community
- At high school career days and similar events
- “Test Drives” on campus where interested parties can visit classes
- During public “Information Nights” on campus
- Also, lots of word-of-mouth in addition to students in secondary and post-secondary education who have Deaf classmates and see interpreters at work.
- In print media

GROWTH in recent years

- Twenty years ago, most of our graduates were hired into the K-12 school system. With more and more parents choosing cochlear implants for their deaf child and eschewing sign language, the number K-12 jobs has decreased. At the same time, with the advent of VRS in our community, more interpreting jobs have opened up in that area. So on balance, there has been growth over the last 10 years.

FUTURE GROWTH and BARRIERS

We track our graduates enough to keep an eye on the job market, locally, nationally and in North America. Eventually, any graduate who wants to, finds interpreting work. The first one to three years

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can be a challenge and some interpreters augment their income with other part-time employment as they build a reputation and gain experience.

We do foresee continued growth, especially as more and more Deaf people aspire to advanced education and employment. Attitudes toward Deaf people have changed a lot in the last few decades – for the better. But attitudinal barriers still exist and technology like cochlear implants can mislead the public and decision-makers into believing all is fine, even where true communication access does not exist.

NSCC and VRS TRAINING

NSCC has partnered with the local VRS provider in the past and is on record as being open to developing this part of the curriculum in the existing AEIP and/or adding stand-alone courses that address specialized VRS skill.

For more information, please contact: Denise Smith, denisemary.smith@nsc.ca

Appendix B



Université du Québec à Montréal

Case postale 8888, succursale Centre-Ville
Montréal (Québec) Canada H3C 3P8

Montréal, le 5 novembre 2013

Conseil de la radiodiffusion et des télécommunications canadiennes
Ottawa (Ontario)
Canada, K1A 0N2

Objet : Complément d'information sur le Certificat en interprétation visuelle de l'UQAM

Madame, Messieurs les Commissaires,

En réponse à la demande de l'AVLIC et suite aux informations fournies lors de leur intervention du 22 octobre dernier dans le cadre des Audiences du CRTC sur le SRV, j'aimerais fournir un complément d'information sur le Certificat en interprétation visuelle de l'UQAM.

Ce programme a été créé en 1990 au département de linguistique de l'UQAM à la demande de l'Association québécoise des interprètes francophones en langage visuel (AQIFLV), maintenant dissoute. Ce programme a beaucoup changé depuis ses débuts. Il a évolué en fonction de l'évolution des cohortes d'étudiants et aussi en fonction de l'avancement des connaissances. Le programme de 1990 comprenait deux volets, un volet de translittération et un volet d'interprétation français/LSQ. Faute d'inscriptions suffisantes, le volet translittération a fermé en 1996. Les premières cohortes étant composées avant tout d'interprètes de métier, désirant officialiser leur expertise, la structure du programme et les contenus étaient bien différents. Aujourd'hui, la clientèle est presque exclusivement constituée d'étudiants n'ayant jamais pratiqué la profession et ayant tout à apprendre. Il s'agit d'une certification de 10 cours de premier cycle universitaire, offerte à temps partiel sur deux ans et ne contenant pas de cours de langue des signes (LSQ), ces cours étant préalables à l'admission au certificat. L'évaluation des préalables linguistiques se fait pour tous les candidats et la réussite aux cinq tests est

conditionnelle à l'admission dans le programme. Les compétences évaluées sont la maîtrise de la production et de la réception en français (oral et écrit) et en LSQ. Les cours incluent des contenus pratiques et théoriques sur les éléments de base de l'interprétation visuelle (ex. éthique, déontologie, impact des types de modèles communicationnels, terminologie, structures des discours, milieux spécifiques, etc.). Un stage de fin d'études inclut une supervision de 150 heures d'interprétation réalisées en milieu de pratique, ainsi que la réalisation d'un projet de recherche sur un problème relié à l'interprétation visuelle. À chaque année, les finissants organisent un colloque et présentent leurs travaux devant leurs pairs et les employeurs du milieu. Ils sont par ailleurs évalués par deux jurys pour le prix de la meilleure interprétation et le prix de la meilleure recherche.

Le recrutement des étudiants se fait à plusieurs niveaux en ce qu'il cible les candidats prêts à l'admission (les cours de langue, les programmes de sensibilisation), les candidats potentiellement intéressés à la formation (les regroupements de pratique et de recherche spécialisés en surdité), la sensibilisation du milieu de l'emploi (les employeurs) et l'information des jeunes sur la profession (les écoles primaires et secondaires). Nous présentons le programme dans des cours de langues

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(associations sociocommunautaires) et dans des programmes de sensibilisation à la surdité (cégep). Nous offrons des conférences sur les résultats de la recherche sur l'interprétation visuelle dans des milieux de la recherche spécialisés sur les questions de surdité (École d'orthophonie, instituts de réadaptation, centres de recherche en santé ou en neurosciences, etc.). Pour la sensibilisation des milieux professionnels québécois à l'intérêt de la formation, nous les invitons à assister à la présentation annuelle des travaux de recherche des finissants. Pour le recrutement à long terme, nous organisons à chaque année un atelier dans le cadre du programme SEUR (Sensibilisation aux Études, à l'Université et à la Recherche) s'adressant aux étudiants du secondaire. Nous rencontrons ponctuellement des classes d'élèves du primaire et du secondaire.

Le nombre d'inscriptions varie considérablement d'une année à l'autre. Depuis 2000, les données du Service de planification académique et de recherche institutionnelle de l'UQAM indiquent que de 2003 à 2013, le nombre de demandes au programme est en moyenne de 43 par année, pour une admission de 51 % d'entre eux, soit une moyenne de 22 admis par année. Selon le Bureau des diplômés de l'UQAM, un peu moins de la moitié des étudiants du programme obtiennent un diplôme, soit une moyenne de 10 étudiants/an. Par ailleurs, une analyse des chiffres de 1992 à 2002 montre une progression dans le nombre moyen d'étudiants qui obtiennent un diplôme par année. En effet, pour la première décennie des années diplômantes du programme (1992 à 2002), il y avait une moyenne de 7 étudiants/an. Nous attribuons cette hausse à la modification du programme (ajout d'un cours sur l'éthique, transformation du stage, révision des cours de linguistique), ainsi qu'à la multiplication et au rayonnement des recherches de l'équipe d'enseignants sur l'interprétation visuelle.

Hormis la déperdition naturelle à tout programme de formation, les raisons qui peuvent expliquer ce faible taux de 45 % de diplomation, peuvent être diverses. Cependant, notre connaissance du milieu et les récentes données sur l'embauche des interprètes (Parisot et Villeneuve, 2013), mettent en lumière d'une part, la difficulté pour les travailleurs d'obtenir un horaire à temps plein et d'autre part, le fait que le diplôme ne soit pas exigé à l'embauche, même si la plupart des employeurs québécois l'encouragent. Ces deux constats pourraient avoir une incidence importante sur la rétention des étudiants dans le programme et par conséquent sur le taux de diplomation. À titre d'exemple, cinq des étudiants de la cohorte actuelle ont été embauchés à leur première session au programme par un organisme offrant des services d'interprétation au niveau postsecondaire (pour les étudiants de cégep et d'université). Certains de ces étudiants n'avaient aucune d'expérience professionnelle et tous commençaient leur formation. Ce type de recrutement professionnel est fréquent dans le milieu de l'interprétation scolaire, habituellement au niveau primaire/secondaire.

Malgré ce faible taux d'inscription, les cours du programme sont offerts sur une base régulière. En effet, depuis les 11 dernières années, deux cours seulement ont été annulés,

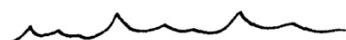
et ce en raison des perturbations occasionnées par la grève des étudiants en 2012, et celle des professeurs en 2010. Cette constance dans l'offre de cours malgré une fréquentation en deçà des moyennes cibles universitaires s'explique par la reconnaissance du statut particulier que l'UQAM reconnaît à ce programme. Cette reconnaissance de la nécessité de former les interprètes visuels s'inscrit dans la mission sociale fondamentale de l'UQAM, soit « servir les collectivités en mobilisant ses ressources et diffusant ses expertises aux partenaires des différents milieux économiques, professionnels et culturels et aux groupes sociaux ».

À notre avis, l'intégration d'un SRV à la palette de services offerts par les interprètes visuels pourrait avoir un effet bénéfique sur la visibilité de la profession, la reconnaissance de la formation et du

programme, et par conséquent sur l'augmentation à la fois des admissions et des diplômés. L'UQAM est actuellement prête d'une part à intégrer de nouveaux contenus sur le SRV à sa formation de base, dans chacun des cours de la formation actuelle, et d'autre part à intégrer de nouvelles problématiques de recherche spécifiques au SRV à la programmation actuelle au *Groupe de recherche sur la LSQ et le bilinguisme sourd*. Cette équipe de recherche, fondée en 1988, est étroitement liée au Certificat en interprétation visuelle et collabore étroitement avec le milieu pour le développement de savoirs spécifiques sur cette problématique.

En souhaitant que ces informations, combinées à celles apportées par mes collègues canadiens, vous fournissent un portrait plus complet de la situation. N'hésitez pas à me contacter pour tout besoin d'information complémentaire.

Cordiales salutations,



Anne-Marie Parisot, Ph. D.
Professeure titulaire
Département de linguistique
UQAM

Appendix C



Deaf Studies Program ASL - English Interpretation Program

TTY: 204-632-2910

Tel: 204-632-2196

Fax: 204-633-9884

Details about IEP

- The American Sign Language-English Interpretation Program (AEIP) at Red River College has been in existence since 1978. Throughout the past 35 years, we have seen our program grow and change to meet the needs of Manitobans. It began as a 10-week intensive program and is currently a 4-year joint degree program with the University of Manitoba.
- The first year of studies at Red River College is dedicated to the study of language development in ASL, Deaf culture, Deaf history, ASL literature, cross-cultural interactions and ASL linguistics. Upon successful completion of the first year of studies, an application process takes place for those who are interested in continuing their studies in the AEIP to become a professional interpreter.
- The AEIP successfully sees 7-8 students graduating out of a cohort that began with an average of 8-10 students their first year.

What you currently do to recruit students?

- Red River College hosts an annual Open House where we take the opportunity to showcase our program. As well, MAVLI participates in a number of career symposiums throughout the year at which time they too promote the interpreting profession.
- The instructors also present information at ASL evening classes to promote our program and talk about the possible career opportunities interpreting has to offer.
- The Deaf and interpreting communities hosts an ASL Fun Night once a month to foster an environment of learning and education surrounding the issues of ASL, Deaf awareness and interpreting career opportunities.

Have you seen growth in recent years (especially since VRS centres have been set up in Canada)?

- Although our enrollment in the first year is limited to 20 students, we steadily notice an increase in applications to the first year of our program yearly. That program, throughout recent years, is consistently at capacity.
- Similarly, the AEIP consistently enrolls on average 10 students in the first year and see 90% graduate in the final year.

Do you foresee more growth?

- Based on enrollment statistics and the number of successful graduates over the past 5 years, we at Red River College believe that our program will continue to grow steadily in the upcoming years.

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What is/are the barriers to more growth?

- Due to the fact that ASL-English Interpretation is a highly specialized profession and the Deaf Community is small in comparison to the general non-deaf population, public awareness of the need for interpretation services is challenging.
- In the context of Red River College the AEIP is a small program. As such, it is often difficult to secure funding to keep up with the continued technological and training needs for our staff and student population.

Do you or can you implement training specific to VRS?

- Our program is currently in the process of undergoing changes to incorporate the technological needs of the Deaf Community.
- Our program is presently in discussion with a local video relay interpretation service provider to collaborate in student training. We are hopeful that our students will begin practicum placement at their facility in the near future.
- Our program is confident that VRS training could be incorporated into our current program and are willing and happy to partner with the necessary participants to successfully train future interpreters.

Submitted by
Rick Zimmer
Coordinator

E102-2055 Notre Dame Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3H 0J9, <http://www.rrc.mb.ca>

Appendix D



American Sign Language Deaf Culture Studies / Sign Language Interpretation Programs University of Alberta Faculty of Education
Ed North 6-102 Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 2G5

November 8, 2013

Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada
105, 39012 Discovery Way
Squamish, BC, Canada
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avlic@avlic.ca

Re: CRTC - VRS Hearing

Lakeland College supports the establishment of, and ongoing commitment to, video relay services for all Canadians.

Lakeland College currently offers a two-year sign language interpretation diploma program, offered on-site at the University of Alberta, which incorporates training related to VRS settings. The program opened in 2008 and has since graduated 11 students in 2010, 9 students in 2012 and anticipates graduating 6 students in 2014.

Lakeland College recruits students through presentations at High Schools, Career Fairs, Open House, via Lakeland's website and in-house events. Lakeland College is committed to expanding programming and student capacity to accommodate the growing needs of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Communities, and is looking ahead to what might be required when VRS becomes a Canadian reality.

Lakeland College recognizes that Canadian VRS services are crucial for equivalent communication access and opportunities for Canadians to equally participate in personal and professional matters, locally and globally. Lakeland College looks forward to VRS services being offered to Canadian citizens.

Sincerely,

Jody Morrison
Program Facilitator
American Sign Language Deaf Culture Studies / Sign Language Interpretation Program

Appendix E

DOUGLAS COLLEGE
PO Box 2503 New Westminster BC
Canada V3L 5B2

New Westminster and Coquitlam
douglascollege.ca
604 527 5400



November 1, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

Program Information

The Program of Sign Language Interpretation at Douglas College was first established in 1988. The majority of students who enroll in the program have already completed an ASL and Deaf Studies Program to learn American Sign Language and gain an understanding of Deaf culture. In BC this program is a 10-month, full-time, immersion program at Vancouver Community College. The interpreting program at Douglas College is currently a two-year diploma program, however, based on the extensive education required we are currently considering extending the program to become a Bachelor of Arts in Sign Language Interpretation. Each year we accept 16 to 18 students and graduate, on average, 11 to 12 students. Over the last 25 years we have graduated approximately 300 students. The current system could be adapted to educate more students.

Student Recruitment

To recruit students, we work in conjunction with the BC interpreters' association, the Westcoast Association of Visual Language Interpreters (WAVLI). Public Relations people on the association board attend job fairs and visit beginner classes in ASL to speak about the profession and direct students to our program. The main difficulty in recruitment is getting information out to the general public that sign language interpreting is a career path that could be available to them. At present, most people learn about interpreting in a serendipitous way: they meet a deaf person, or see sign language being used in public and decide they want to learn the language. We have not noticed any growth which we would attribute solely to Sorenson centres in Canada. With improved advertising about interpreting as a career, and more full-time, permanent job opportunities, we believe more people would be interested in becoming interpreters.

VRS Interpreters

In the curriculum, we currently address VRS as one of the settings in which interpreters might work. Considering how to prepare interpreters to work in VRS, we feel that those who have good interpreting skills, an understanding of Deaf culture, and are ethical professionals will be able to adapt easily to the challenges of interpreting in the Video Relay setting. Graduates from Douglas College are ready for entry-level work. If we are able to offer a BA, we will be able to include more information about specific nuances of VRS work that would be beneficial to graduates choosing to work in that setting. Offering students the opportunity to experience a VRS-like situation by having some similar technology available to them while in the program could also heighten their interest in working in VRS.

The Program of Sign Language Interpretation at Douglas College supports the proposal to the CRTC that video relay services be made available to Deaf and hard-of hearing Canadians and non-deaf members of the public. As interpreters we have some insight into the needs expressed by Deaf people and it is very obvious to us that Deaf Canadians need VRS – it is an essential element for their communication in the twenty-first century.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Palmer, R.S.L.I.
Coordinator
Program of Sign Language Interpretation
Douglas College
palmerc@douglascollege.ca

Appendix F

ASL – English Interpreter Program, George Brown College

submitted by Phyllis Beaton Vazquez, MA
Program Coordinator and Professor
ASL - English Interpreter Program
George Brown College
Toronto, Ontario

Details about the IEP

The American Sign Language (ASL)-English Interpreter Program (AEIP) at George Brown College (GBC) was established in 1997, following the development of program standards by the College Standards and Accreditation Council (CSAC). The program standards committee included stakeholders from both the Deaf and ASL-English Interpreter community who provided input into curriculum development, admission criteria and vocational standards. The program is a 6 semester program (three years) and focuses on developing students' skills in English, ASL, translation, interpreting and Deaf culture knowledge. Many classes are in ASL and students also do community-based placements with working interpreters and Deaf mentors which give students the opportunity to apply classroom learning in the community to enhance their skill development.

The program includes screening of applicants' ASL and English skills prior to admission. Students may acquire the pre – requisite ASL skills through the college's one year ASL-Deaf Studies Program (ADSP), through classes offered by various community agencies and programs such as the Canadian Hearing Society and the Bob Rumball Centre for the Deaf, volunteer or work experience with Deaf persons or through Deaf family members and friends.

Applicants are required to demonstrate the required level of ASL and English skills and, Deaf culture through a screening panel comprised of both faculty and community members.

We have an annual intake of 30 students and approximately 12 – 15 graduates per year. Our graduates have a 100% employment rate after graduation.

What you currently do to recruit students?

We conduct monthly information sessions at the college in which faculty detail the program structure, admission requirements, courses, placements and entry criteria. All of this information is also posted on the GBC website. Applicants are also referred to us from ASL classes and programs throughout the country. We are listed in the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC) website as a recognized ASL – English interpreter program. We host information tables at the Ontario College Information Fair, and various other related community conferences and events.

Have you seen growth in recent years (especially since VRS centers have been set up in Canada)?

We have seen growth in the number of applicants interested in becoming an ASL – English interpreter. In addition, applicants are more fully aware of what is required for entry into the program.

Do you or can you implement training specific to VRS?

We have an ASL lab with computers equipped with internet access, webcams, software, video and voice recording capabilities to allow students to practice their ASL and interpreting skills. All of this can be used to simulate interpreting in video relay service environments.

We have the necessary resources in our faculty and stakeholders to provide a well-rounded training program for the community and the video relay services industry. Our program has the support of the Deaf and interpreter communities.

In our application to confer a degree be approved by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, we have developed a course specific to supporting interpreting through technology. The George Brown College ASL-English Interpreter Program is able to provide capacity to meet this demand in the near future once the CRTC approves the provision of Video Relay Services for the Deaf and non-Deaf communities.

Do you foresee more growth? What is/are the barriers to more growth?

Our program foresees a growth for interpreting services due to the demands of Deaf academics and Deaf professionals. With the implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the demand for skilled interpreters to provide interpreting services has increased. This has also resulted in an increase in the number of applicants to the program.

The AODA will directly contribute to significantly increasing demand for ASL-English Interpreter services in both private and public sectors. The shortage of qualified Interpreters is already acutely evident with the Ontario Interpreter Services (OIS) reporting that 30% of requests are denied due to unavailability of Interpreters. With the aging population, it is anticipated that the need for interpreters in both public and private sectors will only continue to grow in the years ahead.

The Government of Ontario supports the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in its laws, policies, programs and services. This is clearly outlined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005.

The AODA resulted in Ontario becoming the first Canadian jurisdiction to have disability legislation with the intent to have the province fully accessible by 2025. Several standards are defined within the AODA. For example, the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service applies to all organizations (public, private and non-profit) that provide goods or services either directly to the public or to other organizations in Ontario and that have one or more employees in Ontario. This includes consultants, manufacturers and wholesalers as well as other businesses and professional services

Currently 30% of requests made to the Canadian Hearing Society's Ontario Interpreting Services in the province of Ontario continue to go unfilled annually due to lack of interpreter availability. This does not only mean that we do not have enough "body" interpreters to fill in the requests but skills/experiences that interpreters are reportedly lacking especially when it comes to legal, justice, legislative, medical, mental health, and postsecondary educational settings. This is also true for private, broader public, and for non-profit sectors. There is a significant need for well-trained interpreters in the province to meet

the growing need for service. A higher level of education as the George Brown College's proposed undergraduate degree program will certainly provide an enhanced foundational knowledge base. Cheryl Wilson, Director, Ontario Interpreting Services, The Canadian Hearing Society.

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<http://www.cad.ca/telecommunications.php>

"About OAD." *Ontario Association of the Deaf*. Ontario Association of the Deaf, n.d. Web. 24 Oct. 2013.
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