

## Associate in Arts: Deaf Studies

### Item 1. Program Goals and Objectives

The Associate in Arts degree in Deaf Studies is a much-needed program within our college service area that will serve both students and the community while responding to changing conditions in the labor market and the nationwide demand for ASL courses that has spiked in recent years. This degree will prepare students to enter Bachelor's programs in fields such as ASL/English interpretation, deaf education, ASL instruction and social services, among others.

According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, the interpreting and translating profession is growing at a much faster than average rate for most occupations and is expected to grow 18% between 2016 and 2026 (Bureau of Labor and Statistics). The State of California Employment Development Department has similarly estimated a 20.4% growth rate for interpreters and translators, specifically noting the shortage of skilled interpreters and translators for the deaf that has existed for several years (EDD). There is also a shortage of teachers in special education, specifically deaf education; a field that the Bureau of Labor and Statistics expects to grow as fast as average for all occupations at a rate of 8% between 2016 – 2026.

Furthermore, a recent 2017 study conducted by The New American Economy (NAE) Companies showed that companies are now placing a high value on workers who possess second language fluency, and the demand for employees who know more than one language doubled in the previous five years. The Modern Language Association reported that of the top eight modern languages, ASL was the only one to show a positive change in enrollment growth (+19.1%) between 2009 – 2013 when all others declined, and has now replaced German as the third most-studied language in the U.S. OC is responding to this growing interest by offering ASL where access in our service area is limited for both college and high school students.

Providing this degree option to students fulfills the mission of Oxnard College by “providing multiple pathways to student success” and aligns with the college’s philosophy of offering programs that “reflect changing local, national, and international needs.” Students will finally receive acknowledgement for their completion of the coursework in our program, which to date they have gone without. Their degree can be mentioned on applications to university programs and further support them in advancing toward their educational goals.

Commensurate with the mission statement outlined in the California Education Code, an Associate in Arts in Deaf Studies will provide a 4-semester sequence of training in the language in addition to a culture course and general education requirements, that can be achieved within a two-year time frame. Each of our courses ASL R101 – R104 and ASL R110: Introduction to Deaf Studies are aligned with the CSU and UC systems and form the lower-division coursework for Bachelor's programs at these institutions. The program level Student Learning Outcomes are as follows:

- Students will be able to sustain a conversation in ASL that demonstrates comprehension of typical information conveyed in personal and social contexts, as defined by the ACTFL Listening Guidelines for Intermediate High proficiency.
- Students will be able to tell a story using ASL grammar, a broad range of vocabulary and elements of ASL story development that describes, in detail, the persons/objects involved and incidents that occurred.

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- Students will be able to recognize examples of audism and define how cultural bias presents itself in both the overt and systemic oppression of deaf and hard of hearing people.
- Students will be able to describe important events in Deaf History and identify key figures and their contributions to Deaf culture.

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### Item 2. Catalog Description

“The Associate in Arts in Deaf Studies degree program prepares interested students for a multitude of careers working with Deaf and hard of hearing people in fields such as Deaf Studies, ASL/English Interpretation, Deaf Education and social services by providing the foundation needed in American Sign Language to pursue these programs at the university level. A series of four courses in the language and a Deaf Studies course comprise the core requisites of the degree, which can be completed in two years along with fulfillment of general education requirements. Field experiences embedded within the coursework provide a deeper exploration into the culture and history of the Deaf community, as well as the complex phonocentric and audist systems which marginalize and oppress deaf people in public spaces. This critical exploration will expand recognition of Deaf people as a unique cultural group and prepare students to effectively work with and engage deaf people in ways that support and empower the community.

It should be noted that this degree alone is not adequate qualification to interpret or to work within most ASL-related professions. At minimum, a Bachelor’s degree is required to interpret, teach or work professionally with deaf children or adults in most fields. The A.A. in Deaf Studies will provide the necessary foundation to pursue these goals.

For those pursuing other majors who are interested in learning ASL for practical purposes, a separate Certificate of Achievement in ASL is offered for which only the core coursework is required. (*See ‘Certificate of Achievement in ASL’ in the Oxnard College catalog*).

Courses:

ASL R101: American Sign Language 1 (4 units)

ASL R102: American Sign Language 2 (4 units)

*Prerequisite: ASL R101*

ASL R103: American Sign Language 3 (4 units)

*Prerequisite: ASL R102*

ASL R104: American Sign Language 4 (4 units)

*Prerequisite: ASL R103*

ASL R110: Introduction to Deaf Studies (3 units)

At its inception, the A.A. in Deaf Studies will require the same core courses as the Certificate of Achievement in ASL but carry a different name as a means of distinguishing itself from the certificate program and targeting a specific group of students. The A.A. is specifically tailored toward students pursuing careers working with the deaf. While students majoring in other disciplines may shy away from pursuing a second Associate’s degree, a certificate may appeal to them as a more reasonable endeavor and something that could be tagged onto their diploma without too much added time. Thus, the distinctive branding of the programs is necessary despite the identical course offerings. That said, once the program establishes itself and courses begin to grow in enrollment and demand, new

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courses specifically tailored to those in the degree program who intend on pursuing careers working with the deaf would be a foreseeable addition to the requirements for the degree.

For a list of the program-level Student Learning Outcomes see Item 1, above.

### Item 3. Program Requirements

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Requirements	Dept. Name/#	Name	Units	Sequence
Required Courses (19 units)	ASL R101	American Sign Language 1	4	Yr 1, Fall
	ASL R102	American Sign Language 2 <i>prerequisite: ASL R101</i>	4	Yr 1, Spring
	ASL R103	American Sign Language 3 <i>prerequisite: ASL R102</i>	4	Yr 2, Fall
	ASL R104	American Sign Language 4 <i>prerequisite: ASL R103</i>	4	Yr 2, Spring
	ASL R110	Introduction to Deaf Studies <i>prerequisite: ASL R102</i>	3	Yr 2, Fall/Spring

Total Units Required: 19 units

Proposed Sequence:

Year 1, Fall	=	4 units		Year 1, Fall	=	4 units
Year 1, Spring	=	4 units		Year 1, Spring	=	4 units
Year 2, Fall	=	7 units	<i>or</i>	Year 2, Fall	=	4 units
Year 2, Spring	=	4 units		Year 2, Spring	=	7 units
<b>TOTAL UNITS:</b>		<b>19 units</b>		<b>TOTAL UNITS:</b>		<b>19 units</b>

\*Students must begin ASL R101 during Fall semester in order to complete the series and earn the Certificate in four consecutive semesters, *unless* 103 and 104 move to being offered each semester *or* ASL 102 is offered during Summer.

\*ASL R110 may be taken after ASL R102 is completed (either concurrently with ASL R103 or ASL R104) if offered during both Fall and Spring.

**General Education requirements:** Students will be allowed to choose the general education pattern that best aligns with their educational goals from those offered by Oxnard College including the Oxnard College General Education pattern, CSU GE-Breadth, or IGETC.

Total required major units	19
Oxnard College General Education	29
Double-counted units	9
Free Electives Required	21
Total units required for AA Degree	60

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Total required major units	19
CSU GE-Breadth units	39
Double-counted units	9
Free Electives Required	11
Total units required for the AA:	60

OR

Total required major units:	19
IGETC units:	37
Double-counted units:	9
Free Electives Required	13
Total units required for the AA:	60

### Item 4. Master Planning

The development of an Associate in Arts in Deaf Studies is a specifically noted objective of the Letter's Department in Oxnard College's Strategic Plan, which aligns with the college's Institutional Objective to "develop and implement multiple guided pathways and make them easily accessible for students by 2022." More broadly, implementing a degree in Deaf Studies fulfills the college's overarching initiatives I – IV by "actively identifying current and future students' educational needs" and "strengthening the college's response to those needs" while "focusing on institutional effectiveness" and "actively partnering with the community" (connecting students with the community being an integral part of the program).

This program could be implemented with the team of instructors currently employed at Oxnard College, which includes one full-time faculty member and the current pool of part-time instructors. Instituting this program would come at no additional cost to the District since no additional instructors would be required.

### Projections

We project 10 students to graduate with an A.A. in Deaf Studies in the first couple of years of the program, but hope to see this number increase as it gains visibility and interest.

Dramatic drops in enrollment between ASL 1 – 4 sparked an effort to collect data with the purpose of shedding light on the factors fueling this trend. The lead faculty in the ASL department conducted a survey of former ASL students regarding their experience with ASL at Oxnard College. 64 of the 107 students who responded indicated that they are no longer enrolled in an ASL course at OC. Of these students, 52% completed only ASL 1 and 25% went only as far as ASL 2. Only 23% continued into the upper-level courses (see Figure 1 below). 50% of virtually all those who completed the survey stated that they either do not plan to continue taking ASL beyond their current course, plan to take it sometime at a distant date in the future, or plan to take it at a different institution (see Fig. 2). The decrease indicated by this data is consistent with the decrease seen in enrollment throughout the series of courses offered at OC, although the numbers from this survey actually paint a healthier picture than reality. While we consistently fill an average of 5

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sections of ASL 1 each semester, we only offer one section of ASL 2. Even more dismal are the numbers in ASL 3 and 4 (each of which are offered only once a year, alternating terms) that have barely approached 50% enrollment (although we saw an unusual and substantial rise in enrollment for this course Fall 2018). Considering that all classes are capped at 35 students, our ASL 3 and 4 courses are enrolling only ~12% of the number of students taking ASL 1, on average.

**Question #2: If you are not currently enrolled in an ASL course, what is the highest level of ASL that you have completed?**

Number of responses: 64

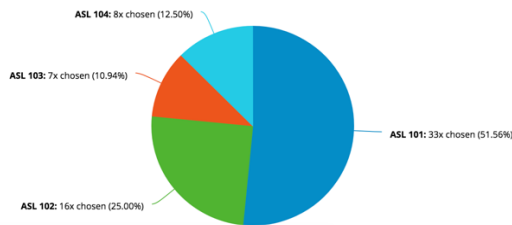


Fig. 1

**Question #4: Do you have plans to continue to the next level of ASL?**

Number of responses: 104

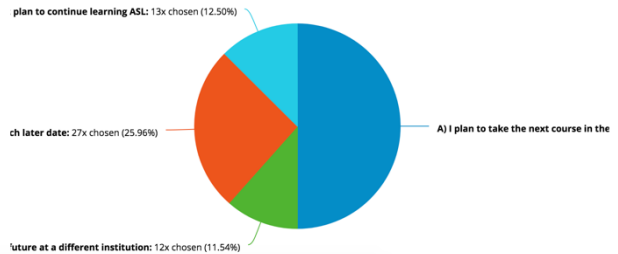


Fig. 2

In an effort to glean a better understanding of this steep drop in enrollment from ASL 1 – ASL 4, students who identified as no longer taking courses in ASL were asked to define their decision not to continue with the language. ~76% stated they “would like to continue taking ASL at OC but it does not fit into their Educational Plan/schedule.” Only 8% stated they were no longer interested in continuing and 10% selected that unavailable or limited course offerings played a role in their decision (see Fig. 3).

**Question #5: If you chose B - D in the previous question (that you do not have immediate plans to continue taking ASL at Oxnard College), please choose the answer that best reflects your decision NOT to continue with the language.**

Number of responses: 62

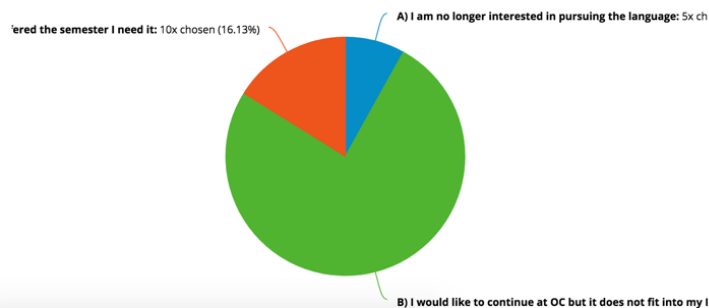


Fig. 3

When further probed as to how a degree option may or may not increase their likelihood of continuing with the language, an astounding 89% of 102 respondents stated that they would be “very likely to continue with ASL” or “likely” to continue if an A.A. in Deaf Studies were offered at Oxnard College (see Fig. 4). This data provides compelling evidence that an Associate in Arts in Deaf Studies degree option would boost enrollment, particularly in courses beyond ASL R101.

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**Question #7: If an Associate in Arts for Transfer (AA-T) in Deaf Studies were offered by Oxnard College, how likely would you be to continue with the required courses to earn a degree?**

Number of responses: 102

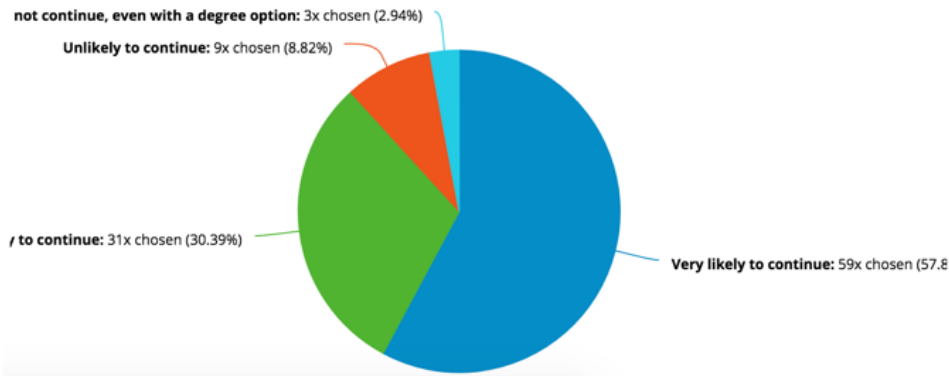


Fig. 4

The following are a small sampling of actual student comments from this same survey, which demonstrate a desire for Oxnard College to offer a degree program:

“I never had exposure to ASL until my first class at Oxnard College as a Condor Student. I am enjoying the class that I plan to further my education in ASL and hopefully have a career in the ASL field.”

“I absolutely LOVE this class!! The only reason I am going to Pierce College next semester is because they offer an AA in Deaf Studies and Oxnard College does not. I really hope it can be offered soon so future don't have to go all the way to Pierce to get their AA.”

“I really enjoyed taking the ASL course. I would love to continue on with the remaining ASL courses. I hope that in the future there is a certificate and degree that focuses on the deaf language.”

“I would also like to have more higher ASL classes because I would love to go farther with this language and become fluent...This culture and language is a beautiful and fascinating to learn. If we can get more classes and an emphasis to graduate with it would make me want to continue my sign language journey here, but since it's not I'm going to have to look into a 4 year that offers this.”

### Item 6. Place of Program in Curriculum/Similar Programs

- a) **Do any active inventory records need to be made inactive or changed in connection with the approval of the proposed program? If yes, please specify.**

No, there are not any active inventory records that will need to be made inactive or changed in connection with the approval of the proposed program.

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- b) Does the program replace any existing program(s) on the college's inventory? Provide relevant details if this program is related to the termination or scaling down of another program(s).**

No, the program will not replace any existing program on the college's inventory.

- c) What related programs are offered by the college?**

There are no other related programs offered by the college, but an Associate of Arts in Deaf Studies is being simultaneously proposed.

### **Item 7. Similar Programs at Other Colleges in Service Area**

At present, no other college in the Ventura County Community College District offers an A.A. in Deaf Studies or a related degree or certificate. No ASL courses are being offered at Moorpark College and Ventura College has limited their offerings to 3-unit ASL 1 and ASL 2 courses, without advanced class options. Pierce College is the closest institution offering a degree program in ASL Interpretation but is outside our college service area and the 38-mile distance from Oxnard would not be a reasonable commute. Santa Barbara City College does offer a wide range of courses but does not currently offer a degree or certificate in ASL or an ASL-related field and is also a 42-mile distance from Oxnard.

Oxnard College did offer an A.A. in ASL/English Interpretation several years ago, however this program did not yield a significant number of graduates as it was difficult to adequately prepare students to begin interpreting professionally having only completed a two-year program. Responding to this nationwide problem, standards in the field of professional interpreting have risen in recent years and the regulating body which certifies interpreters at the national level now requires applicants to hold a Bachelor's degree in order to take the National Interpreter Certification exam. Thus, students are now advised to pursue Interpreter Training Programs (ITPs) at 4-year universities. The coursework within our A.A. program will provide students the foundation needed in the language and culture to enter into interpreting and other Bachelor's-level programs in Deaf Studies.

All of Oxnard's ASL courses, as well as the Deaf Studies course, have been articulated with the CSU and UC system for transfer as well as on a course-by-course basis in related majors. California State University, Northridge (CSUN) is the closest CSU that offers a Bachelor's degree in Deaf Studies and all of the lower division requirements in their program are articulated with Oxnard College's ASL courses, allowing students to seamlessly transfer into this program.