

**CSUN Deaf Studies Program
From 1983 to Present:
Struggles & Challenges**

Authors:

Patrick Boudreault, Jordan Eickman, Lawrence Fleischer, and Genie Gertz

Introduction

In November 2008, it will be exactly twenty-five years since the Deaf Studies program at California State University, Northridge (CSUN) was formally established. Lawrence Fleischer, CSUN Department of Deaf Studies program chair, presents the following history of the Department. This history includes the eight-year struggle-laden embryonic period between 1975 and 1983, so Deaf Studies at CSUN has actually been in existence for a period of thirty-three years.

The Deaf Studies program initially began under the auspices of the Department of Special Education within Deaf Education. When Fleischer started teaching at CSUN in 1972, he taught within the Deaf Education graduate program. His students did not have sufficient ASL fluency or knowledge about the Deaf-World. Thus, courses were added to address these needs. The amount of added courses made the two-year graduate program turn into a four-year graduate program. This was unfeasible, so two years of the program were moved to the undergraduate level and this led to the creation of the BA degree program. All this was done with the aim to assist future teachers of deaf children.

CSUN: 1975-1976

Between 1975 and 1976, Fleischer visualized and developed the program's initial conceptual framework. This vision had a B.A. in Sign Language with three tracks of study: 1) sign language interpreting, 2) sign language teaching, and 3) sign language research, and a minor in sign language. However, this vision was more appropriate for a Masters' degree program rather than a Bachelor's degree program. At the time of design, Fleischer was more concerned with fulfilling basic needs rather than with the degree level.

Formal Establishment of the Educational Policy Committee's Subcommittee

This proposal was then presented to the university, which reacted with the attitude of "What is this? We have never heard of this idea at any other school" and rebuffed the proposal. This led to the formation of a subcommittee of the Educational Policy Committee (EPC—the committee at CSUN focusing on university-wide curriculum), after the EPC initially declined to deal with the proposal.

The subcommittee focused on the rationale behind the program's establishment, its structure, organization, and future, the potential courses to be offered, the people to be involved, and what the sign language major entailed. At that time, the program was named Sign Language Studies, rather than Deaf Studies.

Another issue was that ASL was viewed as a fad that would soon fade away. At that time at CSUN ASL was known as Ameslan—Lou Fant's term (Fant 1972).

The subcommittee was charged with investigating these topics and in bringing Ursula Bellugi to present before the subcommittee as a response to the subcommittee's skepticism. The first subcommittee meeting took place on March 2, 1978. The pivotal meeting with Bellugi occurred on March 30, 1978. Fant was also present at that meeting (Sakharoff 1978).

Bellugi informed the subcommittee of several significant points regarding ASL, including that ASL has an internal structure and that ASL and spoken languages have parallels in structural similarities. The subcommittee took on board and accepted these points.

Final Proposal to CSU

After the initial idea was developed in 1975, struggling with and running into roadblocks to the program's acceptance at various university positions, finally getting a committee—actually, the subcommittee—set up in order to challenge the university's resistance. Putting forth the formal proposal which was considered meritorious led to the formation of yet another subcommittee. This indicated a lack of trust from the university due to the fear of the program being something “just made up” because of the lack of other existing similar programs. In 1979, the idea of having an ASL/Deaf Studies program was finally accepted.

Approval of Bachelor Degree Program in Deaf Studies at CSUN, November 1983

However, California was experiencing a recession and no new programs were to be established at that time. In 1983, Fleischer was informed that the California State University (CSU where CSUN is one of 23 campuses within the CSU system as of 2008) authority was now ready to accept the final proposal for the program. The proposal was submitted on March 15, 1983. In November 1983, the CSU announced that the Deaf Studies degree program was accepted. It took eight years of struggle to achieve this.

At the time of the Deaf Studies program's establishment, there were students who already were “Deaf Studies” majors, but who were actually not labeled as Deaf Studies majors but rather as “Special Majors”. This group moved forward and became the first graduating Deaf Studies class in December 1993 as the old major name was discarded in favor of Deaf Studies.

Four Generations of the Deaf Studies Program Curriculum

CSUN's Deaf Studies program curriculum is now in its fourth generation. The first generation curriculum, developed during the embryonic stage, was modified to become second generation shortly afterwards just after the approval of the degree program and became effective in Fall 1984, as the curriculum was not exactly to the department's liking after initial experience.

The change from the second to third generation curriculum took place after a longer gap from 1984 to 1992. The main difference between the second and third generation curriculums was the structuring of courses within the program.

The leap to the fourth generation curriculum officially took place in the beginning of the 2007-2008 academic year, and also saw a good number of new courses being added to the program. Two significant changes occurred with the fourth generation curriculum: 1) the ASL requirements were raised to require two courses above ASL IV level and 2) more Deaf Studies content courses were required, due to prior experience with students of the previous two curriculum generations. It was felt that these students were "unfinished products" who had yet to thoroughly absorb and grasp Deaf Studies material.

Deaf Studies Achieving Departmental Status: 1994

In 1983, the program broadened its scope as Fleischer was named the coordinator and the program was named the Interdisciplinary BA program with a seven-member committee representing different departments in the university and housed within the College of Education. In 1994, the program became autonomous, and not subject to inter-departmental influences on decisions regarding the Deaf Studies curriculum. Between 1983 and 1994, for example, representatives from the Sociology, Psychology, and Communicative Disorders departments came to the program and gave feedback. It was a very difficult struggle at times to reconcile the program's vision with these representatives. If their feedback was not accepted, the program would not change until their approval was obtained.

In 1994, even though autonomy through being a department was achieved, quick change could not take place because the faculty of Deaf Studies needed to ascertain the right direction to go in. This meant patience and slow, gradual change.

Deaf Studies Concentrations

The previous discussion covered the program's core courses, which are required of all Deaf Studies majors. The program has several concentrations which allow students to specialize in their desired future line of work. The second and third generation program concentrations were:

- I. Communication Sciences & Services
- II. Language & Culture
- III. Human Services
- IV. Special Option

There are more concentrations in the fourth generation program, with each one more clearly and specifically defined, as the second and third generation program concentrations were more broadly defined. An example of this is that Communication Sciences & Services really was the Interpreting concentration but also covering some aspects of the speech/language pathology program. The fourth generation program concentration list reflects that more accurately. The fourth generation program concentrations are:

- I. ASL/English Interpreting
- II. ASL & ASL Literature
- III. Pre-Deaf Education
- IV. Deaf Community Services
- V. Deaf Cultural Studies
- VI. Special Option

Student Statistics

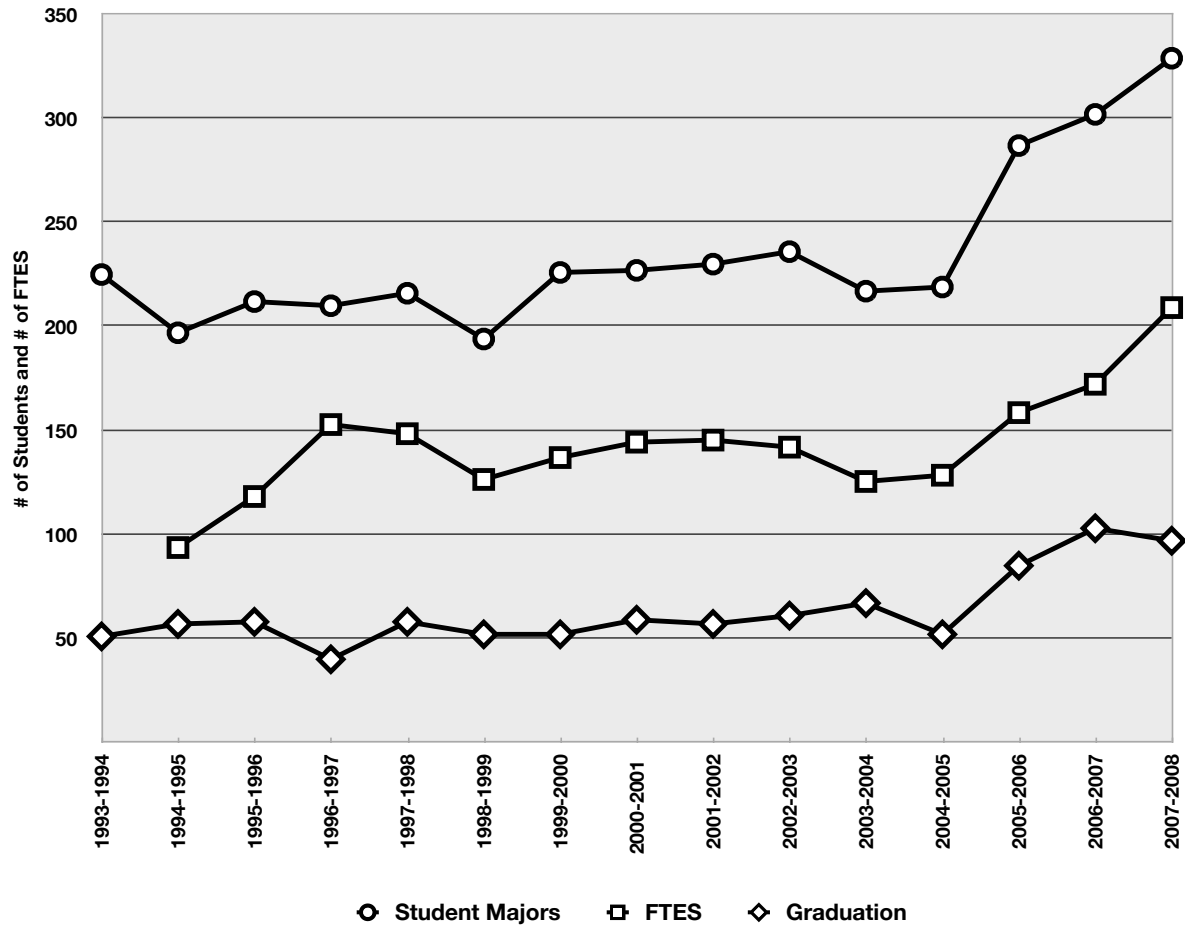
This section discusses the composition of our current students and presents statistics compiled by Patrick Boudreault. The collection of historical data regarding our students was difficult. Post-data compilation dictated that our report reflects 1994-onwards as no data was collected prior to 1994. The following statistics are intended to give a picture of our student body.

Enrollment Rate

In Spring 2008, the Department had approximately 320 students. About ten percent of those students are deaf (approximately 30). Figure 1 illustrates our program's student enrollment, Full-Time Equivalent Students (FTES), and graduation rates from the 1993-1994 Academic Year (AY) until the present.

Figure 1.

Deaf Studies Program Enrollment and Graduation Rate: 1993-2008



Between the 1993-1994 and 2004-2005 AYs, the number of students in our program fluctuated between 194 and 236 students. During the last three AYs (2005-2006 to the present), the number of students has dramatically increased to the current number of 329 students. This number does not include students who take ASL courses to fulfill elective requirements or their curiosity, or for their enjoyment. Those students who are counted are degree-seeking in Deaf Studies.

A similar jump in the number of our department's FTES occurred over the same range of AYs. From 1993-1994 to 2004-2005, our FTES ranged between 93.73 and 152.87 FTES. During the last AY (2007-2008), our FTES reached a record of 209.1 FTES.

Likewise, between the 1993-1994 and 2004-2005 AYs our graduating classes ranged between 40 and 67 students. Since then, there has been a similar increase, with the class of 2007 establishing a department record of 103 students, breaking the 100 student barrier for the first time.

Ethnicity

CSUN is one of the most diverse campuses statewide in California. Our demographics reflect a very diverse student body. Our campus itself has 35,000 students. Northridge, where our campus is, is part of the San Fernando Valley (SFV), which itself is part of Los Angeles.

Boudreault's statistical analysis shows how our student body reflects that diversity. Our student body includes Caucasian, Hispanic, African-American, Asian-American, and other ethnic groups along with International students. Our student body is approximately 50% Caucasian and 50% of all other ethnic groups. For the 2007-2008 AY, Hispanics, at 22% of our student body, comprise the highest non-Caucasian ethnic group.

Since the 2004-2005 AY, the number of Caucasian students has increased. This is thought to be attributable to the general increase in our student body from other parts of the USA which has maintained the general proportion of white students in the Deaf Studies program. Among other ethnicities, one significant increase has occurred beginning with the 2006-2007 AY—the number of Hispanic students.

Gender Distribution

Over time, male students have remained steady (between 16 to 44 students). Over the last three AYs, the number of female students sharply increased to reach 289 students (as of the 2007-2008 AY). Prior to the 2004-2005 AY, the number of female students ranged from 186 to 209 students. Thus, the great majority, ranging from 85% to 91% over various AYs, of our students continue to be female. The student gender distribution in the 2007-2008 AY is 289 females and 44 males, or 87% female and 13% male.

Age Mean

The majority of our students are between the ages of 21 and 25 years. This is expected as students enter the university and our program from community colleges and generally complete their last two years of their major studies with us, as they are General Education (GE) certified prior to coming to CSUN.

Curriculum: Pre-2007

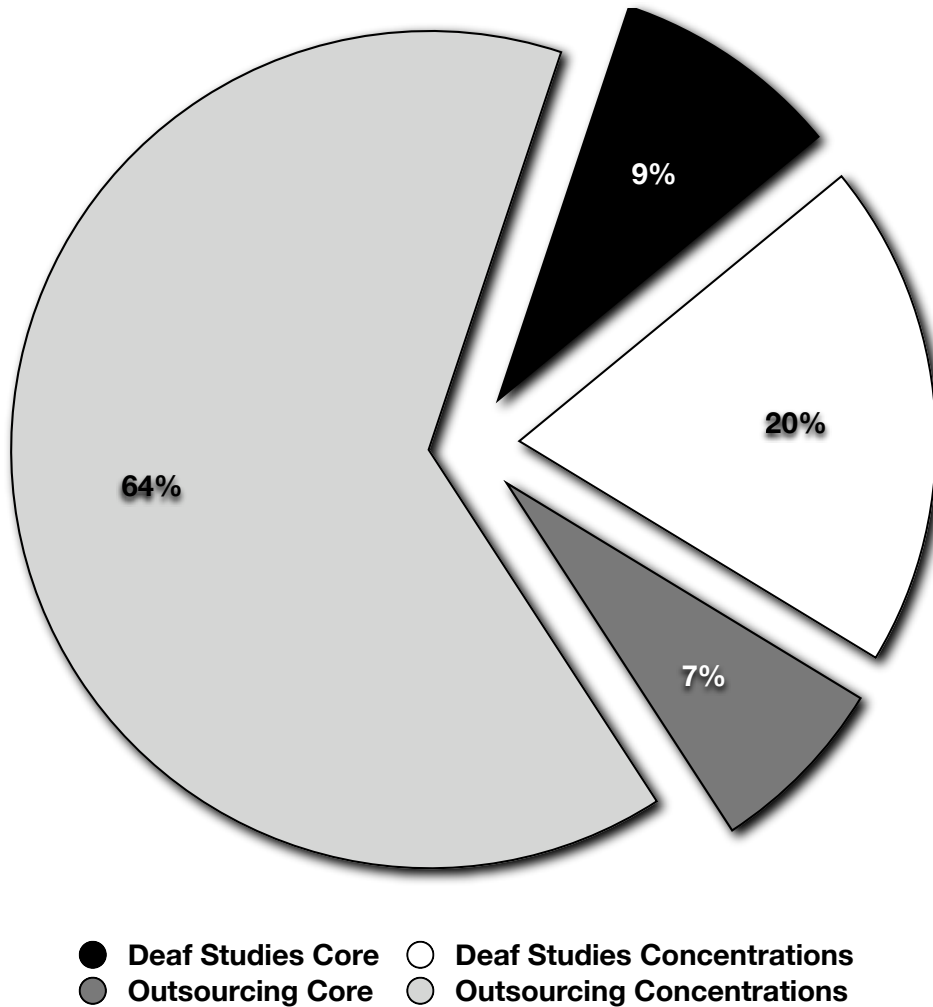
Fleischer previously described the courses offered under our previous four concentration program and the fourth-generation, six concentration program. Figures 2 and 3 look at who has had control over our program courses. Allowing courses offered in other departments outside our program to be used to meet our program requirements is termed as outsourcing.

Figure 2 describes courses offered both within and outside the Department prior to 2007, covering the second and third generation program while excluding the first

generation program. The courses are categorized by whether they are core or concentration courses.

Figure 2.

Courses Offered Pre-2007: Deaf Studies vs. Department Outsourcing



The core Deaf Studies courses are roughly equally split between those offered within the Department (9%) and other courses offered outside in other departments (7%) such as linguistics or audiology. As for concentration-related courses, 20% were offered within the Department and 64% were offered outside the Department. This means a total of 29% of Deaf Studies program courses were offered within the Department and 71% of Deaf Studies program courses were offered outside the Department.

Curriculum: Post-2007

Figure 3 describes courses offered both within and outside the Department after 2007, covering the fourth generation program. As in Figure 2, the courses are categorized by whether they are core or concentration courses.

Figure 3.
Courses Offered Post-2007: Deaf Studies vs. Department Outsourcing

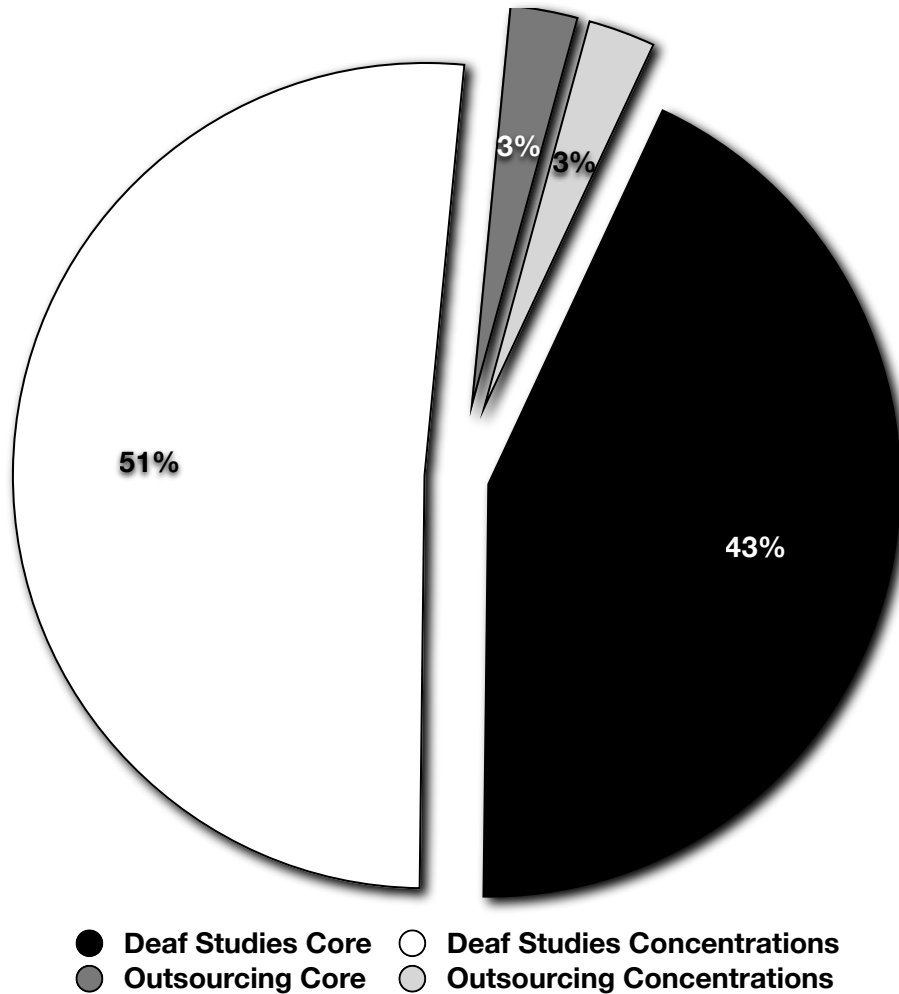


Figure 3 indicates that the total amount of outsourced Deaf Studies courses has been reduced to 6%. This represents a change in becoming Deaf-centered. Again, alluding to the discussion taking place regarding Deaf identity centralization, this is a shift to what is really Deaf people's center. Through working within the context of university politics, change was effected over the years with the ultimate goal of establishing a Deaf-centered program. Figure 3 clearly illustrates and tells us what our Department is doing in establishing our repertoire of courses.

Student Learning Outcomes

An overview of our Department's eight Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) is given by Jordan Eickman. The eight SLOs set out the expectations for incoming students in terms of what they will learn and which skills they will acquire before graduating. Also, as part of the accreditation process required by the university, our college and each department within our college have their own SLOs. Appendix 1 lists our SLOs.

The university requires assessment of our SLOs. This basically means measuring the degree of our students' success in achieving each SLO. For example, our most recent assessment measured ASL proficiency. Our advanced ASL course handed out an assignment which required students to go to our ASL Lab to record their own ASL-produced responses to a list of questions. A set of randomly drawn student responses was then assessed by faculty using a rubric. Rubric ratings were then compiled into a statistical report indicating students' success and non-success and then sent to the university.

Department-Sponsored Community Events

Genie Gertz describes in detail the many significant Department-sponsored community events that have taken place over the years.

The principle behind "if the mountain will not go to Mohammed, Mohammed himself must go to the mountain" applies to our department. Our teaching of many courses, in itself, will not fully support and assist students in succeeding in meeting our SLOs. We must provide add-on learning activities. Classroom learning must be supplemented by and connected with the community.

This is because Deaf Studies, itself, is community-oriented and community-based. Understanding the purpose of community, the purpose of Deaf people, and the purpose of activism is a must. Related to our discussion earlier during the 2008 Deaf Studies Today! conference during M. J. Bienvenu's keynote presentation about Deaf identity centralization (Bienvenu 2008), it must be understood that we, the Department of Deaf Studies, centralize and establish our Deaf identity and Deaf principles. From there, our students can learn how to be allies by showing appropriate respect of and understanding of our Deaf principles. Therefore, we must bring together learning and the community. The events we tend to host illustrate how we establish this connection.

Deafestival

One example is the annual Deafestival that began in 1990. Each year, Deafestival typically focuses on a different theme. The underlying goal is to celebrate language, art, and poetry. For example, the 1996 Deafestival focused on Deaf folklore. The 1998

edition focused on an original Deaf play. The 2003 Deafestival was centered on two different events with interchanging themes, “Art in ASL”—ASL poetry and “ASL in Art”—ASL produced as artwork. The 2001 celebration was titled “Deaf First”. The most important feature of the 2001 poster is the design’s focus toward the center—meaning we must focus on the Deaf center. Various topics are distributed around the poster’s center. Those closest to the poster’s center represent what is the most cherished, the most important to the Deaf center, while those farther away from the poster’s center represent those that are furthest away from the Deaf center. The furthest topics are mainstreaming and sign systems, which are not connected with the Deaf center. So, that is expressed through different forms.

Deaf Studies-Supported Conferences at CSUN

The Department hosted an all-day Deaf Women Conference in Fall 1996. Again, the conference poster has Deaf art within it. The trees represent signs for the different conference themes: communication, understanding, building, and reaching out. For the all-day conference, different speakers were brought in. Throughout the day, discussions were held and attendees interacted with each other. That again emphasizes the connection between classroom learning and the community, through seeing and understanding. The conference also both attracted Deaf community members and was provided for the Deaf community because they are part of that process.

Also, the department hosted a three-day Deaf film event from April 7 to 9, 2005, which focused on the past, present, and future of Hollywood films and Deaf films. The event also included an analysis of and discussion on how the hearing media has portrayed Deaf characters and the meaning of Deaf films. This event included both people who have worked or acted within the mainstream media and people who are exclusively within the Deaf media, including Deaf filmmakers, those focusing on independent Deaf-centered films.

Biennial JASK Program

JASK, short for “Just ASK”, is our biennial Deaf Awareness Month. Each edition of JASK focuses on a specific theme. Guest presenters are brought to CSUN and faculty, staff, and students collaborate to host various socio-cultural events to raise on-campus awareness of and celebrate Deaf culture. JASK originally started out as a week, but later was stretched out to a month, after the realization that only a week was not enough time to carry out a program of satisfactory content.

For example, the 2007 JASK program focused on the Spirit of Deaf Leadership. Presenters were invited to address various topics focusing on Deaf leadership and the meaning of Deaf leadership in different areas such as education, social service, and sports. Sometimes, as for the 2007 JASK program, JASK presenters also overlap as part of our Lecture Series. The 2007 JASK program presenters are included in Appendix 2 which lists the Department’s Lecture Series since 2005.

Lecture Series

Since 1980, the Department has hosted various guest presenters within its Lecture Series. Guest presenters visit campus to enrich our students' learning. Oftentimes, a class session from several concurrent Deaf Studies content courses are "plugged into" a lecture. Others within the CSUN and local Deaf community also benefit from attending these lectures. Appendix 2 lists lectures occurring since 2005 as part of the Department's Lecture Series.

A notable recent lecture was Donalda Ammons' presentation, *The Gallaudet Revolution II: An Insider's Perspective*, on the recent Gallaudet protests from "behind the scenes" as a Gallaudet alumnus, faculty member, and a member of the FSSA (Faculty, Staff, Student, and Alumni) group. Her enlightening explanation of the Gallaudet protests is another example of connecting what we see with a real-life person and real experiences, with an emphasis on real life experience.

Another noteworthy lecture was Gil Eastman's *The Importance of Etymology in the Dictionary of ASL*. A moving, poignant fact about Eastman's lecture is that it was his final one before passing away and we feel fortunate he came to CSUN.

International Lecture Series

Every year the department brings onto campus an international Deaf guest presenter. Again, Deaf Studies' scope is not limited to the United States, but rather is international in scope and international exchanges do take place. We often discuss that Deaf people themselves are "global citizens", so it is important to show the connection with that. Appendix 3 lists the international Deaf guest presenters that the department has hosted.

Stone Deaf Play Production

Stone Deaf, our Department-produced play, stage-presented on April 21 and 22, 2006, is about the language oppression Deaf people have experienced. The play's DVD was screened at the 2008 Deaf Studies Today! conference. Again, this is another example of how the Department documents Deaf people's experience through different genres. The project has migrated online at www.stonedeaftplay.com for the public's education and benefit.

Deaf Studies Association

We also have the Deaf Studies Association where students become involved, and hold their own social activities and organize an annual Silent Weekend, but at the same time support Department-hosted events.

So, in closing, the entire point of describing these Department-sponsored events is illustrating the connection of academic learning with the Deaf community. Including community-based learning within academic learning pulls everything together. In some ways we, as a department, end up doing everything. Other colleges, like Gallaudet or the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) have departments specializing in various content areas (ie: theatre, art, linguistics, etc.), while we cover all these various content areas together within our department because of our belief that we must connect academic learning with the Deaf community. This means our department is deeply committed to our belief in the vision of Deaf Studies.

Struggles & Challenges: Past

In this section, Fleischer discusses various struggles and challenges the program has faced in the past, is facing in the present, and will face in the future. Commentary regarding each struggle and challenge is given. Three examples for each time—past, present, and future—are addressed.

Our program has faced struggles, mighty struggles. These struggles are not to be considered trivial. Much sweat and hard work has been required to achieve results.

The following set of past struggles and challenges occurred prior to the program's establishment:

Struggle: ASL is a fad.

Challenge: Information on ASL is not widely available.

Commentary: As a solution, Ursula Bellugi was brought to CSUN to attest about ASL.

Struggle: Wisdom questioned for an esoteric program in the university.

Challenge: No other Deaf Studies program for comparison.

Commentary: A long gestation period (8 years). If not for the recession at that time, the gestation period would be shortened to 5 years.

Struggle: Different types of deafness into one pot of Deaf Studies.

Challenge: Cultural description of Deaf people nearly nonexistent.

Commentary: One of the representatives from different departments that came to us was a hard of hearing sociology professor who did not buy into Deaf Studies at all. This is one of the different views about Deaf Studies that Fleischer had to put up with, as at that time in the 1970's there were no supporting publications to support Deaf-centered Deaf Studies. This led to the gradual change throughout the four generations of programs, with the first generation program's peculiar set-up, the second and third generations being a bit closer to the ideal, and finally the fourth generation reaching the Deaf-centered ideal with Deaf Studies having true ownership of the program.

Struggles & Challenges: Present

The present struggles and challenges the Department is experiencing are:

Struggle: Participation in university life generally difficult.

Challenge: Direct communication with non-signing people often limited.

Commentary: Retention, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) is a fact and a feature of university life. Out of the thirty-five thousand people at CSUN, the four Deaf faculty within our Department and a handful of other deaf individuals on campus are not completely understood by the hearing academic on-campus community. Direct communication with hearing colleagues is not possible as we depend on sign language interpreters. When interpreters are unavailable, proceedings have to be put on hold or CART used, and neither option is desirable. Our hearing colleagues look at us as different from their way of interacting with each other.

Struggle: Accomplishments by Deaf professors not valued.

Challenge: Scholarship assessed for college professors still traditional.

Commentary: Our department recognizes the importance of involving the Deaf community. For example, Gertz has put in much effort and work in organizing the numerous Department-sponsored events benefiting the Deaf community. Our hearing colleagues do not realize the true value of these events. Fleischer has had to defend the importance of these events, particularly as the connection with the Deaf community leads to a better understanding of each other. If paper-based publications were produced, they would not be widely understood by or beneficial to the Deaf community. The Department puts the Deaf community first, and helps and supports the Deaf community's growth. As the Deaf community becomes more knowledgeable and comfortable with written English-based literacy, we can shift to a more research-oriented focus.

Struggle: Level of participation in committees/activities strongly tied to interpreters.

Challenge: Finding qualified interpreters to match Deaf professors.

Commentary: CSUN has a large number of deaf people working on-campus—faculty, staff, administrators, and students. Competition is high for interpreter manpower, sometimes interpreters are taken away from CSUN by other job opportunities. At times, this means an interpreter is assigned to us that does not match our level of ASL or cannot understand us, which is frustrating. This illustrates how we feel about our effort to be involved on-campus—it is a struggle.

Struggles & Challenges: Future

The struggles and challenges the Department will face in the future are:

Struggle: Less resources for more students.

Challenge: Additional resources harder to obtain.

Commentary: How can the number of faculty remain the same while the number of students continues to increase? This is a difficult dilemma. It is possible to trigger a university procedure to cap the number of students, but this will create more work for the faculty. A large number of student applications (ranging from 150 to 300 applications) will have to be screened and justification given for each student's selection or rejection. This makes the enrollment cap untenable for our program.

Struggle: Long process to establish a new program-Master's degree in Deaf Studies.

Challenge: Request for new faculty doubly difficult.

Commentary: Our program has the Master's degree program of study visualized and ready. However, in California, it takes time for a degree program to go through the university process to become established and to begin functioning. This process will happen successfully with our program. The more difficult problem is financing the Master's degree program's cost. Overcoming this will mean going through the same experience as when establishing the Bachelor's degree program. The current number of four full-time faculty members is insufficient as the four are already fully occupied with running the Bachelor's degree program. Hiring more faculty members is necessary.

Struggle: Lower priority for a smaller population.

Challenge: Number not a deciding factor.

Commentary: Yes, our university is very diverse. In Los Angeles, there is a large Hispanic sector of the population, and the funding focus is thus geared toward the Hispanic population. The Deaf population is smaller and more dispersed, resulting in less funding and an attitude of "this will be dealt with later on".

The Department's Stance on Social Activism

The CSUN Deaf Studies faculty has agreed that the Department will partake in social activism. We do not deal with the issue of being "neutral" and just teaching. When we know something is not right, we will do something about it. The CSUN Women's Studies department also has the same social activism philosophy. Other departments will cover both viewpoints of an issue, but Deaf Studies will take a position, and this clearly indicates our activism.

The Department's Stance on ASL courses and General Education

Our Department does teach ASL courses. Our new program requires two ASL courses above ASL IV. Thus, the number of ASL I, II, and III courses offered will diminish and more students will be transferring in from other colleges where they have taken ASL I-III.

However, our ASL courses are not part of CSUN's General Education (GE) courses. We do not want our ASL courses to be part of GE for several reasons. Firstly, if our ASL courses were part of GE, the number of students taking ASL courses would overwhelm our department and redirect our resources toward ASL teaching, effectively making us an "ASL factory." Secondly, many community colleges already offer ASL courses. Thus, we want to focus on Deaf Studies and its meaning as a discipline because Deaf Studies itself is still a new field even though it has existed for some time now. As Paddy Ladd stated in his keynote presentation earlier at the Deaf Studies Today! 2008 conference, minority studies should have many established sub-fields (Ladd 2008). Applying this concept to Deaf Studies, the field of Deaf Studies has not yet fully established all these sub-fields. Deaf Studies should not be diverted into solely teaching ASL as a second language. This is the rationale behind our decision not to have ASL courses be part of GE and our focus on Deaf Studies as a major.

Program Review

Every five years, our college requires a Program Review of our Department, which is a tedious process. Our Department is currently under the Michael D. Eisner College of Education as our Department has its roots within the Special Education department. As part of our most recent Program Review, we discussed proposing a move from the Michael D. Eisner College of Education to the College of Humanities. However and oddly, other minority studies departments within CSUN are not all situated under the College of Humanities. For example, the Pan African Department is within the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences as they have their roots within that College, while Chicano/a Studies are under the College of Humanities. All minority studies departments should be under a "College of People Studies", which was proposed by Fleischer. This proposal met strong resistance from the various departments as they already had positive ties with their College Deans, and felt comfortable and had good political ties within their Colleges. Our Department is curious as to the response from the College of Humanities' Dean about having our Department within that College when we present our proposal. This is a complex issue. We know the College of Humanities is the right place for our Department, but it remains to be seen if this move will be possible even though Deaf Studies has a strong historical attachment to the Michael D. Eisner College of Education.

ASL Lab

The Department has a fully digital ASL Lab with 15 Mac computers with connections to a central server and digital cameras and video viewing capabilities for ASL development work. Technology is part of our program. As the Department and its curriculum's demands change, technology keeps pace in meeting these demands. This facilitates a shift toward more visual-based learning within language teaching.

Student Advisement

Student advisement has been very time-consuming for the Department's faculty. We believe in providing advisement in ASL. At times, this means new students come in that have very limited knowledge of ASL, and communicating in ASL is very laborious with these students. Advisement consists of many facets. This was despite training advisers within the university advisement center to handle our students, which did not work out too well. These university advisers were still unable to help our students and it ended up that we still had to advise our students. The Spring 2008 semester is the first time we were able to take the yoke of student advisement off, with the hiring of an additional faculty member within our department to focus on student advisement. This new faculty member handled most general student advisement sessions. Fleischer still handled those students who were academically disqualified and other special cases. This took one full-time job off of each faculty's hands. Fleischer, as the chair, is still left with one and a half full-time jobs.

The effect of heavy student advisement meant that the Department's four full-time faculty members found it very difficult to carry out scholarly work, especially with the university asking so much of us. At this point, with the new faculty member handling advisement, the full-time faculty can begin scholarly work.

Teaching Load and Class Sizes

The teaching load is four classes or twelve units per full-time faculty member, which is pretty standard in our field. However, class size is another important factor yet to be mentioned. Class sizes generally begin with twenty students. Some of our content classes have fifty, sixty, or seventy students. Gertz even once taught a class with a hundred students. ASL courses have around thirty students. This is a situation that needs to be improved, and this is another of the Department's struggles.

Topics arising out of Audience Questions/Comments

The audience at our presentation raised questions or commented on many important additional topics and ideas related to running a Deaf Studies program. These topics included covering Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDI) and Deaf-Blind-related content in the

curriculum; one-unit courses, ie: Public Signing; Summer Institute/future International Deaf Leaders' two-week conferences; funding for International/Lecture Series Presenters; collaborating with other universities (ie: Gallaudet with the International Deaf Leaders conference); filming/documenting all presenters; improving communication between Deaf Studies departments at different schools to effect quicker Deaf-centered change in the world; teacher exchanges (Visiting Professors) amongst Deaf Studies programs; and future teachers of ASL/California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET)-ASL/Masters' program including ASL Teaching.

Conclusion

The Department of Deaf Studies' primary objectives are:

- 1) To convey basic knowledge and understanding about the language and culture of Deaf people including their history and social experiences;
- 2) To provide students with instruction and training in preparation for advanced degree programs and/or professional careers working with deaf people.

The body of work described above demonstrates the Department has worked toward accomplishing these objectives over the last twenty-five years. This means the Deaf Studies body of knowledge continues to increase and this, in turn, impacts both the Deaf and academic communities by increasing awareness of Deaf people and improving the lives of Deaf people.

Reference List

Bienvenu, M. J. (2008, April 11). *Expedition for a (Deaf) theory*. Presentation made at the 2008 Deaf Studies Today! Conference at Utah Valley State College, Orem, Utah.

Fant, L. J., Jr. (1972). *Ameslan: An introduction to American Sign Language*. Northridge, CA: Joyce Media, Inc.

Ladd, N. P. (2008, April 10). *Deafhood and Deaf Studies*. Presentation made at the 2008 Deaf Studies Today! Conference at Utah Valley State College, Orem, Utah.

Sakharoff, M. (1978, March 30). *Minutes of the EPC subcommittee on Deaf Studies/Sign Language*. Minutes of a committee meeting at California State University, Northridge.

Appendix 1: CSUN Department of Deaf Studies Student Learning Outcomes

SLO #1: Demonstrate ability to communicate in American Sign Language (ASL) with Deaf people.

SLO #2: Identify the major features of and issues in the Deaf Community and Deaf Culture.

SLO #3: Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of power, privilege, and oppression on the Deaf community that result in Deaf people's experience of prejudice, discrimination, and inequity.

SLO #4: Demonstrate an understanding of how the study of Deaf Studies enables individuals to make informed judgments that strengthen the Deaf Community.

SLO #5: Demonstrate an appreciation of the contribution of Deaf arts and humanities for shedding light on what it means to be Deaf.

SLO #6: Describe communication between hearing people and Deaf people that is vital to contemporary society.

SLO #7: Analyze critically how a Deaf person's social-cultural history influences one's sense of self and relationship to others.

SLO #8: Reflect critically on one's abilities in interacting with Deaf individuals, socially and professionally, and evaluate the level of integration achieved.

Appendix 2: The Department of Deaf Studies' Lecture Series, 2005-present

November 27, 2007	Seán Herlihy	European Union of the Deaf Youth Programs
May 3, 2007	Jennifer Yost-Ortiz	Deaf Youth
May 1, 2007	Patricia Durr	Deaf Arts & Films
April 25, 2007	Steve Sandy	Deaf Sports
April 23, 2007	Ted Supalla	Deaf Academic Research
April 19, 2007	Ryan Commerson & Alison Aubrecht	Social Justice in the Deaf Community
April 18, 2007	Al Sonnenstrahl	Deaf Visual Technology
November 7, 2006	Donalda Ammons	The Gallaudet Revolution II: An Insider's Perspective
November 6, 2006	Gertrude Scott Galloway	My Thoughts on Language & Communication in Educational Programs for the Deaf
May 3, 2006	Peter Novak	Shakespeare's Bawdy Body: The Bard in American Sign Language
May 1, 2006	Gilbert Eastman	The Importance of Etymology in the Dictionary of ASL
November 29, 2005	Frank Turk	Together, We Build
November 1, 2005	Chris Blum	New Zealand Deaf Community and Culture
October 18, 2005	Jane Norman	Deaf Cinema: Visualizing and Owning the Concept
September 21, 2005	Simon Carmel	Deaf Folklore
April 27, 2005	Claudine Storbeck	The Politics of Language: The South African Deaf Experience
April 26, 2005	Ella Mae Lentz	Laurent, South Dakota: Hopes and Challenges of a Signing Community
April 19, 2005	Paul Johnson	De'VIA: What is it?
April 18, 2005	Todd Czubek	Reading into ASL
April 12, 2005	Chris Wagner	Deaf Leadership & Community Development
April 7, 2005	J. Stan Schuchman	Hollywood Speaks: Deafness & the Film Entertainment Industry

Appendix 3: International Deaf Guest Presenters Hosted by the Department of Deaf Studies

2008	Ramon Woolfe	Deaf Media Company Founder & Co-Owner from England
2007	John Bosco Conama	Deaf Political Theorist from Dublin, Ireland
2006	Riina Kuusk	Deaf Leader in Estonia
2005	Paddy Ladd	Internationally Renowned Deaf Activist from England
2004	Oscar Balmaseda	Deaf Leader in Cuba
2003	Roslyn Rosen	Internationally Renowned Deaf Educator
2002	Carol-lee Aquiline	General Secretary, World Federation of the Deaf
2001	Mi Jia-Dong	Deaf Teacher in Beijing, China
2000	David & Rachel McKee	Internationally Renowned Applied Linguists from New Zealand
1999	James Woodward	Internationally Renowned Sociolinguist
1998	Bruce Gross	President, World Recreation Association of the Deaf
1997	Irene Taylor	Author & Photographer, "Buddha in Disguise" (Nepal)
1996	Marilyn Smith	Internationally Recognized Leader of Deaf Women's Issues
1995	Ausma Smits	Secretary, Deaf History International
1994	Eric Malzkuhn	Internationally Recognized Master Signer
1990	Peggy Parsons	Deaf Traveler Extraordinaire