**Teaching Students with Hearing Impairments**

Students with hearing impairments can experience different levels of hearing ability and loss. They can present varying abilities in communications. Differences can be attributed to the degree of the hearing loss; when the hearing loss occurred; social, educational and home environments; and the modes of communications used. Students may rely on lip reading, amplification, any one of a number of interpreting services (e.g. American Sign Language (ASL), Cued Speech, and Oral Interpreters) and/or Computer Assisted Real-time Transcription (CART).

What a student needs in his or her academic life depends on degree of loss, the age at which the hearing loss occurs, and his or her experience with alternative communications and the environment. For example, a student with a hearing loss in a small seminar may be able to rely on lip reading. The same student may require amplification or interpreting support for large lecture environments. When a student relies on lip reading or interpreting services, he or she may also require notetaking support to keep a visual focus on the interpreter or lecturer. Students with hearing loss can also vary widely in their written and verbal expressive ability.

The Office of Disability Services does it's best to meet students with hearing loss or who are deaf prior to their entrance to the University. In planning with some students, it is possible to define the exact supports that will be required. This is possible for a student who is deaf and consistently relies on interpreting services. For others presenting varying degrees of hearing loss, the environments and the correct supports can only be anticipated and arranged when the student arrives.

The University relies on contracted resources for services that include American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and Computer Assisted Real-time Transcription (CART). These services are provided in the classroom through arrangements made by the Office of Disability Service. CART is a service provided by trained court stenographers using a steno machine and laptop computer supported with special software that translates steno into written English. Interpreters often stand at the front of the room, off to one side, but still clearly within the student with a hearing impairment’s field of view. CART and sign language providers may be physically present, or may receive audio remotely to provide their services to the student. For CART, a computer is always needed to display the captions; a computer would only be needed for interpreting if it is provided remotely (where the interpreting would be delivered via a live video feed).

Some students will rely on a wireless FM transmission system to amplify the speech of a speaker. A small clip on microphone is offered to the speaker in a class.

A student with a hearing loss will be encouraged to proactively explain his or her requirements to instructors early in the semester.

Instructors can provide necessary supports for their students with hearing impairments in the following ways:

* When speaking privately to a student with a hearing loss accompanied by an interpreter, direct your eye contact to the student, not the interpreter. To get the student’s attention not already in visual direction, a light tap on the shoulder or other visual sign is helpful. Face the student and avoid sitting in front of a window with bright light. Try to pause briefly to allow the interpreter time to catch up. If unique terminology is used in the conversation, expect the requirement to spell words requested by the interpreter. If the conversation held is an interview with standard questions involving unique terminology, be prepared to provide the questions in writing to the interpreter in advance. Do not hesitate to ask the interpreter questions about the logistics of the interpreting.
* When speaking with a student who has a hearing impairment, try to keep hands and other objects away from your mouth. If something is misunderstood, try rephrasing rather than repeating and avoid speaking louder.
* When presenting a class lecture, face front. Try not to speak with a turned back while, for example, writing on a board. Visual aids can be helpful to supplement verbal presentations.
* If a student is using an interpreter or CART service, try to pause the verbal presentation often. Seconds of silence to erase the blackboard, change overheads or move to the next slide can be helpful for everyone in the class.
* Be patient with student responses. Because of the delay in interpreting and CART supports, there will be a delay in response. Keep casual eye contact with the student as he or she answers.
* If there is a group discussion in the classroom, try to limit the communications to one person at a time. Repeat questions asked by other students before responding.
* When handing out papers that expect immediate visual review, give students time to give their visual attention to the paper before giving explanation or instructions.
* If an interpreter is used, invite a private conversation with the student and the interpreter to discuss how to best communicate in the classroom and the most appropriate location for the interpreter. If there is only one interpreter, she or he will require a break after 45 minutes. For three hour classes, two small breaks can be considered as an alternative to one mid-way break. The interpreter has only one role: to facilitate communication. If a response is unclear, either student or faculty member should indicate this and ask the respondent to rephrase the response. The student or faculty member should not consider interpreters in other roles.