The American Sign Language (ASL) and Deaf Studies is scheduled to undergo program review in the 2017-2018 cycle. This document includes the self-study, conducted by ASLDS, to be submitted by 1 February 2018. For ease of reading, please refer to the following Table of Contents for an overview of the organization of this document. Clicking on a heading or subheading will take you directly to that part of the document.

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I. General program information

A. Degree programs (BA and minor)

The ASL and Deaf Studies program (henceforth ASLDS) offers a Bachelor of Arts in American Sign Language and Deaf Studies. This program takes an interdisciplinary approach to the study of deaf people in mainstream American culture, and more broadly, around the globe. The goal of the program is to teach students about deaf people as a linguistic and cultural group, which requires examination and analysis of stereotypes and various policies and educational practices relating to deaf individuals. How the students, as mostly hearing individuals, can show allyship through effecting change for the betterment of deaf individuals, is discussed throughout the degree program. The major requires completion of 41-46 units, including the basic language progression.

The program also offers a minor, which requires 23 units. Students often pair the ASLDS minor with a variety of other majors including but not limited to: child development, psychology, theatre, and dance. This is discussed further in the program comparison found in Section IIIa.

Table 1, lists all of the courses currently offered in ASLDS and how many units each course carries. The next two columns indicate whether a course is required for the major, minor, or both. For content courses, the next column indicates which courses are offered with English voicing interpretation. In the right-most two columns, the number of sections of each course are given for Academic Year 2017-2018.

There is a steep drop-off in sections offered from ASL II to ASL III because DEAF 51 and DEAF 52, in addition to serving our majors and minors, serve as foreign language and general education requirements for CSUS students. At least one section of all of our major courses is offered in Fall and Spring semesters. This is a new change to the ASLDS schedule, which used to offer some courses – DEAF 163, DEAF 164, and DEAF 166 – offered only in one semester or the other. This sometimes caused a bottleneck in time to degree completion for some students.

Several courses offer fully online or hybrid versions. Courses that offer this option in the Fall and/or Spring semesters, are indicated in the table with an asterisk. The appropriateness of fully-online language instruction will be addressed in Section IIIc on ASL curricula.

In addition to regular hybrid courses (which have varying proportions of traditional class time-to-online ratios), Fall semesters offer eight-week hybrids for DEAF 51 and 52, with the former running from August to October and the latter from October to December. Spring semesters offer the same format for DEAF 53 and 154. These are new course offerings, only in their second year. The goal for these fast-paced courses is that students can complete the language course sequence in one academic year, instead of two, allowing them to start taking content courses taught without voice much earlier in their tenure at CSUS. It will be prudent to evaluate any changes necessary for these
courses (e.g., requiring students to sign up for both, rather than one or the other) as we gather more feedback from students who have taken them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Minor</th>
<th>Voicing</th>
<th>Fall 2017 Sections offered</th>
<th>Spring 2018 Sections offered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*DEAF 51: American Sign Language I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*DEAF 52: American Sign Language II</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>*DEAF 53: American Sign Language III</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*DEAF 56: Fingerspelling and Numbers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEAF 57: Classifiers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*DEAF 60: Introduction to Deaf Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*DEAF 154: American Sign Language IV</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEAF 155: American Sign Language V</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEAF 161: Deaf History</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEAF 162: Deaf Culture &amp; Community</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEAF 163: American Sign Language Literature</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEAF 164: Sign Language Structure &amp; Usage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEAF 165: Current Issues in Deaf World (Seminar)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEAF 166: Experiences in Deaf Community</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Major/minor courses offered*

B. Faculty and staff

ASLDS is home to five full-time, tenure-track or tenured faculty, and nine part-time adjunct faculty for Spring 2018, one of whom has a 24-unit entitlement. Backgrounds of full-time faculty, and the adjunct faculty with 24-unit entitlement are included in detail, in alphabetical order; each faculty member’s hearing status is listed next to their names. Next, there is a brief overview of adjunct faculty in ASLDS. This section concludes with a brief discussion of faculty hearing status and how that may impact courses and our program overall.

**Mela Bennett (Deaf)**

Ms. Bennett joined the faculty in 2010. Since then, she’s taught the full ASL course sequence, as well as the upper-division content course on ASL Literature. Ms. Bennet holds a Bachelor’s degree
in English, with an emphasis on creative writing, from California State University, Northridge, and a Master of Arts in Educational Technology from California State University, Sacramento. For the past three years, Ms. Bennett has served as the Faculty Advisor to the American Sign Language Club. From 2014-2015, she served as the Community Advisor to the same club.

In addition to her service in ASLDS, Ms. Bennett has a variety of experiences in and out of the classroom, and in and out of Sacramento State. She’s served as a lecturer in the College of Education’s Multiple Subject Teacher Credential Program since 2016, worked as the Lead Instructional Assistant at American River College (ARC) from 2007 to 2016, and regularly engages with the Deaf Community by serving, as a Community Evaluator for the Interpreter Preparation Program (IPP) at ARC and, in various capacities, at camps for deaf and hard of hearing children. Finally, Ms. Bennett has served on the California Community College Chancellor’s Office Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Committee since 2009, and, for her efforts in the community, she was nominated for the Women of Influence Award in 2017.

**Dr. Leah C. Geer (Deaf)**

Dr. Geer graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology (2007) from New Mexico State University, a Master of Arts in Linguistics (2010) from Gallaudet University, and a Ph.D., also in linguistics, from The University of Texas at Austin (2016). She also holds a certification in ASL teaching from the American Sign Language Teachers association (ASLTA). Her dissertation examined explicit instruction in fingerspelling for adult second language learners of American Sign Language. Dr. Geer was appointed to the Deaf Studies faculty in the fall of 2016. Since then, she’s given several conference presentations, including CSUS’s College of Education Multicultural Education Conference, a panel presentation (focused on fingerspelling) at the Linguistics Society of America Annual Meeting, and an invited talk for the Visual Language and Visual Learning Student Network Lecture Series. An adapted chapter from Dr. Geer’s dissertation was published in *Language Teaching Research* (1.74 impact factor) in early 2017, she has an invited, single-author manuscript in revisions for a Handbook on Sign Language Pedagogy from Routledge anticipated late 2018 or early 2019, and co-authored manuscript for The SAGE Encyclopedia of Human Communication and Sciences and Disorders, also on fingerspelling. The overarching theme of Dr. Geer’s research program is to develop and assess the efficacy of empirically tested methods of ASL instruction for adult, second-language learners.

Since her appointment, Dr. Geer has received excellent teaching evaluations and has served CSUS and the Sacramento community in a variety of ways. Service to the institution includes serving as the Program Coordinator, beginning in August 2017, serving as a grant reviewer, and serving on the Transgender Inclusion Task Force. For service to the community, Dr. Geer has been collaborating with students and faculty from the American River College and their Interpreter Preparation Program. Since Fall 2016, Dr. Geer also serves as an Editor for *JASLL*, the Journal of American Sign Languages and Literatures.

**Dr. Donald Grushkin (Deaf)**

Dr. Grushkin joined the faculty of CSUS in 2001. He graduated with a Bachelor’s in Psychology (1985) and a Master’s in Developmental/School Psychology (1987) at Gallaudet University before attaining his Ph.D. at the University of Arizona (Language, Reading and Culture with minor in Linguistic/Cultural Anthropology, 1996). Dr. Grushkin’s areas of specialization include Deaf culture and community, Deafhood, biliteracy and bilingualism, and second language acquisition. Dr. Grushkin has published a number of articles in books, journals, Deaf-related websites, and professional/semiprofessional magazines including:


• Linguistic aspects of metaphorical expressions of anger in ASL. Journal of Sign Language Linguistics, 1 (2), 143-168.


• Why Shouldn't Sam Read? Toward a New Paradigm in Literacy and the Deaf. Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education, 3 (3), 179-204.

Dr. Grushkin has served on the Editorial Board of the Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education, and is currently co-editing a special issue of Language Culture and History on Deaf Empowerment. Dr. Grushkin also shares his professional knowledge, experience and expertise with the general public through a variety of social media platforms including his personal website, DeafhoodDiscourses (also on YouTube) and at Quora.com, where he has been named a “Top Writer” in 2016 and 2017.

**Dr. Evan Hibbard (Deaf)**
Dr. Hibbard was born Deaf to a hearing family and identifies as culturally Deaf and queer. He earned his PhD from Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada. His dissertation in Communications and Culture, which he completed with chapters in both ASL and English, is called “Impact of Vlogging on Deaf Culture, Communication and Culture.” Since joining the ASLDS faculty in 2017, he has been working on two manuscripts from his dissertation and TerpTube projects. This work has given him an in-depth understanding of the role culture and media plays in Deaf communication. During his dissertation program, Dr. Hibbard received several awards, and is most proud of the Alan Shepard Award for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion from Ryerson. Dr. Hibbard’s teaching and research focus on advocacy for/Deaf and Deaf LGBTQ culture. More specifically, Dr. Hibbard’s scholarly work examines media representations of Deaf LGBTQ, inclusive design, Deaf identity and how Deaf communication and culture are mediated by technology. Dr. Hibbard’s previous degrees include a BS in biotechnology from the Rochester Institute of Technology (1997) and a Master of Science in Genetics, Genomics, and Development (2004) from the University of Rochester.

**Dr. Jennifer K. Rayman (Hearing)**
Dr. Rayman joined the faculty in 2006. She received her Ph.D. in Communication from the University of California, San Diego in 2004 under the tutelage of Dr. Carol Padden and Dr. Tom Humphries. Her dissertation, entitled "Instabilities of Place and Visions of Equality: The Case of a Deaf Congregation in Los Angeles", examines the unique history of a Deaf Church led by Pastor Francis Casale and how his leadership navigated both geographical change and power relationships. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies: Studio Art, American Sign Language, and French (1992), as well as a Master of Arts in English as a Second Language (1994), both at University of Arizona. She also has gained international experience teaching as a Senior Lecturer at the University of Central Lancashire in Preston, England. There, Dr. Rayman learned functional skills in British Sign Language (2002-2006). The overarching theme of her research focuses on power dynamics at the intersection of Deaf and Hearing communities as well as the construction of culture and identity through discourse. Her research interests range from Deaf/Hearing power relationships, to discourse analysis of American Sign Language storytelling, preaching and poetry, to the construction of Deaf space, to representations of Deaf people in film and television.

**Dr. William G. Vicars (Deaf)**
Dr. Vicars joined the faculty in 2003. He earned a Master of Science and Ed.D in Deaf Studies/Deaf Education from Lamar University in 2001 and 2003, respectively. Before that, he studied Communication at Weber State University in Utah (1991). His research focus is on Open Education Resource (OER) development, for which he won a Faculty Grant Program Award during the 2016-2017 academic year. In January of 2018, he gave a presentation for the Singapore Association for the Deaf in the Republic of Singapore, entitled “Curriculum Development and Instruction Methods.”

Other faculty

The ASLDS program employs eight additional adjunct faculty for Spring 2018. These instructional faculty include Colette Cabral (Deaf), Patrick Champion (Deaf), Barbara Dimopoulos (Hearing), Shane Molaison (Deaf), Lauren Smith (Deaf), Sandra Thrapp (Deaf), Angelica Toca (Hearing), and Belinda Vicars (Deaf). These faculty members teach between three and 15 units, depending on a variety of factors including schedule availability, teaching expertise and preferences, and in the case of some, the number of units to which their contracts entitle them. Some faculty have taught for CSUS for a number of years (e.g., Sandra Thrapp, who has been here almost 25 years), while some are quite new (e.g., Colette Cabral, who began in Spring 2017).

Faculty members’ hearing status is listed after each their names. This information will be relevant in a subsequent section (IIIb, d, e) in the discussion of ASL curricula, Program working Practices, and Educational Effectiveness and Faculty Access to Communication.

C. Facilities

The ASLDS program has five offices: three doubles, one single, and a large, shared office suite for lecturers. We also have a storage room used to keep old books, videos, and other materials such as table cloths and signs used for career fairs, the World Language Day and other advertising events. ASLDS does not have a dedicated lab with a book/video library to which students have access, and computers with high quality cameras, with which they can complete video projects, should they not have their own recording equipment. This type of lab is common in ASL/Deaf Studies/Sign Language Linguistics programs because course content requires students to make videos and have access to a variety of books and DVDs, some of which may be cost prohibitive to some students. More of this will be detailed in Section IVa.

ASLDS classes are held in various buildings across campus. Some classrooms are more well-suited than others to the unique needs of our program. The nature of ASL classes and content courses in which the language of instruction is ASL (without English voicing interpretation) requires that the instructor and students all have a clear line of sight with one another. To achieve this, a horseshoe arrangement is most appropriate (see Figure 1). Many classrooms in which our program classes are held do not allow this arrangement. Two reasons for this include classrooms (e.g., EUR 309, CLV 135) that are too small to move the desks into this arrangement or classrooms that have immovable furniture (e.g., 313E). Two very commonly used classrooms for our program courses are EUR 307G and EUR 313E. These are likely used because they are located in the same hall as faculty offices. The former is large and has easily-movable furniture, but no up-to-date teacher’s console. There is no computer in the classroom, which means that instructors who don’t have a laptop are not able to use technology in the classroom. As was just mentioned, EUR 313E has immovable furniture, though it is technologically up-to-date.
To maximize the effectiveness classroom instruction, the following would be beneficial to our program:

- Developing a list of suitable classroom characteristics, and from that, a list of appropriate classrooms which allow the configuration depicted in Figure 1, which allows for students and teacher(s) to have a clear line of sight with one another for the most effective communication
- In conjunction with the above, working with classroom schedulers to ensure priority assignment of suitable rooms as identified for our program courses
- Should the opportunity arise to reserve a dedicated room for our program, for which we can purchase furniture such as foldable, rolling chairs much like that pictured in Figure 2, with a small folding desk (not pictured), which would allow for the most flexibility of arrangement. This type of chair allows for easy classroom rearrangement. Chairs can be quickly stacked if more space is required for an activity. If a writing surface is required, students can form a horseshoe configuration enabling all to see the instructor and one another, while raising the desk component to write whatever is necessary.

D. Student data (retention, graduation rates, etc.)
Since it began, the ASLDS has been home to both native freshman students, as well as transfers. The proportion of the latter is always higher than the former, as can be seen in Figure 3. One complication with this student distribution is that the program of work we currently offer is best suited for students with no background in ASL or Deaf Studies, yet this does not characterize most of our majors and minors. This suggests we need to develop a second program of work, or track,
specifically for students who transfer in with AA-level degrees in Deaf Studies and/or Interpreting. We will return to this in Section IV.

From Fall 2012 to Spring 2017, ASLDS has awarded 156 Bachelor’s degrees. The average time to degree completion for native freshmen is 5.5 years. Transfer students complete their degree in 2.6-2.7 years, on average. There are currently – in the 2017-2018 academic year – 259 declared ASLDS majors. Of these, all save seven who are on probation, are students in good standing with anticipated graduation semesters ranging from this upcoming summer 2018 to summer 2023.

Figure 3: Time to completion for Native Freshman versus Transfer students in Deaf Studies since Fall 2008.

II. Summary of previous learning outcomes and assessment

ASLDS is a new program which has yet to be fully assessed and reviewed. That is the purpose of the program review we are currently undergoing, and part of the purpose of this self-study report. We do have access to a program assessment, conducted during the 2009-2010 academic year, which reports on progress of the ASLDS. This report provides a starting place for the current report to understand how we’ve been assessed in the past, and how we might better be assessed in the future. Two tables with information about how students in our program are assessed from the previous report are copied here for the reader’s convenience, and then expounded upon. Table 2 presents a copy of the overview of key assessments for the ASLDS program; Table 3 presents aggregate data on graduating students. Each of these is discussed in turn.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Tool</th>
<th>Type of assessment (formative/summative)</th>
<th>Administered When</th>
<th>Details about administration</th>
<th>Learning outcomes addressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades earned (ASL 3)</td>
<td>Formative</td>
<td>End of semester</td>
<td>Individual faculty assesses student work based on learning outcomes for specific ASL level</td>
<td>To be able to share information about self and others regarding: biographical information, situations and problems, travel and vacation plans, and develop competence in ASL classifiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades earned (ASL 4)</td>
<td>Formative</td>
<td>End of semester</td>
<td>Individual faculty assesses student work based on learning outcomes for specific ASL level</td>
<td>To be able to share information at an academic level in ASL, to formulate and express rules for games and behaviors in ASL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades earned (ASL 5)</td>
<td>Formative</td>
<td>End of semester</td>
<td>Individual faculty assesses student work based on learning outcomes for specific ASL level</td>
<td>To be able to share personal narrative about accidents and important events. To be able to retell a short children’s story in ASL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate of Advanced Study in ASL earned</td>
<td>Formative</td>
<td>By request upon completion of ASL 4 or 5</td>
<td>Passage of ASL Proficiency Interview or completion of ASL 5 with a “C” or better</td>
<td>Demonstrate high-intermediate level of proficiency in ASL.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Table 2: Overview of key assessments for the ASL/Deaf Studies Program (copied from Program Assessment Report from AY 2009-2010) |

There are several troubling aspects of this type of assessment, which relate to other themes that emerged in the process of self-study. First, if individual faculty are assessing student work using their own metrics, there is no way to know for certain to what extent the same student would receive the same evaluation from different faculty members. Furthermore, since there is no standard curriculum or approach used in this program, there is no way to determine from this type of assessment how structurally accurate students’ productions were. Finally, “passage of the ASLPI or completion of ASL 5 with a ‘C’ or better” are very different measures. There is no “passage” of the ASLPI. There is simply a numerical rating assigned, with values from 0-5: 0, 0+, 1, 1+, 2, 2+, 3, 3+, 4, 4+, 5. No value is considered “passing”, so it is unclear what this criterion means. Secondly, given the issues noted above regarding course assessment, there’s no way to guarantee that “passage” of the ASLPI and a course grade of ‘C’ or better in ASL 5 are equivalent. To reliably
measure student outcomes, we need a neutral measure that is the same across all sections and all instructors for each level. Further discussion of these issues is provided in Sections IIIb and IIIc.

Table 3, like Table 2, uses course grades to explain how graduating students are performing. The issues with such a metric remain, indicating that we have no real understanding of how proficient our students are in ASL upon graduating. As discussed below in the ASL proficiency section of this report, it is the perception of a non-negligible number of ASL faculty as well as some of our own students and alumni that our students do not graduate with sufficiently proficient ASL skills (See Figures 4-7 in Section IIIb). There are several potential remedies to this, including a standardized curriculum, placement tests and exit exams, increased (and measured) proficiency of ASL instructors, as well as requiring students to take a national, standardized assessment of ASL proficiency (the ASLPI) as part of their program of work here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Tools</th>
<th>Fall 2008</th>
<th>Spring 2009</th>
<th>Fall 2009</th>
<th>Spring 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1. ASL 3 Grades</td>
<td>Mean = 3.43/4.0; N = 22</td>
<td>Mean = 3.04/4.0; N = 26</td>
<td>Mean = 3.47/4.0; N = 29</td>
<td>N = 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2. ASL 4 Grades</td>
<td>Mean = 3.43/4.0; N = 22</td>
<td>Mean = 3.13/4.0; N = 28</td>
<td>Mean = 2.58/4.0; N = 24</td>
<td>N = 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3. ASL 5 Grades</td>
<td>Mean = 2.93/4.0; N = 15</td>
<td>Mean = 2.59/4.0; N = 19</td>
<td>Mean = 3.99/4.0; N = 24</td>
<td>N =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4. Certificate of Advanced Study</td>
<td>N = 12</td>
<td>N = 18 (including summer)</td>
<td>N =</td>
<td>N =</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3: Aggregate Data on Graduating Students in the ASL/Deaf Studies Program (copied from Program Assessment Report from AY 2009-2010)*

### III. Focused inquiry

The ASLDS self-study presents the results of a focused inquiry that addresses the definition and perception of ASL and Deaf Studies. A discussion of how our program compares to others like it, and how it fits within the university at large is provided. We also focus on ASL proficiency outcomes as reported in surveys collected from alumni and language-teaching faculty. A full list of questions from both surveys is presented in Appendices A and B. Where appropriate, commentary from instructors and students offered during informal conversations is also included. Finally, we include a section on working practices and curriculum we hope to promote in our program going forward.

#### A. Definition of Deaf Studies

Deaf Studies is an academic discipline which teaches students to appreciate the unique history, social context, economics, geography, psychology, political science, and linguistics of deaf communities around the globe. Upon graduation, students should have a foundation for entry-level work with deaf individuals. With further study, students can pursue careers as teachers of the deaf, interpreters, case workers, and counselors, among others. In Table 4 we compare descriptions/mission statements for several Deaf Studies programs in the region, within the CSU, and from Gallaudet University, the nation’s only Liberal Arts University for Deaf and hard of
hearing students. The purpose of this comparison is to determine how similar or different our program may be to neighboring programs, as well as a flagship program at Gallaudet University, the country’s only Liberal Arts University for Deaf and Hard of hearing students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Deaf Studies Program Description/Mission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California State University, Sacramento</td>
<td>American Sign Language (ASL) &amp; the Deaf Studies major takes an interdisciplinary approach to the study of deaf and hard-of-hearing people in American and world society. The program promotes the understanding of deaf people as a linguistic and cultural group and encourages students to analyze existing stereotypes and policies relating to deaf and hard-of-hearing people in order to work both within their own communities and others in effecting change for the betterment of the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. <a href="http://www.csus.edu/coe/academics/undergraduate/programs/overview-asl.html">http://www.csus.edu/coe/academics/undergraduate/programs/overview-asl.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California State University, Northridge</td>
<td>Deaf Studies is not a study of them; it is a study of us. We are deaf; we are hearing; we are old; we are young; we are from every corner of the United States; we are from every part of the globe. We are richly diverse in our backgrounds, our interests, our abilities and disabilities--but we are one in the pursuit of excellence in education and the equalization of opportunities for all people. Majoring in Deaf Studies will broaden and enrich your knowledge on the most basic elements of our humanity ... language, culture and society. <a href="https://www.csun.edu/eisner-education/deaf-studies/why-deaf-studies">https://www.csun.edu/eisner-education/deaf-studies/why-deaf-studies</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American River College</td>
<td>Provide academic coursework to students interested in enrolling in Deaf Culture &amp; ASL Studies courses as a major so they can matriculate with a certificate, an associates [sic] degree, to meet transfer requirements, or to pursue coursework as part of a personal enrichment quest. Prepare students with a basic understanding of and appreciation for their roles in local, regional, national, and global Deaf-Hearing relations and how those relationships impact Deaf people. Prepare students for entry-level positions working with the Deaf community. <a href="http://www.arc.losrios.edu/ARC_Majors/Humanities/Deaf_Culture_and_ASL_Studies.htm">http://www.arc.losrios.edu/ARC_Majors/Humanities/Deaf_Culture_and_ASL_Studies.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohlone College</td>
<td>The Mission of the Ohlone College Deaf Studies Division is to provide quality post-secondary education and training opportunities to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. The Center is committed to full communication access for all who can benefit from instruction. In order to implement the mission of the Center, all faculty and staff are fluent in American Sign Language, trained in the areas of Deaf Education and/or Rehabilitation Counseling, and are sensitive to the diverse cultural and educational background of the students. <a href="http://www.ohlone.edu/instr/deafstudies/">http://www.ohlone.edu/instr/deafstudies/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Kentucky University</td>
<td>Our Deaf Studies program is a multidisciplinary program that provides students with a foundation in American Sign Language (ASL) skills, a broad understanding of Deaf history, literature, and culture, as well as knowledge of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
educational and legal issues affecting Deaf people. It will expand students’ understanding of what it means to be human. The Deaf Studies program is designed to allow students to potentially complete a second major or minor in another discipline, therefore preparing them to specialize in service to Deaf people within their chosen discipline. The Deaf Studies degree does not prepare students to become professional interpreters or ASL teachers upon graduation. The program may help prepare students to serve the diverse language and cultural needs of Deaf people in their chosen careers. These careers may include counselors, government specialists, community service coordinators/advocates, medical personnel, and law enforcement personnel. This program also prepares students for advanced study in Deaf studies, interpreting, Deaf history, ASL studies, and teaching ASL. [https://aslie.eku.edu/deaf-studies](https://aslie.eku.edu/deaf-studies)

| Gallaudet University (Washington, DC) | The Department of American Sign Language and Deaf Studies is at the forefront of research and publication of issues relating to the language and culture of deaf people. Students collaborate with expert faculty to explore the complexities of deaf communities and their signed languages through interdisciplinary approaches. Resources and courses in the department help students acquire an understanding of the deaf community as part of human diversity. Programs prepare students to spend their professional or social lives after graduation in the deaf community or to make further contributions in a chosen academic discipline. One hundred percent of recent department alumni are employed or in graduate school within one year of graduation. [http://www.gallaudet.edu/department-of-asl-and-deaf-studies](http://www.gallaudet.edu/department-of-asl-and-deaf-studies) |

**Table 4: Comparison of Deaf Studies programs**

**Program comparison**

**What Deaf Studies includes**

University level Deaf Studies programs should emphasize knowledge and understanding of language, culture and society, history, and literature. CSUS, CSUN, EKU (Eastern Kentucky University) and Gallaudet University’s mission statements mention language and culture. EKU’s statement encompass history and literature. Deaf History, Culture, and Literature are courses offered at CSUS and should be considered cornerstone courses to the Deaf Studies program, as they provide context to deaf people’s culture and society. CSUS and CSUN’s statements suggests studying society as a whole is an important aspect of their Deaf Studies program. ARC (American River College)’s mission statement stresses Deaf-Hearing relationships and how those relationships impact Deaf people. CSUS, ARC, and Gallaudet’s statements reflect the notion that understanding community is essential to Deaf Studies.

**Situating our program within the campus community**

CSUS’s mission statement points out one area that is not mentioned by the other universities and colleges: addressing stereotypes. CSUS provides students a unique opportunity in learning about how stereotypes shape societal perception of various groups. This makes our program unique among those examined here.

**Projected student outcomes: What students can do and what they can’t**
Deaf Studies Programs, working in concert with other majors and minors, should provide quality entry level training which prepares students to interact with the Deaf community professionally and personally, as counselors, community advocates, government specialists, law enforcement, medical personnel, etc. Ohlone College’s mission statement emphasizes quality education and training. ARC and EKU highlight how the design of the program allows for students to specialize their work with Deaf people in their chosen careers. In other words, Deaf Studies alone does not prepare students for most entry level positions unless they have completed a minor or major in another program. This is an important area which needs attention in our program. Particularly because of the high rate of transfer students (refer back to Section Id), we have an obligation to our students to provide quality training beyond what they received in their Associate degrees. We must develop a second track of work for students transferring in with backgrounds in Deaf Studies/Interpreting. This is detailed further in section IV.

Some programs provide students with the background needed for advanced study in academic fields including Deaf Studies, ASL studies, and teaching ASL. EKU and Gallaudet University clarify this aspect in their mission statements while CSUS and other Universities/colleges do not. This should be clarified in CSUS’s statement, as a common misconception about our program is that students can become teachers of the deaf upon graduation, or upon completion of a Credential program without specific training in Deaf Education. We are currently not equipped to offer this type of training.

Taken together, the results of this focused inquiry demonstrate that CSUS is, in a variety of ways, similar to other Deaf Studies programs in the region and across the country. It also has features which make it unique. Where we are lacking most, it seems, is in how well we prepare students for life after graduation. For example, Interpreter Preparation Program faculty have reported that ASLDS graduates are routinely the weakest signers in their cohort, if they’re admitted at all. This leads well into the next section on ASL proficiency, and the subsequent section on ASL curricula.

B. ASL proficiency
Anecdotally, and before the self-study was undertaken, the greatest concern with our program was the level of ASL proficiency with which our students graduated. We have examined this issue from a variety of angles. These synthesized data all seem to suggest that we need a measure of ASL proficiency, which, regardless of curriculum (though we hope to standardize the language curriculum), assesses the language skills with which students should graduate. If they are not able to pass this testing metric, they’d not be able to graduate despite our efforts and desire to see our students receive their degrees. We return to this in the next section on ASL curricula.

The ASLPI was mentioned in the 2009-2010 report summarized in section IIa, but no data on student scores was provided. Use of this instrument, or some other standardized metric is a common and practical practice for assessing language proficiency. For example, Eastern Kentucky University states, as one of their program objectives, that graduates of their deaf studies program will be able to communicate in ASL beyond an intermediate level, as determined by the SLPI:ASL (Signed Language Proficiency Interview for ASL), or the ASLPI (American Sign Language Proficiency Interview). Based on the description of ASLPI proficiency levels (http://www.gallaudet.edu/the-american-sign-language-proficiency-interview/aslpi/aslpi-proficiency-levels), we would want our students to graduate with at least a level 3+. This level allows students to discuss familiar and unfamiliar topics in a range of situations, including practical, social, and professional. Their grammar is sufficiently accurate that the conversation is not hampered by misunderstanding that results from insufficient language proficiency. This measure is used nationally for a variety of purposes including earning certification in ASL teaching from
the American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA) and for gaining entrance into Deaf Education programs. The minimum suitable score for these is typically a 4. By graduating with at least a 3 on the ASLPI, we would be providing a strong foundation on which students can continue to develop their ASL skills to work their way up to a 4.

While we currently have no such measure, evidence that our students are not meeting such a proficiency criterion comes from informal conversations with students and alumni, an alumni survey, and a survey sent to a variety of language teachers in the Sacramento area, including at CSUS. A summary of who participated in these two surveys is given in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total survey respondents</th>
<th>Faculty/Staff Survey</th>
<th>Alumni Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Total survey respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 from CSUS</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 from ARC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 from SCC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 from Ohlone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 from Merritt College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 from Napa Valley College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Faculty appointment     | 14 full-time         | Responses to questions specifically about ASL and the Deaf Studies program | 32 |
| 9 part-time             |                      |               |
| 1 staff member          |                      |               |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary appointment department</th>
<th>ASL/Deaf Studies (13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Other” (4; ESL, Continuing Education, Learning Disabilities Specialist, Child Development)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language(s) taught</th>
<th>ASL (13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5: Summary of survey respondents*

Here we discuss common themes with respect to language proficiency that emerged in collecting these data. The results from three questions in particular are presented here in Figures 4-7. Taken together, these results do not speak strongly to the assertion that our students are graduating as proficient ASL signers.
Figure 4: Results plot from Question 18 of the faculty/staff survey. “To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: Overall, I would say that CSUS students are proficient in ASL.”

Figure 5: Results plot from Question 26 of the alumni survey. “Which of the following best describes your ASL skills on graduating?”

Figure 6: Results plot from Question 27 of the alumni survey. “Which of the following best characterizes the situations in which you feel comfortable using ASL?”

Figure 7: Results plot from Question 28 of the alumni survey. “If you used your Deaf Studies degree as a bridge to an Interpreter Preparation Program, how prepared did you feel to apply/enter the program?”

Figure 4 shows the results from 13 respondents (recall that 24 individuals completed the survey). It is most likely that 11 survey respondents opted not to answer this question, because they teach a language other than ASL. Still, of the 13 who responded, six disagreed with the premise that
ASLDS graduates are proficient in ASL. There were also six abstentions and one person who strongly agreed, but impressions of the six who disagreed is corroborated by alumni survey results.

Figure 5 shows that 53% of alumni respondents rated their ASL skills as only conversationally fluent, or as having basic/intermediate skills. While not everyone is expected to graduate from our program with native-like skills, none should graduate with only a basic level of signing. It is encouraging to see that nine alumni rated themselves as native-like but it is important to consider that several recent graduates are hearing children of deaf adults, meaning that their first language is ASL. They likely had these highly-proficient skills before they entered the program.

The next question, with results presented in Figure 6, offers encouraging – though somewhat conflicting – results, as compared to the previous question. Fifty percent of students said they feel comfortable speaking ASL in all situations with speakers of all ages and skill levels. However encouraging, it is still troubling that two students said their academic ASL is weak, and that five said they can only understand ASL in limited social situations and cannot understand presentations. Refer back to Table 1, which shows which content courses have voicing interpreters. Students complete DEAF 163, 164, 165, and 166 without English voicing interpretation. This means that, for these five students who said they do not understand presentations in ASL, they did not understand the content of these courses. This is deeply troubling for two reasons in particular: 1) This means that students are completing the course sequence with insufficient proficiency to take content courses in ASL, and 2), it means that students are passing these content courses without understanding (much of) the content.

The final question presented here, results in Figure 7, relates to students who use ASLDS as a bridge to an Interpreter Preparation Program. This is a path a large portion of our students take. We want them to be confident enough in their ASL skills to apply to the program but more importantly, we want them to be accepted and once accepted, to do well. If graduates lack the ability to understand ASL without having to slow it down (IPP courses are all taught in ASL and the teachers do not slow down), they will not be successful in this program. Eleven students reported feeling either slightly, or grossly underprepared to take on an IPP.

Informal conversations with CSUS language faculty who teach advanced ASL and/or content courses without voicing interpreters, IPP faculty, and our own students corroborate these points further. CSUS faculty teaching ASL 3, 4, and 5 are often concerned about the lack of preparedness of the students to be in the level they're teaching. Some refer to “damage control” or “clean-up duty” in these cases – they feel they have to “clean up” the work done by other instructors. IPP faculty indicate that they are able to, from the day that IPP applicants are screened for admittance to the program, identify who is coming from CSUS based on their level of signing skill, as well as some of the specific errors they make, that other students do not. We will return to this in the curriculum section.

Students, reflecting on their ASL journey, have indicated that they were unaware of how much they didn’t know until they attended deaf events. They felt confident in their ASL skills because they scored well on all their tests and earned A’s in their courses (refer back to use of course grades as an outcome measure), but when they actually engaged in conversation with deaf signers, they did not understand them, nor did the deaf individuals understand the students. This was frustrating and spirit-crushing to them.

Another complaint from students, those who happen to be more advanced, but even those who aren’t, but wish they were, is that there are upper division courses taught either in English (by
hearing instructors) or with English voicing interpretation when taught by deaf faculty. Students feel this practice robs them of a semester-long opportunity to enhance their receptive and expressive language skills. Several students noted that they felt their ASL skills had regressed after a semester of taking Deaf Culture and/or Deaf History, as those courses are taught with English interpretation. These same students then felt behind in the following semester when they took any combination of DEAF 163, 164, 165, or 166. Related to that question from the alumni survey, students have reported that if they had more classes here in ASL, they’d not struggle so much in their IPP classes, which are taught solely in ASL regardless of the teacher’s hearing status.

This suggests two relevant areas for change: 1) standards of ASL instruction must be improved so that students are attaining an objectively, reliably, validly measured, and appropriate level of ASL proficiency by the time they leave our program and that 2) upper division courses must be offered in ASL only, so that students can continue to develop their ASL skills, even after they’ve finished, or mostly finished the language course sequence.

C. ASL Curricula used at CSUS and elsewhere

There are two main curricula used at CSUS. This ties very strongly to the reports above regarding the language proficiency with which our students graduate. The use of two curricula is also a point of contention among the faculty and generates much discussion. The purpose of this section is to describe the two curricula used in ASLDS and consider the most appropriate actions going forward as we work to improve our program.

i. Signing Naturally https://www.dawnsign.com/series/details/signing-naturally

Signing Naturally (SN) is published by Dawn Sign Press and is the most popular ASL curriculum in the US and Canada. More relevant, it is used in the ASL course progression at ARC and other Los Rios community colleges, from which a high percentage of our majors transfer. It includes four texts, the first two of which have been recently revamped. They include detailed lesson plans as well as prep materials – including slides – for teachers, as well as access to videos for students. This means students are not just practicing from static images printed in a book. This curriculum takes a functional-notional approach, which means that it uses real-life situations and discuss what specific function language serves in these moments. This is a common approach in second-language teaching. This type of program and its merits are detailed more thoroughly in Wilcox and Wilcox (1997). From very early in the course, students are asked to attend to signed narratives, watching for comprehension. Shortly thereafter, they’re asked to produce short narratives as well. The goal is to encourage to use students to talk about things they’ll actually encounter in everyday settings, and to understand the mechanics of why a particular utterance is produced as it is in ASL.

There are several main criticisms of SN. First, many instructors report needing special training to use the curriculum. These are offered periodically by the authors or by those trained to give the workshop. These are often far away, but even if they’re local, they’re cost prohibitive for a number of instructors. Instead of using this type of training, it may be prudent to offer in-house training on this curriculum.

The second critique is more a comment on how much instructional time is given in ASL 1 and 2 (DEAF 51 and 52, respectively). It is quite common for these courses to carry 4 units, but at CSUS, they carry only three. A petition to increase the unit count for these courses was submitted in the AY 2016-2017 but has not yet been approved. What’s at issue currently is that instructors, all lacking enough time to cover the entire text, cut different
lessons from their course, resulting in a class of ASL 2 students who don’t all know the same things. This must become standard even if the unit count can’t be increased.

A third critique is that the curriculum is too heteronormative. It does not teach signs which reflect family diversity, nor does it teach signs for various queer identities. When this type of vocabulary has been offered in supplementary materials by certain instructors, students expressed how pleased they were to be able to identify with the curriculum in that way.

Finally, SN texts are expensive and thus cost prohibitive for some students. One way around this challenge is to purchase several copies for the program and, when students are in need, lend them out.

ii. ASL University http://lifeprint.com/asl101/pages-layout/accreditation.htm

ASL University (ASLU; also referred to as “Lifeprint”) is self-published electronically. It is advertised as a resource site but it is used at CSUS by a minority of teachers as an entire curriculum. This curriculum has a heavy focus on vocabulary with little attention to grammatical structure, natural discourse, or culture. In particular, it teaches students to acquire translation equivalents of English words. ASLU is free, which is great for students who would have difficulty affording a textbook.

There are many criticisms of ASLU. Because of its heavy reliance on vocabulary, students learn this to the exclusion of natural conversational abilities. In addition, because of the reliance on English translation equivalents, students often erroneously associate a single sign with an English word which may have multiple meanings, each of which has their own sign. Students have reported that this curriculum, while a good, extremely basic introduction to ASL, and a good review for those who have already learned the language, gives them a false sense of proficiency. This can be seen in some of the commentary above wherein students reported being unaware of how little they knew until they got into situations which require more than vocabulary recitation.

An additional issue related to use of this curriculum was noted in one of the classroom observations that was a part of this self-study. Following only vocabulary, hearing teachers sometimes incorrectly produced signs, and even deaf instructors used conceptually inaccurate signs because they were looking only at an English word (with multiple meanings).

What is particularly challenging in the ASLDS is that both of these curricula are used. This means that when students leave their DEAF 51 class, they’ll be entering a DEAF 52 class in which some students learned with SN and some with ASLU. These curricula do not cover the same topics or vocabulary in these courses, which means that students have not learned the same vocabulary, yet are now in the same course. Further, they have not learned in the same way – functional-notional approach versus vocabulary memorization. This is frustrating for teachers and for students.

We can see that there are issues with both of these curricula, but based on the discussion presented above in the Proficiency section, what the program needs is to adopt a standard curriculum that is used in all sections, regardless of whether a course is in a traditional classroom, hybrid, or fully online (though the efficacy of fully online language courses is questionable). Results from the faculty survey support these claims.
Question 9 of the faculty survey asks whether language teachers (refer back to Table 5 for characteristics of survey respondents) support curriculum standardization. The results, presented in Figure 8, indicate this overwhelmingly. These data, again, come from language teachers inside and outside of our program. In addition, respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion that languages can be acquired with fully online instruction. These results are presented in Figure 9. We return to issues of curriculum and online teaching in Section IV.

![Figure 8: Results plot from Question 9 of the faculty survey. “To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: Language programs of study should have a standardized curriculum.”](image)

![Figure 9: Results plot from Question 10 of the faculty survey. “To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: Languages can be acquired with 100% online instruction.”](image)

D. Program working practices

We have seen in earlier sections of this self-study report that we, as a program, have a variety of things to work on with respect to improving student outcomes. Issues of curriculum will not be further discussed here. This section deals with who our teachers are and what lived experiences and practices they bring to the classroom, and how these practices impact student performance.

In section 1b, we provided information on the faculty teaching in ASLDS. Next to their name is an indication of their hearing status. That is relevant for the present discussion. One issue that is
mentioned repeatedly, both by faculty members, and by students in their course evaluations, is that of teachers using voice in language classes that are supposed to be taught voice off.

While this is an issue with both deaf and hearing faculty, it is far more prevalent among hearing instructors. This is problematic for a variety of reasons that are particularly relevant in this discussion of curriculum, but also related to the language proficiency of our graduates addressed in the previous section. When instructors use voice in class, they are directly going against the nature of the course, as well as general cultural norms in the Deaf community (Quinto-Pozos, 2011); all language courses are listed as voice-off in the course catalog. By voicing, instructors are robbing students of the opportunity to practice (and even challenge) their receptive language skills. Studies have shown that, generally speaking, students feel that learning ASL from a deaf instructor is more valuable experience than learning from a hearing instructor (McKee & McKee, 1992). Hearing instructors are also setting a dangerous precedent when they speak, regardless of their rationale for doing so; if a student takes DEAF 51 with an instructor who voices during class, they will expect the same in DEAF 52. Several students have noted that, at the time, they appreciated the instructor’s willingness/ability to speak during class because it made comprehension easier. Later, and reflecting on their ASL skills, they realized how damaging that was to their language acquisition process.

There is an additional complication when hearing instructors, in particular, voice in class: the power imbalance, or sociocultural conflict, it creates (Quinto-Pozos, 2011; Lane, Hoffmeister, & Bahan, 1996). Specifically, there are systematic barriers which impact deaf faculty (e.g., access to information, access to professional development opportunities on- and off-campus, etc.). Thus, when hearing instructors speak, students often prefer to take courses under them, though they may come to regret that preference later on. Hearing individuals speaking in spaces shared with deaf instructors has also become problematic, but this behavior is modeled by hearing faculty who speak in front of ASL students. EKU, for example, has a no-voicing policy for all faculty, even in hearing faculty members’ offices. This should be discussed to determine what iteration of such a policy might be feasible in ASLDS in a way that honors deaf space, or spaces in which the daily pressures and microaggressions of living in a hearing world and working in a predominantly hearing university are removed (see Section IIIe for more information on this, and also Stapleton, 2015).

An additional concern is related to the authenticity of instruction. Many students, later in their course of study in ASLDS, wonder how appropriate it is to have hearing instructors teaching ASL, courses like Deaf Culture or Experiences in the Deaf Community, when hearing individuals have no lived experiences to inform their teaching. We realize that this is a complex issue. Some hearing instructors are perfectly capable of imparting program information in a way that shows sensitivity and deference to deaf individuals and acknowledging the privilege they carry as hearing individuals. But, as we will discuss in the next section, there are hearing faculty who do not honor this practice in their everyday lives. This adversely impacts deaf, but not hearing faculty.

E. Educational effectiveness and faculty access to communication

As we alluded to above, there are systemic barriers in place which either prevent, or present obstacles to deaf, but not hearing faculty in the university setting. Stapleton (2015) describes some of these obstacles, which she was only able to acknowledge (as a hearing person) after she worked with deaf faculty for a number of years. For example, Deaf faculty don’t have the ability to meet spontaneously with other faculty or attend a workshop or meeting announced with little notice. Deaf faculty often make their courses accessible by using voicing interpreters. But if these interpreters are not highly skilled for that specific type of interpreting, it is often the instructor who is perceived to be inept, and not the interpreter. This is not an issue hearing faculty face.
Some of the inequity experienced by deaf, but not hearing faculty, would be ameliorated with a full-time, staff interpreter. ASLDS has worked with College of Education administrators to produce a job description for a staff interpreter. Having an interpreter here full-time would help to make last-minute meetings accessible and would help to ensure that there is always at least one interpreter with the skills necessary to interpret complicated course content from English to ASL, and from ASL to English. A single staff-interpreter, however, will likely have an insufficient impact on this inequity, because of how many deaf faculty are employed in ASLDS. For example, if multiple faculty are teaching a course which requires voicing interpretation at the same time, only one will be able to work with the staff interpreter. Or, if the staff interpreter is interpreting a class, and another faculty member suddenly has need of an interpreter for an emergency meeting, the interpreter will have to leave their assigned class to attend the meeting. Several staff interpreter positions will be required, as well as developing a pool of “on-call” interpreters for CSUS faculty. Further discussions will be needed to determine the best course of action related to hiring staff interpreters, how many are hired, and how their services are allocated throughout the day, week, and semester.

IV. Summary, recommendations, and conclusion

This self-study report has provided general information about our program, including faculty, facilities, and student demographics (Section I). We have also detailed previously-used assessment measures and learning outcomes from our program proposal documents and what needs to be done in this regard going forward (Section II). Section III provides information from a focused inquiry related to what constitutes a Deaf Studies program, ASL curricula used here and in other programs, the level of ASL proficiency with which our students graduate, program working practices, and educational effectiveness. Here, we provide a set of recommendations for moving forward, based on the results of the self-study.

A. Facilities

As we noted in Section Ic, we must develop a list of classroom characteristics that maximize access to communication in ASLDS classrooms, for both faculty and students. In collaboration with the office that assigns classrooms, we should work to get priority status for the rooms best suited for ASL instruction. If possible, we should also work to get updated furniture which, if used to replace furniture in rooms that are currently inappropriate for visually-based instruction, would render those rooms appropriate for ASLDS use.

Additionally, we must secure funding and space for a fully-stocked ASL laboratory. The ASL lab should include 30 desktop computers, separated by a shield so that students can record video projects without distraction from the students on either side of them. It should also include a library with program copies of texts that may be cost-prohibitive, as well as various DVDs. Outside of regular lab hours, students would be able to reserve the room to view assigned videos. The lab could also function as a classroom. The shields separating the computers should be adjustable, so they can come down, and rolling chairs (see Figure 2) so that students can arrange themselves in a horseshoe (Figure 1), or in smaller, circular groups, as needed. An example of what such a lab might look like is given in Figure 10.
B. Students, assessment, and curricular changes

Due to the high volume of transfer students, ASLDS must develop a second track for students arriving with Associate level degrees in Deaf Studies and/or Interpreting. Coursework could include designated courses currently offered in other departments that would provide them with general knowledge that would inform their future career. It could also involve more advanced course work in Deaf Studies. Courses could include the study of first- and/or second-language acquisition, advanced linguistic analysis, communication studies, deaf education, global Deaf Studies, Introduction to International Sign, among others.

We are also in need of normed assessment measures to ensure that our students are graduating with sufficiently high levels of ASL proficiency. Upon graduation, they should be able to converse with any person in ASL on any topic, without needing them to slow down. They should be able to apply to, be accepted into, and excel in Interpreter Preparation Programs, rather than feeling “grossly underprepared.” One such assessment is the ASLPI (https://www.gallaudet.edu/the-american-sign-language-proficiency-interview/aslpi).

Another way to improve student ASL proficiency is to regulate instructor ASL proficiency (this is required because (uncorrected) production and grammatical errors were noted when various faculty were observed in the course of this self-study). There are several ways to achieve this, which merit discussion as we work to improve our program. For example, instructors must earn ASLTA certification or must earn at least a 4 on the ASLPI.
ASLDS must standardize their language curriculum. This is needed not only for program cohesion, and to ease the transition from level-to-level, and instructor-to-instructor, but also because DEAF 51 and DEAF 52 function as general education requirements, which require multiple sections to follow the same (skeletal) syllabus, with signature assignments used across sections. Such a sample is included in Appendix C for DEAF 51.

In addition to standardizing the language curriculum, we must examine carefully the progression of other courses our students follow. For example, DEAF 56, Fingerspelling & Numbers, lists DEAF 52 as a prerequisite. The issue is that, rather than taking this course in the semester immediately following the completion of DEAF 52 (and concurrently with DEAF 53), students sometimes wait to take DEAF 56 until a later time. This means that a classroom often has a wide range of language abilities, making it difficult for the instructor to deliver a course that is suitably challenging for all students. Those who are in, for example, DEAF 155 are bored in DEAF 56, while those in DEAF 53 are struggling. Instructors for DEAF 57, Classifiers, have noted similar challenges. They indicate that DEAF 53 should be a prerequisite, rather than co-requisite.

We also need to examine whether it is appropriate to remove the need for voicing interpreters in DEAF 161, Deaf History, and DEAF 162, Deaf Culture & Community, as these are upper-division courses. If DEAF 154 were to become a pre-requisite for these courses, they, like all course numbers above them, could be taught in ASL only, without voicing interpretation. One potential issue with this, however, is a bottleneck that may be created as students attempt to complete their language progression but cannot co-enroll in other major/minor courses. This obstacle is not insurmountable, thought it would take careful planning and advising for students wishing to major/minor in Deaf Studies, and graduate in four years.

C. Program working practices & educational effectiveness
There are current working practices in ASLDS that go against course descriptions and accepted Deaf Community practices, and which serve to disadvantage students and further disenfranchise deaf, but not hearing, faculty. These must be addressed. In particular, it is imperative that we hire a staff interpreter to help ameliorate the lack of access to various programs, meetings, etc., that are offered on campus. A single staff interpreter, however, will be insufficient to address the needs of a deaf faculty this large. Discussions for how best to use staff interpreter(s) will be required.
V. References


VI. Appendices

A. Appendix A: Self-study faculty/staff survey questions

Tell us who you are
1. Which of the following describes your position?
   a. Full-time faculty
   b. Part-time faculty
   c. Staff
   d. Community member
   e. Other

2. If you said “other” on question #1, please state your position: ____________

3. At which of the following institutions are you employed? Please check all that apply.
   a. Sacramento State
   b. American River College
   c. Cosumnes River College
   d. Folsom Lake College
   e. Sacramento City College
   f. Sacramento Community College
   g. Ohlone College
   h. Other

4. If you said “other” on question #3, please state at which institution(s) you are employed: __________

5. In what department/program are you appointed in the college or university indicated in question #3? Check all that apply.
   a. ASL/Deaf Studies
   b. Interpreting
   c. World Languages
   d. Linguistics
   e. Other

6. If you said “other” on question #5, please state the name of the department or program in which you’re appointed: ___________

7. What language(s) do you teach? Please check all that apply.
   a. ASL
   b. Spanish
   c. French
   d. Italian
   e. German
   f. Japanese
   g. Chinese
   h. Korean
   i. I do not teach a language
   j. Other
8. If you said “other” on question #7, please state the language you teach: ____________

If you are a language teacher and/or interpreter trainer, please tell us about your language-teaching philosophy.

9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: Language programs of study should have a standardized curriculum.
   a. Strongly disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Neutral
   d. Agree
   e. Strongly agree

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: Languages can be acquired with 100% online instruction.
    a. Strongly disagree
    b. Disagree
    c. Neutral
    d. Agree
    e. Strongly agree

11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: When CSUS ASL students transfer to my class from another class/program where a different curriculum was used, I feel they are appropriately prepared for my course.
    a. Strongly disagree
    b. Disagree
    c. Neutral
    d. Agree
    e. Strongly agree
    f. NA

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: When CSUS ASL students transfer to my class from another class/program where the same curriculum was used, I feel they are appropriately prepared for my course.
    a. Strongly disagree
    b. Disagree
    c. Neutral
    d. Agree
    e. Strongly agree
    f. NA

13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: When CSUS ASL students enter the Interpreter Preparation Program at ARC, their ASL is sufficiently proficient to excel in the program.
    a. Strongly disagree
    b. Disagree
    c. Neutral
    d. Agree
    e. Strongly agree
    f. NA
If you are a Deaf/ASL community member, please tell us about your interactions with CSUS ASL & Deaf Studies students.

14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: When I interact with CSUS students at Deaf events, I understand their signing clearly.
   a. Strongly disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Neutral
   d. Agree
   e. Strongly agree

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: When I interact with CSUS students at Deaf events, they understand my signing clearly.
   a. Strongly disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Neutral
   d. Agree
   e. Strongly agree

16. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: Overall, I would say that CSUS students are proficient in ASL.
   a. Strongly disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Neutral
   d. Agree
   e. Strongly agree

17. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: CSUS students know about Deaf culture.
   a. Strongly disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Neutral
   d. Agree
   e. Strongly agree

18. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: CSUS students behave appropriately and in accordance with Deaf culture norms and values at Deaf events.
   a. Strongly disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Neutral
   d. Agree
   e. Strongly agree

Three final questions for everyone:

19. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: The CSUS ASL & Deaf Studies program has an excellent reputation for graduating students with excellent skill in ASL and knowledge of Deaf Culture.
   a. Strongly disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Neutral
d. Agree
   1. Strongly agree

20. What do you think the Deaf Studies program at CSUS does well, and what do you think they do best?

21. Please share any additional comments, or elaborate on your responses to any of the above-posed questions here:
B. Appendix B: Alumni survey questions

1. Among the following factors which ONE was the MOST important in selecting your major?
   a. I enjoyed a course I had related to the major.
   b. I thought it would prepare me for a career in the field.
   c. I had always been interested in studying the major.
   d. I heard good things from peers about the major.
   e. My coursework at a community college led me to the major.
   f. I was impressed with the faculty in the major at Sacramento State.

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following:

2. The quality of faculty instruction you received in your major courses
   a. Very satisfied
   b. Somewhat satisfied
   c. Mixed feelings
   d. Somewhat dissatisfied
   e. Very dissatisfied

3. The quality of the courses you took in your major
   a. Very satisfied
   b. Somewhat satisfied
   c. Mixed feelings
   d. Somewhat dissatisfied
   e. Very dissatisfied

4. The intellectual challenge you received in the major
   a. Very satisfied
   b. Somewhat satisfied
   c. Mixed feelings
   d. Somewhat dissatisfied
   e. Very dissatisfied

5. The ability of the Department to schedule classes that would allow you to graduate within a reasonable period of time
   a. Very satisfied
   b. Somewhat satisfied
   c. Mixed feelings
   d. Somewhat dissatisfied
   e. Very dissatisfied

6. Your overall experience in the major
   a. Very satisfied
   b. Somewhat satisfied
   c. Mixed feelings
   d. Somewhat dissatisfied
   e. Very dissatisfied
7. How satisfied are you with the level of preparation you received from the major in relation to succeeding in the world after college?
   a. Very satisfied
   b. Somewhat satisfied
   c. Mixed feelings
   d. Somewhat dissatisfied
   e. Very dissatisfied

8. How well did the curriculum in your program provide you with the discipline-specific skills needed to succeed in your chosen field?
   a. Exceptionally well
   b. More than adequately
   c. Adequately
   d. Less than adequately
   e. Not at all
   f. Not applicable

9. How well did the curriculum in your program provide you with understanding of the methods and practices of the profession?
   a. Exceptionally well
   b. More than adequately
   c. Adequately
   d. Less than adequately
   e. Not at all
   f. Not applicable

To what extent did your major help you develop the following types of knowledge and proficiencies?

10. Careful reading (Reading is “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language”)
    a. Considerably
    b. Sufficiently
    c. Somewhat
    d. Very little

11. Critical thinking (Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action)
    a. Considerably
    b. Sufficiently
    c. Somewhat
    d. Very little

12. Creative thinking (Creative thinking is both the capacity to combine or synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways and the experience of thinking, reacting and working in an imaginative way characterized by a high degree of innovation, divergent thinking, and risk taking)
    a. Considerably
    b. Sufficiently
    c. Somewhat
    d. Very little
13. Understanding and using quantitative information (Quantitative Literacy or Quantitative Reasoning is a competency and comfort in working with numerical data. Individuals with strong quantitative skills possess the ability to reason and solve quantitative problems from a wide array of contexts and situations. They understand and can create sophisticated arguments supported by quantitative evidence and they can clearly communicate those arguments in a variety of formats [using words, tables, graphs, mathematical equations, etc.])
   a. Considerably
   b. Sufficiently
   c. Somewhat
   d. Very little

14. Information literacy and research skills (Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information")
   a. Considerably
   b. Sufficiently
   c. Somewhat
   d. Very little

15. Effective writing (Effective written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing)
   a. Considerably
   b. Sufficiently
   c. Somewhat
   d. Very little

16. Effective communication (Communication is prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners’ attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors)
   a. Considerably
   b. Sufficiently
   c. Somewhat
   d. Very little

17. Teamwork (Teamwork is behaviors under the control of individual team members [effort they put into team tasks, their manner of interacting with others on team, and the quantity and quality of contributions they make to team discussions])
   a. Considerably
   b. Sufficiently
   c. Somewhat
   d. Very little

18. Problem-solving (Problem solving is the process of designing, evaluating and implementing a strategy to answer an open-ended question or achieve a desired goal)
   a. Considerably
   b. Sufficiently
   c. Somewhat
   d. Very little
19. Ethical reasoning and action (Ethical Reasoning is reasoning about right and wrong human conduct. It requires students to be able to assess their own ethical values and the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, think about how different ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas and consider the ramifications of alternative actions)
   a. Considerably
   b. Sufficiently
   c. Somewhat
   d. Very little

20. Civic knowledge (Civic engagement is “working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.” In addition, civic engagement encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community)
   a. Considerably
   b. Sufficiently
   c. Somewhat
   d. Very little

21. Intercultural knowledge and competence (Intercultural Knowledge and Competence is “a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts.”)
   a. Considerably
   b. Sufficiently
   c. Somewhat
   d. Very little

22. Foundations and skills for lifelong learning (Lifelong learning is “all purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence”)
   a. Considerably
   b. Sufficiently
   c. Somewhat
   d. Very little

23. The ability to integrate or connect ideas or information (Integrative learning is an understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and co-curriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus)
   a. Considerably
   b. Sufficiently
   c. Somewhat
   d. Very little

24. The ability to apply your knowledge to new situations or problems
   a. Considerably
   b. Sufficiently
   c. Somewhat
   d. Very little
25. Which of the following best describes your current **primary** activity?
   a. Employed full time
   b. Employed part time
   c. Graduate/professional school full time
   d. Graduate/professional school part time
   e. Military service
   f. Not employed, seeking employment, admission to graduate school, or other opportunity
   g. Not employed by choice (homemaker, volunteer, traveling, etc)

26. Which of the following best describes your ASL skills on graduating?
   a. Highly proficient, native-like
   b. Proficient
   c. Conversationally fluent
   d. Basic/intermediate skills only

27. Which of the following best characterizes the situations in which you feel comfortable using ASL?
   a. In all situations with signers of all ages and levels
   b. In most situations with signers who sign a bit slower
   c. In some situations, mostly casual; my academic ASL is weak
   d. In limited social situations; I cannot understand presentations in ASL

28. If you used your Deaf Studies degree as a bridge to an Interpreter Preparation Program, how prepared did you feel to apply to/enter the program?
   a. Fully prepared; I sign as well as the best signers in my cohort
   b. Mostly prepared; I sign as well as the average signer in my cohort
   c. Slightly underprepared; I can keep up but barely
   d. Grossly underprepared; I am always behind, I wonder if I’ll be able to finish the program

29. Which of the following best describes your career path since graduation? (Check all that apply)
   a. Work in private sector
   b. Work in not-for-profit sector
   c. Work in public sector “local, state, or federal government”
   d. Graduate school
   e. Career training or other instruction (non-graduate school)
   f. None of the above

30. Now important to your current employer is your undergraduate degree?
   a. Very important
   b. Somewhat important
   c. Only slightly important
   d. Not important at all
   e. Not applicable

31. My current job: (Check all that apply)
   a. Is related to my undergraduate major
   b. Uses important skills I gained during college
   c. Is related to my desired career path
   d. Allows me to continue to grow and learn
e. Pays enough to support my desired lifestyle
f. Pays health insurance benefits
g. Is likely to continue until I wish to leave
h. Not applicable

32. What is your gender?
   a. Female
   b. Male
   c. Prefer not to say

33. What is your age?
   a. 20-24
   b. 25-29
   c. 30-34
   d. 35-39
   e. 40-44
   f. 45-49
   g. 50 or above
   h. Prefer not to say

34. What is your racial/ethnic identity?
   a. African American/Black, non-Hispanic
   b. Native American or Alaska Native
   c. Caucasian/White
   d. Mexican/Hispanic/Latino
   e. Asian
   f. Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian
   g. Foreign/nonresident alien
   h. Other/multiracial
   i. Prefer not to say

35. Which of the following best describes you in relation to the degree(s) you received from Sacramento State?
   a. I received a Bachelor’s degree only
   b. I received a Master’s degree only
   c. I received both a Bachelor’s and Master’s degree
   d. I do not have a degree from Sacramento State
C. Appendix C: Sample skeletal syllabus with signature assignments for DEAF 51

Professor …

Email first.last@csus.edu

Office location XXX

Office hours XXX

CRN(s) XXX

Class day(s)/time(s) XXX

Class location(s) XXX

Course Description

Students will learn basic vocabulary and grammar of American Sign Language. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to exchange basic information about themselves and their families such as their names, where they live, and their interests. Through out-of-class readings, in-class discussions and demonstrations, and experiences within the deaf community, students are exposed to elements of the deaf culture and community.

Notes:

- No prerequisite
- GE Area (if applicable): If you continue on to complete DEAF 52 you will meet GE area C2 and satisfy the Graduation Requirement for skills in a World Language (foreign language requirement). This course by itself does not meet the requirement but serves as a prerequisite to DEAF 52.

Course objectives

Upon completion of this course, the successful student should be able to:

1. manage a basic vocabulary in ASL,

2. manage basic grammatical structures in ASL, including the use of manual (i.e., the hands) and non-manual (i.e., the torso, face, etc.) features,

3. comprehend short dialogues and narratives produced in ASL,

4. produce short dialogues in ASL,

5. demonstrate ASL conversation facilitating/regulating behaviors such as attention getting techniques, turn taking signals, leave-taking patterns, etc., and
6. demonstrate knowledge of historical topics as they relate to the Deaf community, such as important figures and institutions in Deaf Culture and the role of technology in Deaf culture

How we will learn

This class is taught in ASL without voice using a variety of approaches to meet all students’ learning needs. Most activities involve skill development through individual, small group, and class activities. We will use lecture, slide presentations, reference texts, and host of other learning strategies. Guest speakers may be invited to class to share linguistic and cultural information and to give you the opportunity to socialize with other skilled signers.

Required text

Mikos, K., Smith, C., & Lentz, E. (2008). Signing Naturally Units 1-6 Student Workbook. San Diego, CA: DawnSign Press. Available at the Hornet Store or online. NB: Make sure your book includes both DVDs! *Additional readings, if applicable, will be posted in PDF format on Canvas.

Course requirements and weights

A. Exams (2): 30%

B. Quizzes (v10): 20%

C. Out-of-class enrichment: 20%

D. Electronic Portfolio: 30%

A. Exams

These should be uniform across sections

B. Quizzes

This is an area that individual instructors could tailor to their teaching styles/preferences.

C. Out-of-class enrichment

This is an area that individual instructors could tailor to their teaching styles/preferences but could include:

1. Interaction experience with Deaf community member(s). It is important that students interact with other Deaf people in order to be exposed to a variety of ASL signing styles and to gain first-hand experience with Deaf culture. In line with this core value of ASL instruction, students will have the opportunity to interact with skilled signers in class and are encouraged to engage in
additional activities outside of class. On at least one occasion, I will invite members of the ASL community to class. After this special in-class event, you will produce a signed report based on your experience (ePortfolio assignment #3). Additional details will be provided in class about this assignment.

2. Signing Naturally video assignments and language practice: Using your SN DVD, you’ll be expected to complete various assignments in your student workbook. More details will be provided in class.

3. You may be asked to view movies & videos outside of class, the content of which may also be discussed in class. Additionally, homework assignments and quiz/exam questions may be based on information contained in these videos. Details of any homework assignments based on videos and how they’re to be submitted will be provided in class.

D. Creation of an electronic portfolio (Signature Assignments)

Throughout the semester students will maintain an electronic portfolio of video assignments. The portfolio may also include self- and peer-evaluations of progress and descriptions of the portfolio. Much of the content will be produced in ASL, although there will also be some written information included. Students are required to create and maintain this portfolio through which I can monitor your progress. Due dates for specific parts of the portfolio will be provided as they approach, and the complete portfolio will be due at the end of the semester. Additional details will be provided in class.

Attendance policy & class participation

Uniform, program policies regarding attendance should be developed and agreed upon.

Grading scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A 94+</th>
<th>B+ 87–89</th>
<th>C+ 77–79</th>
<th>D+ 67–69</th>
<th>F 0%–59</th>
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<td>B 84–86</td>
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<td>D 64–66</td>
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University notices and policies

• Academic Honesty

“The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of scholars and teachers. California State University, Sacramento expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles, and in so doing, will protect the integrity of academic work and student grades.”
If I have reason to suspect that your work has not upheld these ideals of academic integrity, the consequences can be severe including a zero for that assignment, a failing grade for the course, or even suspension or expulsion from the university. For more information, read the policy manual on academic honesty: http://www.csus.edu/umanual/student/stu-0100.htm

• **Email as the official form of course-related correspondence**

• **Diversity**

  “At Sacramento State we strive to create awareness and understanding through maintaining the vision and core values of the campus. Diversity enriches the classroom experience through academic discourse, the teachings of social justice and encourages open dialogue. Sacramento State is committed to fostering a multicultural environment and prepares our future leaders towards a multifaceted work force and civic responsibilities.”

For more information, click on “Diversity Plan” at [http://www.csus.edu/saseep](http://www.csus.edu/saseep)

• **Documented Disability**

  If you need any accommodations associated with a learning, physical, and/or mental disability, please provide official documentation from the Services to Students With Disabilities office. SSWD is located in Lassen Hall 1008 and can be contacted by phone at (916) 278-6955, or via email at sswd@csus.edu. Once the I’ve received your letter, we can discuss (in person or via email) how the approved accommodations can be implemented in this course. For more information online, go to [http://www.csus.edu/sswd/](http://www.csus.edu/sswd/).
**Proposed schedule** — should be followed fairly closely across sections, but will vary depending on whether the course is fully on-campus or hybrid, and whether classes are in 50, 75, or some other length, sessions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>SN Lessons (specific lessons will vary across sections)</th>
<th>Out-of-class reading &amp; Assignments (may vary across sections)</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Begin Unit 1</td>
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<td>ePortfolio 1 due</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Unit 1 continued, Begin Unit 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Unit 2 continued</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>ePortfolio 2 due</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Unit 3 continued</td>
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<td><strong>Exam 1</strong></td>
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<td>ePortfolio 3 due</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td><strong>Exam 2</strong></td>
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**NOTE:** Subject to change to meet course objectives and to accommodate guest speakers and other activities. Please be diligent about checking Canvas for updates.