

**DATE:** May 15, 2020

**SUBJECT:** New Academic Program  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
Deaf Studies, Bachelor of Science  
(CIP 05.0211– Deaf Studies)

**ACTION RECOMMENDED:** Approval

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**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville proposes a Bachelor of Science (BS) in Deaf Studies with the option of a concentration in American Sign Language (ASL) Education. The College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences currently offers concentrations in Deaf Education and Educational Interpreting, and if approved, these concentrations will be housed under the proposed Deaf Studies BS program in addition to the concentration in ASL.

Students in the proposed program will take necessary prerequisite courses that will increase knowledge of the Deaf Community and Deaf Culture, grow students’ ASL linguistic and metalinguistic competencies, develop students’ lesson and unit planning skills associated with ASL teaching, and provide supported field placements in ASL classrooms. The proposed program would be the first ASL education licensure program in the state.

**INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNING BOARD APPROVAL**

The proposed Deaf Studies BS program was approved by the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees on February 19, 2020.

**PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

Fall 2020

**RELEVANCE TO INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STRATEGIC PLAN**

The proposed program aligns with the State’s Master Plan by increasing postsecondary education options for Tennesseans who have interest in Deaf-related fields and ASL teaching while increasing the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary credential. Additionally, recent state legislation permits American Sign Language (ASL) as a foreign language for high school students, increasing the demand for ASL certified educators significantly across all sectors of education in Tennessee. The proposed program would provide certified ASL educators, thus increasing the supply of needed professionals in the state to work with an often underserved population.

The proposed program aligns with the University of Tennessee’s commitment to provide undergraduate, graduate, and professional education programs in a diverse learning environment that prepares students to be leaders in a global society and would allow UTK to serve Tennessee populations that are more diverse. Additionally, the proposed program would directly contribute to participation in a global society, as Deaf populations in countries across North America, South America, and the Caribbean utilize ASL.

### **CURRICULUM**

The proposed Deaf Studies BS program will require 120 credit hours including 37 credit hours of general education courses, 30 credit hours of core courses, 22 credit hours of licensure courses and practicum requirements, nine hours of methods courses, and 22 hours of elective courses. The program will primarily be delivered on-ground and will not require the development of any new courses.

### **PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY**

The proposed Deaf Studies BS program projects an initial enrollment of 48 students with a five-year enrollment of 68 students. Enrollment and graduation projections include the two existing concentrations (Deaf Education and Educational Interpreting) along with the proposed concentration in American Sign Language.

UTK made minor adjustments to the initial enrollment class based on uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Appendix A outlines UTK’s response to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the proposed Deaf Studies BS program. Five-year enrollment and graduation projections are listed below.

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Enrollment</b>	48	53	58	63	68
<b>Graduates</b>	12	12	14	17	17

### **PROGRAM DUPLICATION**

There are no other programs in the state that are currently structured in the same manner as the proposed Deaf Studies BS program. East Tennessee State University and University of Memphis both offer minors which focus on basic and intermediate ASL culture and history. However, neither institution offers a degree. Additionally, Maryville College offers an ASL and Deaf Studies Bachelor of Arts program but the degree does not lead to licensure.

### **EXTERNAL JUDGEMENT**

An external review of the proposed program was conducted during an institutional site visit on September 30, 2019. Dr. Todd Czubek, Lecturer of Deaf Studies at Boston University, served as the external reviewer. The site visit included meetings with campus administrators, faculty, prospective students and community partners.

Dr. Czubek made a recommendation for the approval of the proposed program and stated "Throughout the course of the review it was made clear that the plan for the newly proposed concentration, Teaching ASL, was well thought out, comprehensive, and designed to support the development of excellent teachers of American Sign Language." Additionally, Dr. Czubek added "one of the most impressive and inspiring elements of the proposed program is its potential to be exceptional."

### **STUDENT DEMAND**

A student interest survey was distributed along with a focus group to gauge students' interest in the proposed Deaf Studies program. A total of 334 students were surveyed with 171 responses. Results of the survey included: over half of the students currently enrolled in ASL courses reported a desire to at least pursue ASL as a minor; and of those already declared for other majors in the School of Education, 40 percent of respondents reported that they would have considered Deaf Studies should the option have been available to them. Additionally, the majority of students in a focus group of 22 students in the ASL linguistics class were supportive of the proposed program. Lastly, there has been a 34 percent increase in language courses at UTK since 2006 and ASL is currently the third highest enrolled language program at UTK.

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM GRADUATES**

Nationally, there has been an increase in ASL programs and in 2016, the US Department of Education documented a shortage of trained educators and a national organization rated the demand for ASL teachers at 4.66 on a 5-point scale. Additionally, according to the American Sign Language Teachers Association, the demand for ASL teachers in Tennessee far exceeds the current supply.

Currently, there are over 600 students who are deaf in Tennessee schools scattered around the state and 75 percent of deaf students attend Tennessee public schools. Parents of these students are increasingly asking for additional services or mainstreaming these students which put a strain on districts without trained professionals. The proposed program would be the first teacher licensure program for ASL in the state and would be able to fill these gaps in services for existing students and also fill the growing demand for ASL teachers in the K-12 system.

Letters of support for the proposed program were provided by the American Sign Language Teachers Association, Tennessee School for the Deaf, Knox County Department of Public Instruction, Knox County Schools World Languages Specialist, Bearden Senior High School, Central High School, Putnam County School System, and Knoxville Center for the Deaf.

### **INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO DELIVER THE PROGRAM**

The proposed program will have minimal impact on the current offerings at UTK. The Department currently offers much of the coursework necessary for the proposed Deaf Studies program based on an existing minor in Deaf Studies and existing concentrations in Deaf Education and Educational Interpreting along with a team of eight faculty members

qualified to teach in this area. Appendix B outlines the 5-year financial projections for the proposed Deaf Studies BS program which outlines minimal expenditures.

### **ASSESSMENT AND POST-APPROVAL MONITORING**

An annual performance review of the proposed program will be conducted for the first five years following program approval. The review will be based on benchmarks established in the approved proposal. At the end of this period, the campus, institutional governing board, and Commission staff will perform a summative evaluation. The benchmarks include, but are not limited to, enrollment and graduation, program cost, progress toward accreditation, and other metrics set by the institution and Commission staff. If benchmarks are not met during the monitoring period, the Commission may recommend that the institutional governing board terminate the program. If additional time is needed and requested by the institutional governing board, the Commission may choose to extend the monitoring period.

**Tennessee Higher Education  
Commission Coronavirus Impact on  
New Academic Programs: April 15, 2020**



*In light of the current Coronavirus pandemic, THEC is requesting additional information for new academic programs that are slated for the May 15, 2020 Commission meeting agenda. Please submit your response to the questions listed below by April 24, 2020. Any changes to expenditures and/or revenues will require a revised THEC Financial Projections Form.*

**Institution:** University of Tennessee, Knoxville

**Academic Program, Degree Designation:** Bachelor of Science in Deaf Studies, with ASL Education Concentration

**Proposed Implementation Date:** August 2020

**Questions: Coronavirus Impact on New Academic Programs**

**Overall Program Need**

- Is this academic program as relevant as before the pandemic?

*The new program provides an undergraduate pathway to become an ASL teacher, and it is not anticipated that the demand for ASL teachers in Tennessee will be impacted by the pandemic in the long term. It will take 4 years for a student to complete the Deaf Studies undergraduate degree with an ASL Education concentration, and an additional year to complete their teaching internship. The first licensed ASL teachers produced from the new academic program will appear on the job market in 2025. Tennessee state bills that have recently passed allow high school students to take ASL to satisfy foreign language credits (SB0524, March 2017) and allow ASL courses to satisfy foreign language requirements for admission to undergraduate degree programs (SB1514, February 2018). Our school partners have expressed enthusiasm for offering ASL to their students. There is no reason to suspect that the interest or need would decline due to the pandemic.*

- Does this remain the most needed utilization of institutional resources in light of the pandemic?

*The new academic program does not need additional institutional resources for implementation. It will draw upon current resources (e.g., current ASL, World Language, and Teacher Licensure courses) as well as faculty expertise that already exists in the Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education (TPTE). As interest in the program grows, there will be a need for additional resources, including extra intern placement supervisors. Such decisions will include institutional leadership (i.e., TPTE department head and the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences dean and/or budget director). See NAPP pages 9 & 11.*

**Implementation Date, Admissions, and Enrollment**

- Any projected change in the proposed implementation date for the program?

*No*

- Will there be any adjustments needed in admission standards?

*Admission Board interviews for entry into the program will be offered online via Zoom until in-person interviews are reinstated. The admission standards have not changed.*

- Have enrollment projections shifted for the proposed program? If so, please provide an updated enrollment and graduation table and include an updated financial projections form.

*Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and the limitations in predicting 2020 fall enrollment, we have reduced the projected enrollment for the Deaf Studies major from 53 to 48 (Aug 2020-May 2021), and revised the degrees awarded to reflect this modification. However, the changes to the enrollment projections in light of the*

### **Program Delivery**

- What is the current delivery mode of the proposed academic program?

*In person and online*

- Are there plans to change the delivery mode for this program in light of the pandemic?

*UTK has successfully moved all spring and summer 2020 classes to online delivery due to the pandemic.*

*Should this be required in Fall 2020, the Deaf Studies program courses (already in operation) will continue to be available to students online.*

### **Staffing and Placements**

- What faculty and staff searches are planned prior to implementing the proposed program?

*There are no new faculty/staff positions needed for the Deaf Studies academic program to begin. We will begin the program using current faculty resources.*

- Are any faculty and staff searches currently being advertised? If so, what is the anticipated hire date for these positions? Any challenges in hiring for these positions?

*Dr. Pattie Davis-Wiley (Professor of World Languages, and named in this proposal) is retiring, and there is a faculty search underway to fill her vacated position. The position is advertised as Assistant Professor in World Language/ ESL Education (tenure track). The search committee has indicated that there is a satisfactory pool of applicants; they have since narrowed the pool to three candidates for interviewing. The hire date is August 2020.*

***Update 4/29/20:** Effective April 28, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville announced that nearly all current searches, including the one noted above, are to be placed on hold due to Covid-19. The original version of this form was submitted on April 24, at which time the information provided above was correct. Despite placing this search on hold, there will be no adverse effects for the program, as there are currently other faculty available who can teach Dr. Davis-Wiley's courses until the search reopens.*

### **Accreditation**

- Are there any accreditation considerations in light of the pandemic for the proposed program?

*UTK's teacher preparation programs were accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education in 2014 and then transitioned to accreditation through the Council of the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) in 2014.*

*In addition to annual reporting, CAEP conducts an in-depth program review on a seven-year cycle. This review includes the submission of a self-study report to CAEP, which must include multiple sources of data and evidence that the EPP meets the rigorous CAEP standards. Following the submission of the self-study report, CAEP will conduct a site visit along with the Tennessee Department of Education (TNDOE) to verify the information presented in the self-study report. The site visitors will author a report to submit to the CAEP accreditation council, who make the final accreditation decision.*

*UTK is undergoing an in-depth 7-year review. UTK's Self-Study report has been submitted to CAEP (<https://sites.google.com/utk.edu/bgse-2020-caep-ssr/home?authuser=1>), and the site visit is currently planned for October 2020.*

**Fiscal**

- If applicable, are there any renovation and/or equipment purchases that have been affected by the pandemic?

*A new space (231 Claxton Complex) has been dedicated to the Deaf Studies academic program. There were plans to convert the room into an ASL filming studio in the Spring of 2020. These renovations are now delayed to the Fall 2020 semester.*

- How equipped is the proposed program to endure any significant institutional budget cuts?

*The renovation expenses are being covered by F/A returned to the Center on Deafness and faculty PI funds (certified effort on grants). Those funds will continue to be available in the 2020-2021 academic year.*

**Other**

- Are there any additional changes/considerations for the proposed academic program due to the pandemic?

*Not at this time.*

**Appendix B**  
**THEC Financial Projections**  
**University of Tennessee, Knoxville**  
**Deaf Studies Bachelor of Science**

	Year 1, 2020-21	Year 2, 2021-22	Year 3, 2022-23	Year 4, 2023-24	Year 5, 2024-25
<b>I. Expenditures</b>					
<b>A. One-time Expenditures</b>					
New/Renovated Space	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
Library	-	-	-	-	-
Consultants	3,000	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-	-
Other	500	250	250	250	250
<b>Sub-Total One-time</b>	<b>\$ 3,500</b>	<b>\$ 250</b>	<b>\$ 250</b>	<b>\$ 250</b>	<b>\$ 250</b>
<b>B. Recurring Expenditures</b>					
<b>Personnel</b>					
<b>Administration</b>					
Salary	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Benefits	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub-Total Administration</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Faculty</b>					
Salary	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Benefits	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub-Total Faculty</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Support Staff</b>					
Salary	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Benefits	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub-Total Support Staff</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Graduate Assistants</b>					
Salary	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Benefits	-	-	-	-	-
Tuition and Fees* (See Below)	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub-Total Graduate Assistants</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Operating</b>					
Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Printing	-	-	-	-	-
Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub-Total Operating</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Total Recurring</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES (A + B)</b>	<b>\$ 3,500</b>	<b>\$ 250</b>	<b>\$ 250</b>	<b>\$ 250</b>	<b>\$ 250</b>



	Year 1, 2020-21	Year 2, 2021-22	Year 3, 2022-23	Year 4, 2023-24	Year 5, 2024-25
<b>II. Revenue</b>	50 students	53 students	58 students	63 students	68 students
Tuition and Fees <sup>1</sup>	676,312	730,677	814,696	901,316	990,537
Institutional Reallocations <sup>2</sup>	(672,812)	(730,427)	(814,446)	(901,066)	(990,287)
Federal Grants <sup>3</sup>	-	-	-	-	-
Private Grants or Gifts <sup>4</sup>	-	-	-	-	-
Other <sup>5</sup>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>BALANCED BUDGET LINE</b>	<b>\$ 3,500</b>	<b>\$ 250</b>	<b>\$ 250</b>	<b>\$ 250</b>	<b>\$ 250</b>

**Notes:**

(1) In what year is tuition and fee revenue expected to be generated and explain any differential fees. Tuition and fees include maintenance fees, out-of-state tuition, and any applicable earmarked fees for the program.

Yearly tuition and fees rates are based on 2018-19 in-state tuition for fall and spring semester at 12+ credits each (\$6503 x 2 semesters).  
An annual 2% increase in tuition is applied.

(2) Please identify the source(s) of the institutional reallocations, and grant matching requirements if applicable.

N/A

(3) Please provide the source(s) of the Federal Grant including the granting department and CFDA(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance) number.

N/A

(4) Please provide the name of the organization(s) or individual(s) providing grant(s) or gift(s).

N/A

(5) Please provide information regarding other sources of the funding.

N/A