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TRANSITIONAL SERVICES FOR HEARING IMPAIRED YOUNG ADULTS USING
THE CONTINUING EDUCATION DIVISION OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Introduction

The Community college has emerged as a major point of access for many individuals who have special needs and who wish to continue their education beyond the secondary level. The advantages of enrollment in a community college include low cost, responsiveness to the adult learners’ special needs, the availability of non-credit continuing education courses and training programs, and its geographic accessibility.

Description of LaGuardia Community College

From its inception, LaGuardia’s fundamental mission has been to serve non-traditional students who were usually excluded from the mainstream of higher education. LaGuardia opened its doors in the Spring of 1971 to its first students, a group of 125 paraprofessionals employed within the New York City Board of Education as aides, education assistants and family assistants. Today, LaGuardia has an enrollment of 9,000 full-time students in degree programs and approximately 20,000 students in both on and off campus continuing education programs.

LaGuardia was also the first community college in the nation to offer a comprehensive program in cooperative education requiring all full time students to complete 3 ten week internships in conjunction with a series of biweekly co-op seminars. These seminars are designed for students to discuss and analyze their work experiences. One of the many advantages of the co-op experience for all students, and more so for students with special needs, is the opportunity to explore various career options and to enhance personal growth, usually while earning a salary.

The Role of the Division of Adult and Continuing Education

It is no coincidence that LaGuardia’s Division of Adult and Continuing Education served as the incubator for the initial non-credit continuing Education Program for Deaf Adults. From its inception, the Division of Adult and Continuing Education has played a pivotal role in enabling the college to fulfill its mission to provide access for non-traditional populations. Its ability to attract funding from public and private sources has enabled its staff of 60 full-time professionals to develop and offer programs for veterans, women, older adults, ESL learners, out of school youth, youth with learning disabilities, and GED preparation. There is, in addition, a College for Children serving over 300 children in Saturday academic and leisure programs, and academic and job training program for homeless families living in shelters and hotels, an Adult Career and Resource Center and its Model Comprehensive Program for Deaf Adults.
Access to post secondary programs for deaf adults should include not only degree/credit programs but the full range of non-degree continuing education programs which may include academic skills preparation, career preparation, personal development, internships on and off campus, and job training programs. Moreover, true access to such programs for deaf persons must include the ability of a wide range of specialized support services. Without these, very few deaf students will benefit from the available educational opportunities regardless of whether the campus is a mainstreamed one like LaGuardia's or Lehman College, a 4 year college within the City University of New York, or like Gallaudet University, the only liberal arts university for deaf persons.

The continuing education programs for deaf adults (P.D.A.) were developed at LaGuardia Community College in 1974 to meet the postsecondary educational needs of the deaf population. By providing a comprehensive support system for deaf students consisting of sign language and oral interpreters; counselors, teachers and tutors skilled in communicating with deaf persons; notetakers as well as telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDDs), the college has been able to attract and educate a "critical mass" of deaf students in both non-credit and credit programs. We currently serve over 150 deaf students annually across all program areas.

Prior to establishing its Programs for Deaf Adults, LaGuardia staff visited and talked with administrators in the continuing education division at Gallaudet College. We also convened a local advisory committee composed of deaf consumers and professionals in the field of deafness. At our first meeting, committee members acknowledged the lack of any post-secondary programs available to the sizeable deaf population in New York City, and recommended a number of leisure and communication skills courses for potential deaf students. "An Evening of Entertainment and Education" was held for the deaf community who learned about the courses' content through multimedia presentations. All the potential instructors were deaf and were also well known within the deaf community. Entertainment and refreshments concluded a very successful event which attracted over 200 deaf persons and stimulated 90 deaf persons to enroll in the first continuing education program on a college campus in New York City.

LaGuardia's approach to program development for its deaf student population has been consistent with the principles outlined by the Conference of Executives of American Schools for the Deaf (CEASD). Appropriately concerned about "the quality of post-secondary programs, basic criteria for such programs, and the availability of such programs, the conference meeting in Toronto in 1972 passed a resolution providing for a working committee to identify and disseminate principles which will assist post-secondary institutions in assuring that the education and training of deaf students accepted into their respective settings to be one of quality." The committee developed a set of specific principles subsumed under these topics: Planning, Administration, Staffing, Students, Curriculum and Support Services. These areas were to be addressed by administrators in the design, development and implementation of programs for deaf persons.

LaGuardia Community College not only addressed these basic principles but was also convinced that deaf hearing impaired individuals would be responsive to and obtain considerable benefits from a well planned and comprehensive program which considered factors identified by Bowe, Watson and Anderson, (1973) as essential for an effective services delivery model. These factors include:

1. Ongoing identification through formal and informal needs assessments of physical, psychological and educational barriers to participation in post-

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secondary educational programs.
2. Implementation of an ongoing, flexible support services delivery system to meet the needs of the deaf individual.
3. Expansion of access to a diversity of courses and educational activities encompassing many of the deaf consumer's needs.
4. Refinement and development of effective teaching methods, techniques and written materials geared to needs of all deaf learners.
5. Provision for the continuing delivery of interpreting, counseling and other necessary educational and support services on a permanent basis.
6. Compilation and maintenance of an efficient information dissemination system.
7. Economy of costs for maintenance of program and deaf consumer participation.

LaGuardia's response to the above has been as follows:

Conducted Periodic Needs Assessment

Between 1974 and 1987, a total of 4 formal needs assessments and one program evaluation were completed ranging from "An Assessment of Needs for Counseling Services in a Two Year College Program for Deaf Individuals" in 1974 by Frank Bowe to "Assessing LaGuardia's Capability to Develop an Interpreter Training Program" in 1987 by Margaret Ransom. In general, the Programs for Deaf Adults' administrative and instructional processes were strengthened following implementation of the recommendations from these assessments.

These assessments were also of critical importance in planning for the anticipated increase in the numbers of deaf students leaving schools for the deaf through 1990. Prior to 1981, LaGuardia had a quarterly average enrollment of 25 deaf students in non-credit academic programs and 6-10 students in degree programs. Today we serve 85-100 students in non-credit programs each quarter and 45-50 students in credit programs.

Provided a Full Complement of Specialized Support Services

In a 1975 survey of deaf persons, Bowe and Watson found that only 8% of their respondents reported any post secondary education which when juxtaposed with other data, revealed severe under education among the deaf population. They also found "a strong need for counseling assistance among their sample (since) almost half of their respondents were unaware of the services they could obtain from vocational rehabilitation...and very few were aware of career alternatives open to them."

The need for transitional support services to prepare deaf persons for full employment was also strongly recommended, and LaGuardia responded by providing the following services:

Counseling. With the significant increase in the enrollment of deaf students at LaGuardia, 2 full time counselors were hired and one p/t evening counselor. These counselors assist students with academic problems, or lent all students (credit and non-credit) to LaGuardia's resources, academic and training opportunities as well as extra-curricula activities, teach career education classes, coordinate topical seminars of interest to students e.g., "the O.V.R. Process", "Parenthood Planning", "Community and Resource Information", while handling course advisement, registration and transfer issues.

The "Orientation to LaGuardia" and other counseling and advisement activities workshops have resulted in a consistent movement of deaf students from the non-credit to the credit programs. During 1983, 60% of deaf students in degree programs were completers of the non-credit academic programs, an outcome attributed to
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intensive, ongoing collaboration and information sharing and encouragement which exist among the counselors, instructors and students.

Interpreting. In additional to a full-time staff interpreter, LaGuardia utilizes each quarter, over 26 part-time interpreters, most of whom are placed in credit courses. Concern that deaf students are assigned interpreters with excellent skills has resulted in both a Mentoring Program for interpreter where a less experienced interpreter is able to observe and learn from a certified and more experienced interpreter, as well as the development of a Continuing Education Program for Interpreters where a range of professional development workshops are available.

Since there is a range of language abilities and communication modes among deaf students, the Coordinator of Interpreter Services who handles all student and staff interpreter service requests, must be able to assess each student's communication mode (e.g., ASL, signed English, Pidgin signed English or Oral) before assigning an interpreter. The language modalities of our deaf student population include:

1. Student whose primary language acquisition is American Sign Language (ASL) and English is a second language.
2. Students whose first language is English and ASL is a second language.
3. Students whose only language is English (no ASL skills).
4. Foreign born deaf students whose first language is neither English nor ASL.

All instructors and staff in the non-credit programs are fluent in communicating with deaf students hence fewer interpreters are used there.

Tutoring. Tutoring for deaf students in credit programs is available through several channels. Two tutors with ASL skills are available in the college's writing center. Moreover, if deaf students require tutors with a specific knowledge base e.g., accounting, these students may request same through the counselor or hire the tutor directly.

Readers' Aid Funding, available through the State Education Department, usually pays for this service. Credit students may also receive tutoring by enrolling in the non-credit upper level classes. Most deaf students can and do benefit from tutoring services, particularly in courses where concepts are unfamiliar and abstract. Hours of frustration can be avoided through discussion with a tutor skilled in communicating with deaf persons.

Tutoring in the non-credit programs is available based on staff evaluation of students' needs. For example, individual tutoring may be recommended for a foreign born student depending on the level of formal education. However, classes are generally small so that students receive individualized attention.

Notetaking. Deaf students are provided with notetaking services on a request basis. They are informed of the availability of this and other support services during their orientation sessions with the academic counselor who keeps an ample supply of notetaking sheets for student use. The majority of students utilize notetaking services; however, counselors have identified a real need for trained notetakers since many hearing students are either poor notetakers, or do not write legibly.

Expanded Access to Diverse Program and Activities

The Programs for Deaf Adults has over the past 14 years capitalized on the rich academic, vocational and career resources available on campus through the various divisions to ensure that deaf students are provided with the knowledge, skills and opportunities needed for their transition to gainful employment and an increased sense of self worth and achievement. The Programs for Deaf Adults has enabled deaf students to:

A. Prepare for the High School Equivalency examination.
B. Move into the workplace with improved
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skills in Business English and Word Processing.

C. Continue their education in LaGuardia’s two year degree programs.

D. Transfer to Gallaudet College or the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (Rochester) feeling better prepared to handle college work.

E. Continue in a mainstreamed four-year college, e.g., Lehman College of the City University of New York.

F. Strengthen their academic skills as transfers from N.T.I.D. and Gallaudet to which they return, better prepared.

Specifically, the Programs for Deaf Adults provide the following transitional program options:

Non-Credit. Courses offered for non-credit are: Basic Reading, Writing and Math Skills, High School Equivalency Preparation, College Preparation Skills, E.S.L. for Foreign Born Deaf Students, Vocational Training in Typing, Word Processing and Business English, Basic Skills Tutoring, and Drivers Education. The program also provides opportunities for career education, on campus internships, academic, personal and career counseling and follow up, sign language skills upgrading, and professional and para-professional role models.

Credit Program. Deaf students have access to all degree programs on campus and have pursued degrees in Data Processing, Accounting/Managerial Sciences, Computer Science, Human Services, Liberal Arts, and Office Technology. They are also able to transfer to Lehman College, a CUNY senior college providing full support services for deaf students or to pursue other transfer options.

In addition, LaGuardia’s Theatre Department has for the last 5 years, sponsored annual performances by the Little Theatre of the Deaf which attracts over 700 deaf and hearing public school children as well as faculty, staff and deaf students. At least 2 performances of student plays are interpreted annually and, following a recent fundraising effort initiated by the Theatre Director, interpreters will be available at all theatre performances for children. Interpreters are routinely available at all college wide events including graduation ceremonies, thereby making them accessible to all deaf persons. Deaf students have also formed a club, “Student Organization for Deaf Awareness”, (S.O.D.A.), where common experiences and concerns are shared and where hearing students with an interest in communicating with deaf persons have the opportunity to do so.

Encouraged Development and Compilation of Effective Instructional Method/Materials

Prior to 1983, the chronic repeat rate for deaf students in the college’s basic skills courses resulted in a high attrition rate. With approval from the Chairperson of our Communication Skills Department, a special section in English Language Development for Deaf Students Only was piloted using many instructional techniques from English as a Second Language (ESL). Of the initial 18 deaf students who enrolled in over 4 quarters in successive levels, only 1 student repeated the course. Consequently, LaGuardia now offers basic reading and writing classes for deaf students (4 levels in each) taught by a full-time professor who has a background in deafness education. Her most recent recommendation is to extend each course over 2 quarters without penalty to students to maximize gains in reading and writing proficiency.

The Coordinator of Academic Programs in the non-credit programs has stressed the importance of introducing only relevant information and materials to LaGuardia’s diverse deaf population since typically, “These students have experienced severe educational defects. “Real World” reading material, including articles from the Silent News, assist in motivating students to learn... (and) students have demonstrated a significantly greater benefit from assigned texts that can be read from beginning to end.”
Both academic instructors (credit and non-credit) meet regularly to share insights and pedagogues. They have also worked closely with faculty in the ESL area and in the English Department resulting in an increasing interest in deafness among various faculty members. Placement tests which more accurately measure what the deaf student knows and which ask questions “based upon a short story or article with some relevance to the students’ lives as an assessment of their current skills…and key in on all the aspects of the reading process” have also been developed. Deaf students’ performance across various levels have so far indicated that they were accurately evaluated and placed and that, indeed, they were able to build on earlier skills.

Instructors also now include more deaf oriented material and captioned news items within their curricula. Also, two groups focusing on teaching deaf students have been active over the past year:

1. On campus, an Ad Hoc Committee on Teaching Deaf Students composed of faculty, staff and students has encouraged open discussion of acuity concerns in educating deaf students. Besides obtaining information on successful teaching strategies, faculty have in the process learned much about deafness as well as how deaf students perceive themselves and their instructors’ attitudes towards them. Another outcome was the pilot course, “Oral Communication for Deaf Students” where the goal is to improve the deaf students’ ASL, or oral skills depending on the needs of the class. The positive response to the course has resulted in the request for another class in Spring 1989.

2. The Academic Alliance in Language and Literacy Development in Deaf Students, initiated by Dr. Sue Livingston, has attracted over 34 participants including educators, interpreters and interested consumers from secondary and post-secondary settings who share an interest in the education of deaf persons. Dr. Frank Bowe, Regional Commissioner of R.S.A. has been a guest speaker at one of this group’s activities.

The P.D.A.’s recent acquisition of a Portable TV Mini Studio featuring state of the art technology has strengthened the program’s capability to provide improved educational services and to develop unique ways to assist deaf learners e.g., videotaping required or selected courses where interpreters are present so that students can review the lecture at their individual pace. The studio is also used to train interpreters, tutors and teachers who work with deaf students at LaGuardia.

Moreover, a new Apple computer lab for the P.D.A. has enabled more deaf students to obtain word processing skills and to become familiar with the computer. It has also enabled staff to become more familiar with instructional software which works well with our student population.

Ensured Continuity of Support Services
Through a Combination of Fiscal Resources

Funding for P.D.A.’s operation has generally been obtained from a combination of several sources: college, local and state dollars. We were also recipients of a federal award from 1981-83. In his study on “State Legislated Funds for the Postsecondary Education of Deaf Students,” DiLorenzo, National Technical Institute for the Deaf (N.T.I.D. 1986), has highlighted the increasingly significant role of state governments in their delivery of services to persons with disabilities and has identified 2 funding approaches taken by many states.

The first approach “attempts to maximize access for deaf students to the individual institution of the state’s system of higher education.” (p.3). Examples ranged from California’s full accessibility
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for deaf students to support services on every state campus to the exemption "from tuition and fees at all institutions of higher education utilizing public funds" in Texas, (p.3). The second approach is to concentrate state funding in one or more colleges within the state, the goal being to maintain "cost effective comprehensive support services," (p.5).

LaGuardia's initial award from the U.S. Department of Education (1981-83) enabled us to improve the quality and quantity of the support services available to deaf students. The resultant significant increase in deaf student enrollment established LaGuardia more firmly as a postsecondary institution truly committed to improving educational opportunities for the deaf population. New York State has always played a significant role in funding P.D.A.'s operations through its Department of Education/Vocation Education Act of 1976. The latter has provided consistent funding and oversight of program operations since 1975. Also, the New York State Office of Vocational Rehabilitation through its local offices contributes by paying tuition and fees for specific support services for eligible clients.

Since Governor Cuomo's visit to the Programs for Deaf Adults in 1985, we have received a sizeable portion of our annual operational costs which totals over $400,000 from the Executive Budget. Without the latter funding, the program could not possibly provide the current level of services to its deaf population even though the college continues to provide direct financial subsides through tax levy lines and in kind services.

Maintained an Information Dissemination System

Programs for Deaf Adults staff has maintained master files of all deaf students who have enrolled at LaGuardia. Also, current and former students in the non-credit program continue to receive course announcements regularly since their names are entered in the Division of Continuing Education's active master file.

Lists of organizations serving deaf persons, professionals in the field, interpreters, and institutions serving deaf persons including the New York City Board of Education's Hearing Impaired Programs, as well as nationally known programs, have also been compiled.

Moreover, by reconvening our initial Advisory Committee, staff intends to broaden our constituency and to obtain input from the Committee regarding increased outreach to unserved populations.

Maintained a Cost Effective Program for Both the College and the Deaf Consumer

To serve deaf students effectively, an institution must provide the necessary complement of support services: interpreting, counseling, tutoring, and notetaking. LaGuardia has achieved this goal while attempting to maintain a relatively cost effective program. Academic preparation classes incur the lowest student cost while degree and vocational training are more costly. Simultaneously, tuition costs in both credit and non-credit academic programs are quite modest because LaGuardia is a public institution. Finally, the deaf consumer's ability to pay is a consistent factor in the determination of fees in tuition based on non-credit courses since only 50% of our students are sponsored by OVR. The reminder pay their own tuition and fees.

Issues and Options in the Transition Process

LaGuardia's perspective on the transition of deaf students from school to work has included the provision of a continuum of educational and career related services from the opportunity for foreign born deaf students to learn ASL and English language skills to career preparation workshops and opportunities for deaf students to move from
non-credit into credit programs. Deaf students with leadership potential have been identified and encouraged to assume a variety of leadership roles on campus e.g., delivering presentations at educational hearings, recruitment meetings, meeting visitors to the campus or serving on campus committees. Many of our more advanced students serve as tutors in the non-credit academic program where they earn good hourly wages.

Concomitant with the many positive program and student outcomes, a number of student, instructional, and administrative issues have surfaced during the transitional preparation process. Identification and discussion of some of the issues affecting students and the options utilized are described below:

Student and Instructional Issues

High School Diplomas. During the counseling of deaf students around college entry, counselors observed that many recent high school graduates who were potential degree program enrollees lacked a regular high school diploma. The majority possessed an Individualized Education Plan diploma (I.E.P.) which is not recognized in the college admissions process. Students were encouraged to take the General Equivalency Diploma by enrolling in our High School Equivalency Preparation program. Staff then held several discussions with the Board of Education's administrative staff to explore some early intervention strategies e.g., enrichment classes at LaGuardia to improve deaf students' chances to obtain a regular diploma and classes to prepare deaf students for the Regents Competency exam. That latter is now a regular non-credit course offering.

Redesign of the G.E.D. Examination. In an effort to discourage high school students from seeking the G.E.D. as an easy way to a diploma as well as to enhance the image and quality of the GED diploma, the New York State Department of Education has redesigned all tests to reflect changes in high school curricula, requirements and standards. The new test now stresses application, analysis, comprehension and evaluation. The addition of a writing component, the Essay, constitutes a major obstacle for deaf students who so often have used the G.E.D. as a means to enter college programs or to obtain better jobs. To address this issue, staff has already increased the volume of writing in the curriculum and has also been talking with other institutions to informally assess any significant shifts in the pass rate of deaf students on the exam. It appears that deaf students generally need 3-5 attempts to achieve the required passing score. Other strategies are under discussion pending results from the next few examinations.

Gaps in Basic Skills. As discussed earlier, deaf students enter LaGuardia's non-credit and credit programs with enormous gaps in basic skills areas. As a result, close attention is paid to their performances in Reading and English courses so that appropriate help (e.g., tutoring) can be given early to build needed skills. Our academic instructors have combined their own insights and experience with the most recent research on teaching English language syntax and writing, from the use of “dialogue journals” to “rewrites” as effective tools to reinforce skills. Moreover, in preparing for reading or writing assignments now, students are initially provided with sufficient background information to stimulate their interest and to introduce new concepts before delving into the assignment. Also, in using rewriting as a tool for skills building, teachers “focus on the conceptual aspect of the essay, rather than grammatical organization (since)...once concepts are understood, grammar will be acquired with much more ease.”

The hiring of two experienced full-time professionals, one of whom teaches in the degree basic skills area and the other within the non-credit programs, has maximized the opportunities for
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deaf students to obtain the skills they need. Concomitantly, the availability of Basic Reading and Writing credit classes for deaf students each quarter has enabled deaf students to work together and to strengthen their English language and reading skills before being mainstreamed with hearing students. As of September 1988, deaf students will also be able to take an Oral Communication class for credit where their ASL or oral skills will be enhanced and evaluated, instead of being mainstreamed in the traditional speech improvement course for hearing students.

Access to Career Education. Many deaf students enroll in PDA with limited access to career or vocational information. Few have had the experience common to hearing teenagers of having held a summer job. Quigley and Kretschmer (1982) report on several studies which indicated that deaf students tended to select jobs which were semi-skilled or unskilled and were at a lower socioeconomic level than their hearing peers. To address this issue, PDA staff has incorporated Career Education seminars into its academic program, invited deaf employees from a range of occupations to address students, shared information on the range of Technical and Vocational training available through LaGuardia's degree programs or elsewhere, as well as served as an internship site for students from the public high schools, particularly during the summer. Moreover, staff members serve as role models since 80% of our instructors and tutors, as well as the Program Director, are deaf.

However, a more formalized approach needs to be undertaken to ensure that all deaf students entering Programs for Deaf Adults non-credit programs are exposed to career education. Since all full-time students in degree programs must participate in 3 internship experiences, their transition to the workplace is well structured, supervised and allows for bi-weekly feedback in required seminars.

Deaf Students with Special Needs. The program serves deaf students who have additional special needs. Many are referred to LaGuardia from other agencies to obtain the assistance needed to define or assess their career goals. These students include a hearing female with a degree in Special Education who lost her voice through an as yet undiagnosed disease. Her OVR counselor was aware of the loss in self-esteem and pessimism which had developed, and steered her to LaGuardia. After a lengthy interview, the Program Director suggested that she learn AFL which would allow her another mode of communication and did not require use of her voice. This individual is currently involved in learning AFL and has in the process discovered another viable career area. She now plans to pursue further studies in deafness education in order to teach deaf children and feels much more hopeful about the future.

Other special needs individuals include:

A. Older deaf adults who have few available resources for lifelong learning opportunities. One staff member has focused her attention on attracting this population to inexpensive for free, short term, non-credit courses such as 'Health and Nutrition', and 'Relaxation Exercises' to stimulate their interest.

B. Deaf students with learning disabilities. Since there is no learning disability specialist on staff, we have used an Educational Evaluator on a consultant basis to assess a few students for whom our instructional approaches appeared ineffective. Recommendations from these evaluations were useful in identifying specific techniques to help the students. It was important that the evaluator was able to communicate directly with her students and that she had a solid background in deafness education.

Administrative Issues. The administrative and institutional issues are many but only two will
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be highlighted here.

Orientation, Advocacy for a Nurturing Environment, and Training. One of the roles for FDA staff, both administrative and support, is to create an environment on campus which fosters personal, intellectual and social growth for all deaf students across the continuum of programs, credit and non-credit. Access to socialization opportunities must be experienced by deaf students, and ways to increase these opportunities can be promoted by the kind of quality of orientation programs which are implemented by the program’s staff.

In his study, “Outcomes of Increased Access to Postsecondary Education by Deaf Persons,” Gerald Walter (NTID, 1987) noted that the persistence withdrawal theory (Tinto, 1975) suggest that the greater the student’s level of social and academic integration, the more likely he or she is to continue at the particular institution,” (p.15). Although this theory could be generalized to deaf students, administrators and faculty need to be aware that for deaf students, communication and academic achievement may constitute real barriers to full campus participation and integration. Walter cautions that “even though a hearing impaired person has access to college, he/she may remain isolated both socially and educationally from the mainstream...(which, in turn)...may be a cause of the high level of attrition of deaf persons attending college,” (p.16). Since a high correlation exists between the attainment of a degree or certificate and the deaf student’s earning power, every effort must be made to ensure that deaf students complete their postsecondary goals.

LaGuardia’s faculty and staff have been very receptive to orientation to deafness workshops and the general advocacy role of the Programs for Deaf Adults staff who are available to meet with individual faculty or to present at divisional meetings. Many faculty members have acquired some familiarity with AFL skills and others have joined the Ad Hoc Committee on teaching deaf students where their concerns can be addressed.

We also recognize and support the need to identify and provide training opportunities for deaf persons to prepare them for administrative positions, congruent with the intent of the discussion leading to recommendation #24 in the Report from the Commission on Education of the Deaf. The latter states that “any educational program primarily serving persons who are deaf...must be strongly encouraged to take aggressive steps to recruit, hire and promote deaf people,” (p.6).

In the process of serving deaf students, the college has become a viable source of employment for deaf persons both full and part-time. In addition to hiring teachers and tutors who are deaf, LaGuardia had hired 3 deaf staff members (non-instructional) who were former students to coordinate various activities for the program. As their administrative skills developed so did their job responsibilities. Two of three are currently permanent staff with the third seeming very likely to be hired full-time, pending sufficient funds in the next fiscal year. Moreover, staff has provided training and technical assistance to numerous programs for deaf persons in the Tri-State area and are always ready to share our experiences, concerns and approaches with colleagues whether through conferences, workshops or telephone requests.

Fiscal Concerns. While LaGuardia has so far been fortunate to garner sufficient fiscal resources to allow for an expansion of support services to deaf students and to increase its staff, there is always concern about the possible reduction of state aid due to unforeseen budget crises. Also, within the City University of New York there are three colleges which offer direct educational services to deaf students: a senior college, a community college and a technical college. Only two of these currently receive tax levy funding from the state’s special allocation. The third college needs more permanent funds while a
fourth college is seeking similar funds to build its small program. While LaGuardia is the only program with a critical mass of deaf students, enrollment is steadily increasing in the other programs. LaGuardia cooperates and collaborates with its sister programs, each of which serves a distinct population and is located in a different borough. Each program needs and should receive sufficient funds to continue to provide access to post secondary programs for the deaf population. Hence, although we are faced with the reality of ongoing fiscal constraints, we remain hopeful that funding will be increased and expanded to enable deaf persons, who have not in the past had the benefit of today's available educational options, to move towards increased financial independence and greater self-fulfillment. As Dr. Walter has indicated, "only as more (deaf) college graduates enter the labor market will the historical underemployment and reduced earnings...begin to be reduced".

Summary

LaGuardia has striven to become a positive alternative for many deaf youth and adults who desire to develop or upgrade their academic and employment related skills. In the process of achieving this goal, program staff has provided the kinds of personal growth activities which foster building and enhancing of our deaf students' self esteem through successful experiences. We have also increased our technological capabilities, provided on-going orientation to deafness sessions to college faculty and staff, and reached out to many groups, organizations and institutions of higher education. We have also provided positive role models on staff with whom deaf students can identify.

In addition, our professional development activities for interpreter are rich, diverse, and of the highest caliber. Such activities, in turn, benefit deaf students because of the interpreters' increased fluency in AFL and their accumulated knowledge about the interpreting process.

The combination of these activities in conjunction with ongoing efforts to strengthen and integrate a variety of educational and support services reflect LaGuardia's commitment to provide a truly comprehensive continuing education program, and one that ensures that deaf students will make successful transitions to the workplace following graduation, whether they come from degree or non-degree programs.
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References


