HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING COMMISSION

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HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING COMMISSION
June 11, 2020
Docket Item #: 5.3

Docket Item:

Community College Approval: Portland Community College, Associate of Applied Science Degree in ASL/English Interpreting Program within 16.0103 – Language Interpretation and Translation.

Summary:

Portland Community College proposes a new Associate of Applied Science Degree in ASL/English Interpreting Program. Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) staff completed a review of the proposed program. After analysis, HECC staff recommends approval of the degree as proposed.

Staff Recommendation:

The HECC recommends the adoption of the following resolution:
RESOLVED, that the Higher Education Coordinating Commission approve the following degree: AAS in ASL/English Interpreting Program.

Portland Community College seeks the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission's approval to offer an instructional program leading to an Associate of Applied Science Degree in ASL/English Interpreting Program.

Program Summary

Professional sign language interpreters work in a variety of settings such as education, social service, religion, government, business, performing arts, mental health, medical, legal, video relay and law enforcement. Interpreters may specialize in one area or may work in private practice in a variety of settings. Currently, the demand for services exceeds the supply of qualified interpreters nationwide.

The ASL/English Interpreting Program is a two-year, intensive program that prepares graduates for entry-level ASL-English interpreting work, with a strong foundation in Deaf culture, interpreting skills, and ethical practices. Many of the graduates of this program will be hired into entry level positions in educational and video relay settings. The program believes in teaching language through immersion and interpreting competencies through application. The primary language of instruction is American Sign Language.

The program aligns with national interpreter training program's accreditation standards.

This is a revision of the Sign Language Interpretation Program AAS.

1. *Describe the need for this program by providing clear evidence.*
   ASL/English sign language interpreters are a critical part of providing accessibility to individuals in the Deaf, Deaf/Blind and hard of hearing communities. Portland Community College is the only public institution in the state of Oregon which is currently offering a degree in sign language interpretation. Interpreters in the Portland Tri-County area earn an average annual wage of $50,445. Job growth in this area is expected to be 12.7% over the ten year period spanning 2017-2027. Supply for sign language interpreters is not keeping up with demand and the greatest demand is in medium to large cities, according to the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, which is a national certifying body for interpreters of the Deaf.

2. *Does the community college utilize systemic methods for meaningful and ongoing involvement of the appropriate constituencies?*
   The program has an advisory board which meets regularly to discuss employment trends and opportunities as well as curricular design. The board suggested the changes to the curriculum that were

made to the degree in order to make it more up-to-date and relevant. The program also consulted the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, which is a national certifying body for interpreters of the Deaf.

3. *Is the community college program aligned with appropriate education, workforce development, and economic development programs?*
Coursework was designed to scaffold students in a meaningful way through the curriculum. It is aligned toward a future goal of accreditation with the program's accrediting body. Students complete practicum and internship courses which have them work in a supervised way with clients in the Deaf, Deaf/Blind and hard of hearing communities, giving them real-world, practical interpreting experience that cannot be replicated in a classroom setting. Students are prepared to work with clients upon completion of the degree. Coursework is also built into the program that offers students a range of opportunities to work in different types of interpreting environments.

4. *Does the community college program lead to student achievement of academic and technical knowledge, skills, and related proficiencies?*
Student skills and proficiency are measured and assessed at numerous points in the program. Proficiency is assessed using a standardized test that maps to certification standards and assessment occurs in a three course sequence to give students ample opportunity to demonstrate proficiency. A broad range of coursework in cultural issues involving the Deaf, Deaf/Blind and hard of hearing communities is included in the coursework students complete as part of the degree. Students must complete WR 121 prior to entering the program.

5. *Does the community college identify and have the resources to develop, implement, and sustain the program?*
Portland Community College has the resources to support this program and has committed to do so. This is an ongoing program that the college has been supporting for a number of years.

Assurances
Portland Community College has met or will meet the four institutional assurances required for program application.
1. *Access.* The college and program will affirmatively provide access, accommodations, flexibility, and additional/supplemental services for special populations and protected classes of students.
2. *Continuous Improvement.* The college has assessment, evaluation, feedback, and continuous improvement processes or systems in place. For the proposed program, there will be opportunities for input from and concerning the instructor(s), students, employers, and other partners/stakeholders. Program need and labor market information will be periodically re-evaluated and changes will be requested as needed.

3. *Adverse impact and detrimental duplication.* The college will follow all current laws, rules, and procedures and has made good faith efforts to avoid or resolve adverse *inter*segmental and *intra*segmental impact and detrimental duplication problems with other relevant programs or institutions.

4. *Program records maintenance and congruence.* The college acknowledges that the records concerning the program title, curriculum, CIP code, credit hours, etc. maintained by the Office are the official records and it is the college's responsibility to keep their records aligned with those of the Office. The college will not make changes to the program without informing and/or receiving approval from the Office.