

**2021-2023 Biennium Internal Budget Proposal Narrative**  
**Divisions: Modern and Classical Languages (CHSS), Special Education**  
**(Woodring)**

**Evaluation Criteria:** Proposals will be evaluated on every aspect of this template. It is highly recommended that the narrative portion touch on each area. Proposals forwarded to UPRC by unit leaders will be discussed at UPRC and authors are encouraged to attend so that they may answer questions and provide clarification.

**First- and Second-year American Sign Language Courses**

- This is a revised version of a previously submitted budget proposal.  
*If box is checked please briefly outline any significant changes and/or indicate why it is being resubmitted.*

The Department of Modern and Classical Languages (MCL) submitted a 2019-2021 biennium budget proposal for second-year American Sign Language courses, which was not funded. Subsequently, in AY 2019-2020, MCL worked with the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD), Special Education (SPED), WWU Executive Director of Government Relations Becca Kenna-Schenk, and Washington State Representative Laurie Dolan to write a WWU Deaf Education Proposal to be submitted to the legislature for funding. This proposal included both first- and second-year ASL courses as well as Deaf Studies and Deaf Education courses. While the \$215K request was funded in early March 2020, Governor Inslee vetoed the funding soon after because of the pandemic. MCL and SPED, in consultation with CSD, have revised the original 2019-2021 proposal to also include first-year ASL courses but have not included Deaf Studies and Deaf Education courses to keep the proposal within the parameters of an operating budget proposal.

**Statement of Purpose:** *(What is the challenge or opportunity being addressed? How does the proposal address this challenge or opportunity? Limit response to 1 page – please link to any existing reports, data, supplemental materials, etc.)*

**The Department of Modern and Classical languages and Special Education seek funding to offer complete series of first- and second-year American Sign Language (ASL) courses (six courses total) for two consecutive years as a first step toward addressing the critical statewide need for teachers of the Deaf and ASL interpreters.**

WWU is currently the only four-year public university in the State of Washington that does not offer ASL. The absence of this language from the university's course catalog has not gone unnoticed; during the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 academic years, students from across campus campaigned heavily for the establishment of an ASL program in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages. Besides a formal written request from two students, the former MCL chair received, on average, one call or email a week about the availability of ASL courses. The current chair has also regularly received inquiries since 2018. Recently, undergraduate students in CSD contacted their chair and the Dean of CHSS about their desire for coursework in ASL.

This strong demand for ASL is unsurprising, as it aligns with nation- and statewide trends in ASL program enrollments. To wit: the 2007 Modern Language Association reports a nearly [600% increase](#) in ASL enrollment at the post-secondary level between 1998 and 2006, [a trend in growth that has continued](#); [ASL is the fourth-most enrolled language](#) at the collegiate level after Spanish, French, and German; and the number of Washington counties in which ASL is offered increased from [17 to 25 between 2009 and 2019](#).

During the 2017-2018 academic year, MCL faculty approved a test trial that would entail offering a second-year ASL sequence (i.e., 201, 202, 203) for two consecutive years, on the condition that no money would be diverted from existing MCL programs to fund the courses. There were no funds available for the trial at that time, and it has since been on hold. Similarly, Special Education has hoped to offer a first-year sequence. The first ASL course (101) is a prerequisite for one of the major requirements starting in Fall 2021, but the department cannot secure the necessary NTT funding for this course without diverting resources from other areas. Without additional funding, the department will be forced to reduce popular GUR courses and only teach the first ASL course in order to keep students on time for degree. Students will be unable to access the rest of the first-year sequence of courses (ASL 102 and 103). Furthermore, the department will not be able to offer enough sections of ASL to meet the needs of non-majors in special education.

As noted above, the WWU Deaf Education proposal put forth by CSD, MCL, and SPED during the 2019-2020 academic year was funded by the Washington State legislature, but Governor Inslee ultimately vetoed the funding because of the pandemic.

By offering ASL, MCL and SPED will not only meet the demand of students coming to WWU from Washington high schools with previous knowledge of the language, but will also allow students to gain further insight into the cultural values, beliefs, and practices of a minority group - the Deaf community - and open up a career path for which there is great demand, namely ASL/English interpretation. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, [employment of interpreters of languages such as ASL is expected to increase by 18% between 2016 and 2026](#), a rate much higher than average. As for the departments themselves, the addition of ASL will bring greater diversity to their profiles and will strengthen ties with CSD, with which they will continue to work to bring Deaf Studies and Deaf Education courses to campus.

### **Anticipated Outcome(s):**

Outcomes include:

- courses enrolled to capacity, given the strong demand for ASL;
- a marked decrease or even disappearance of inquiries into the availability of ASL courses;
- increased student insight into the cultural values, beliefs, and practices of the Deaf community, a minority group.

**Metrics:** *(How will outcomes be measured? Please include current data points and goals. If this proposal will have any impact on the [Overall Metrics](#) included in the university's strategic plan, please indicate which specific ones here.)*

- Enrollments will be measured through ClassFinder.
- The MCL and SPED chairs will track inquiries into the availability of ASL courses.

--Insight into the Deaf community will be measured through student assessments and end-of-course evaluations.

**How does this proposal align with your departmental/divisional strategic priorities?** *(Please reference specific items from the recently completed departmental/divisional strategic plan and attach a copy.)*

As stated on the MCL homepage and in the departmental mission statement:

“Learning a language is the primary gateway to understanding the cultures and values of those who speak it. Learning a language fosters empathy, respect, and appreciation of the richness found across diverse cultures. By embracing diversity we can find creative solutions to problems and challenges of both local and global scope.”

“In fulfillment of Western Washington University’s stated goals, the Department of Modern and Classical Languages enables students to engage firsthand with world societies. The members of the department believe that cultural knowledge and language proficiency are inextricably linked.”

Like all other languages offered in MCL, ASL goes hand in hand with a culture, and this language is the best way to understand that culture. ASL is a source of expression that “fosters empathy, respect, and appreciation of the richness” of the Deaf community. The cross-cultural communication and understanding that MCL fosters is not limited to languages and cultures outside the United States; rather, the department embraces the study of all world languages and cultures, including ASL.

Special Education & Education Administration faculty and staff believe that with the necessary skills, all educators can transform lives in the community, across agencies, and in general and special education. They believe that they can build an inclusive society, help others succeed, make a difference in a child’s life, change the world into a better place, develop effective skills for working with persons with disabilities and children at-risk for academic or behavioral challenges, and be and work in organizations that promote social justice.

These beliefs and aspirations can only be met, however, when teachers in school are able to communicate with the students they serve. Inclusive education cannot be achieved when students who use ASL to communicate are siloed and/or placed in situations with peers and teachers where all communication needs to be facilitated through an interpreter. Indeed, as the U.S. Department of Education’s Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates, children who are deaf or hard of hearing are entitled to direct communication with peers and teachers in their chosen language/communication mode. Such direct communication with peers and adults is critical for social-emotional well-being and social competence in these children.

As for the CHSS goals and objectives, the project aligns with:

***G-4) Advance a deeper knowledge and understanding of local, state, national and global communities and foster better communication and cooperation among different communities and cultures***

- ➔ The initiative will be devoted, in part, to the dissemination of information about a specific community and its issues, namely the Deaf community.

**How does this proposal support the University Mission and Strategic Objectives?** *(Please refer to the [2018-2025 Strategic Plan](#) and indicate which core theme(s) this proposal will help achieve.)*

This project directly supports Western’s “commitment to equity and justice, and respect for the rights and dignity of others.” In addition, the project supports:

***Strategic Goal 1 (“Provide a transformational education”)*** by creating access to a series of courses in high demand, thereby broadening the undergraduate offerings in MCL.

***Strategic Goal 2 (“Advance a deeper understanding of and engagement with place”)*** by helping students to recognize and better understand the rich Deaf culture within our U.S. borders.

***Strategic Goal 4 (“ . . .pursue justice and equity . . .”)*** by fostering engagement with the diverse Deaf community.

### **What are the consequences of not funding this proposal?**

If the proposal is not funded, there will surely be continued pressure from students on Western’s campus and from the Hearing, Speech & Deafness Center in Bellingham to establish a language sequence until such a series is eventually funded.

### **What alternatives were explored?**

ASL used to be offered at WWU in CSD until the retirement of the faculty member who taught the courses. The possibility of once again offering the language in CSD was explored; however:

-no one in CSD is qualified to evaluate the pedagogy of world language instruction, and ASL is a world language. Therefore, CSD is not a suitable home for ASL.

-ASL is not a language reserved for those who are Deaf. In fact, the majority of members of the American Deaf Community do not have hearing differences. They are the children and siblings of American Deaf Community members and, despite their ability to hear, are raised with the language and culture, and it is inextricably part of who they are. If ASL were offered through CSD, it could appear to be tied to a disability category.

### **Which units (departments, colleges, etc.) will be involved?**

Department of Modern and Classical Languages (CHSS)  
Special Education (Woodring)

**Equipment needed:**

Computer (\$1,500)

*For major (>\$25k) purchases, please provide the following information.*

**Item:**

NONE

**Purpose:**

NONE

**Cost:**

NONE

**Anticipated Useful Life:**

NONE

**Replacement Cost if any:**

NONE

**Human Resources** *(Complete the table below adding additional rows if necessary):*

<i>Position Title</i>	<i>Total Headcount</i>	<i>Total FTE</i>	<i>Salary and Benefits per FTE</i>	<i>Total Cost</i>
Instructor of ASL	1	.67	\$54,376	\$54,376

*Table above should match data on budget spreadsheets submitted with this proposal. Complete the spreadsheet to get salary, benefit, and total cost amounts. Contact your division budget officer with questions.*

**Note that if a deaf instructor were hired, the costs of an interpreter would be covered by accommodations provided through the ADA.**

**Operating & Maintenance Costs (include service contracts, installation costs, etc.):**

Instructional materials		<i>\$2,000</i>
Curriculum development funds for first- and second-year ASL courses		<i>\$2,000</i>
Professional development travel support		<i>\$1,000</i>
Proficiency and evaluation consultants		<i>\$1,000</i>

**Space Requirements:**

**What type of space is needed for this proposal? (e.g., private office, lab space, group work/study space, etc.)**

regular classroom

**What features must this space have? (e.g., fume hoods, plumbing, 3-phase power, etc.)**

standard computer/internet connection/projector

**What needs can be accommodated within your existing space?**

Click here to enter text

**How much new space will be required?**

Click here to enter text