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Signed Language Interpreter Education Programs in North America: A Descriptive Study

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to provide interpreter education faculty, university administrators, accrediting bodies, stakeholders, interpreters, and students (current or prospective) a descriptive snapshot-in-time of interpreter education curriculum and programs in North America. This study expands upon work done in the late 1987-1990 and 2007-2009 to capture a descriptive snapshot-in-time of the preparation of signed language interpreters. Researchers anticipated learning how programs align their curricula with Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE) accreditation standards (whether they are accredited or not), how two- and four-year programs (including Canada) allocate faculty time and resources, and how student characteristics and support systems differ among programs. This study examined interpreting education programs (IEP) in the U.S. and Canada across five distinct areas: (a) university and unit, (b) faculty, (c) students, (d) curriculum and internship, and (e) accreditation. Data were collected via a Qualtrics online survey with 67 questions sent to 125 IEP program directors with 58 total usable responses (46% return rate).

INTRODUCTION AND RELATED LITERATURE

When considering the profession of signed language interpreting and its purpose to provide equitable communication access to Deaf and DeafBlind communities, the value of interpreter education becomes clear. The preparation of signed language interpreters in the United States dates to 1948, when Ms. Lottie Riekehof began teaching the first interpreting classes at Central Bible Institute in Springfield, Missouri (Ball, 2013). Prior to this time there was no known formal academic preparation of signed language interpreters in the United States. In the forward to the book *Legacies and Legends: History of Interpreter Education from 1800 to the 21st Century* (Ball, 2013), Patrie and Witter-Merrithew assert that “the history of our profession has been largely undocumented until now. Understanding our history achieves at least three important outcomes. History helps us understand our profession’s origins and how it has evolved. Second, history helps us understand the role of change and advancing our vision of the profession. Finally becoming familiar with our professions history brings into clear focus that we have very specific things to accomplish in our future” (ix). Understanding how interpreter education is organized, developed, and taught today provides a strong foundation for moving forward and ultimately improving the scope and content of interpreter education programs.

HISTORICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF SIGNED LANGUAGE INTERPRETER PREPARATION IN THE US AND CANADA

Preparation of signed language interpreters was initially in the form of short-term trainings offered as non-credit courses and workshops in the 1960s and early 1970s (Ball, 2013). Formal programs in North America were offered by California State University at Northridge (CSUN) in 1965 and by the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) in Rochester, NY in 1966. These programs were designed to train individuals to serve as signed language interpreters only for the two institutions. Programs to prepare interpreters for work in the community began in 1969 at Saint Paul Technical-Vocational Institution (Saint Paul Community College) in Minnesota and at New York University in New York City (Stewart et al., 2004).

The many meetings, workshops, trainings, and professional conferences between the mid 1960s and the early part of the 1980s focused on the recurring themes of who to teach (students), what to teach (content), how to teach (methods) and assessment (measuring achievement). A review of the available literature (Arjona, 1984; Quigley, 1965; Roy, 1984; Sternberg et al., 1973; Sternberg, 1974; Yoken, 1979), which includes proceedings, training guides, and meeting reports, identifies a recurrence of the following topics:

- Qualifications and prerequisites for admissions into an interpreting program
- Selection and admission screening process
- Practical experience and internships
- Qualification of instructors
- Language fluency prior to learning interpreting
- Course of study and curriculum for teaching interpreting
- Assessment and Evaluation

These topics have persisted at conferences, meetings, and literature that slowly emerged in the years following the implementation of formal interpreter preparation: (a) what to teach (i.e., skills, processes, practices), (b) who to teach (i.e., type of student and prerequisite skills and knowledge), and (c) how to teach (i.e., scaffolding, degree level, and pedagogical methods). As Roy (2000) stated, “Ever since the formal education of interpreters began, educators have been trying to determine what to teach in order to produce entry-level interpreters who achieve the minimum level of competence needed to perform their jobs successfully” (p. 1). Over the years, the question has been raised many times as to admissions screenings in an effort to select the right students. Sternberg’s (1973) summary of prerequisites needed to succeed in a training program are as applicable today as they were then:

Intelligence, attitudes toward deafness, visual and hearing acuity, manual dexterity, eye-hand coordination, educational achievement level, all are known to be factors influencing to some degree a trainee's likelihood of turning out well as an interpreter. Interpreter training programs should therefore make provision for early screening and testing of trainees (p. 64).

Organization at the national level led to a collaborative effort across institutions to prepare interpreters, and according to Stewart, Schein, and Cartwright (2004), “In the United States, the most significant development in interpreter preparation was the advent of the National Interpreter Training Consortium (NTIC)” (Stewart et al., 2004) The NTIC was a group of six colleges and universities with interpreter preparation programs. Consortia members included University of Arizona, California State University at Northridge, Gallaudet University, New York University, St. Paul Community College, and the University of Tennessee. The consortium provided training for interpreters already working in the field, intensive three-month courses for individuals without experience as interpreters, and professional development programming to prepare interpreter educators.

Two meetings in the late 1970s and early 1980s focused on topics such as interpreter trainers, policies associated with interpreter training, research, and curricula (Witter-Merithew et al., 1980; Yoken, 1979). Attendees agreed that most programs were still in the process of developing curricula and standards for curriculum development needed to be prioritized. The meetings identified key components of interpreter preparation that should be standard: short term memory, introduction to the profession, language and interpreting skill development in various settings, ethics, and attitudes. Participants expressed an interest in having a manual that would provide interpreter educators with a framework for content, materials, and methods for preparing interpreters.

CURRICULUM

The term ‘curriculum’ refers to “a course; specifically, a regular course of study or training, as at a school or university” (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.), and “the courses offered by an educational institution” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). The term originates from the Latin term *currere* meaning “action of running, course of action, race.” ‘Curriculum’ also can refer to a broader concept that encompasses how courses are taught and in what context. In other words, it is “a description of what, why, how, and how well students should learn in a systematic and intentional way” (UNESCO International Bureau of Education, 2013).

Ornstein and Hunkins (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998) posited that ‘curriculum’ includes a plan, the learner’s experiences, the system, a field of study, and subject matter. Kelly (Kelly, 2009) describes ‘curriculum as “the totality of experiences the pupil has” (p. 13) and explains that the total learning experience takes into account the methodologies used and how the school is organized. Braslavsky (2003), a former director of UNESCO’s International Bureau of Education, also emphasizes the broad scope of a curriculum when she says,

the curriculum defines the educational foundations and contents, their sequencing in relation to the amount of time available for the learning experiences, the characteristics of the teaching institutions, the characteristics of the learning experiences, in particular from the point of view of methods to be used, the resources for learning and teaching (e.g. textbooks and new technologies), evaluation and teachers’ profiles. (p.1)

Notice that Braslavsky identifies such aspects as sequencing, available time, characteristics of the institution, teaching methods, resources, assessment, and characteristics of the teachers as significant parts of the curriculum. For our purposes, ‘curriculum’ refers to a program’s content and delivery modes and the institutional infrastructure that supports the program. “Curriculum

studies' are common across professions to examine key aspects of a preparation program, including curriculum, prospective and admitted students, faculty, and institutional infrastructure. For example, in the field of therapeutic recreation, two sets of curriculum studies have been completed over the last five decades. One of the most extensive studies began in 1969 and follow-up studies were conducted every 10 years (Anderson, S. C. et al., 2000). Stumbo, Carter et al. conducted another set of curriculum studies in therapeutic recreation, beginning in 1996 and recurring in 2004, 2007, 2012, and 2018 (Zahl et al., 2021). This series of studies led the present team of researchers to apply the same concept of regular and systematic data collection over time to signed language interpreter education programs in the United States and Canada, beginning with this study.

PRIOR CURRICULUM STUDIES IN INTERPRETER EDUCATION

An examination of the literature related to signed language interpreting education and curriculum in North America results in few scholarly, peer-reviewed publications focused on matters of curriculum or the interpreting education programs (IEPs) themselves. Initially, resources identified by Ball (2013) were reviewed and a literature search was also conducted for keywords such as sign language interpreting, signed language interpreting, and interpreter education with curriculum and then filtering results for North America. Between 1960 and 2019, a total of 33 documents were located and included six training or workshop proceedings, 11 training or curriculum guides, six professional conference proceedings, three government reports, and seven scholarly articles or book chapters. Of the 33 documents reviewed, one article (Anderson, G. B. & Stauffer, 1991) and two government grant reports (Cokely & Winston, 2008; Cokely & Winston, 2010) contained curriculum studies of interpreter education programs. Since 2010, there has been limited-to-no access to research, documentation or publications relative to the profile of interpreter education in North America today.

Anderson and Stauffer (1991) conducted a national survey in 1987 of 61 Interpreter Training Programs (ITPs) in the United States seeking information about student, faculty and curricula characteristics. The researchers used a 16-question instrument completed by program coordinators and received 51 responses from the 61 programs that received the survey (84% response rate). Highlights of the results include the total number of full-time and part-time faculty, student enrollment numbers, graduation rates, and employment rates. The authors recommended improving the uneven distribution of ITPs across the U.S., the provision of additional federal grant funds towards the preparation of interpreters, and the diversification of academic interpreter preparation programs across all levels (i.e., associate, bachelor, master, doctoral).

In 2007 and 2009, the National Interpreting Education Center (NIEC) conducted a needs assessment of Interpreter Education Programs (IEPs) in the United States. The assessment consisted of an electronic survey instrument disseminated to 126 IEPs nationwide in September 2007. There were 91 responses (72% response rate) to the survey, which resulted in a final report (Cokely & Winston, 2008). Subsequently, the research team revised, updated, and disseminated the instrument to the same 126 IEPs in October of 2009. There were 54 completed responses to the second survey (42% response rate). While the two surveys were similar, they were not identical. One major difference between the two was the focus on program types in question. Survey #1 included non-degree and degree programs (e.g., AA/AS, BA/BS, MA/MS), whereas the Survey #2 focused on associate- and bachelor-level degree programs. A second report (Cokely &

Winston, 2010) presented new information and compared results between the two surveys. The two NIEC surveys were substantially more detailed than the Anderson and Stauffer study and included greater detail on program faculty, students, and curriculum.

Building on the work of Anderson and Stauffer (1991), Cokely and Winston (2008, 2010), the objective of this study is to provide interpreter education faculty, university administrators, accrediting bodies, stakeholders, interpreters, and students (current or prospective) a descriptive snapshot-in-time of interpreter education curriculum and programs. This study expands upon the previous study by adding the area of accreditation to gain perceptions and attitudes around the process of obtaining CCIE accreditation. We anticipated learning how programs align their curricula with CCIE accreditation standards (whether they are accredited or not), how two- and four-year programs (including Canada) allocate faculty time and resources, and how student characteristics and support systems differ among programs. Specifically, we sought to answer these guiding questions to further our understanding of the path that programs are following toward effective interpreter education:

1. Are there program areas (faculty, student, curriculum, accreditation) in which similarities are more common than differences?
2. Are programs institutionally constrained from implementing best practices for interpreter education, such as class size, appropriate faculty teaching loads, and program director compensation?
3. What curricular changes are occurring in interpreter education programs, and are these changes (past or anticipated) in response to market demands and requirements of the Deaf and DeafBlind communities?
4. Are there relationships between student demographics, curriculum modifications, faculty configuration, and accreditation status that could inform us about how to proceed with improving interpreter education?

METHODS

This study examines IEPs in the U.S. and Canada across five distinct areas: (a) university and unit, (b) faculty, (c) students, (d) curriculum and internship, and (e) accreditation. Data were collected via a Qualtrics online survey after the lead researcher's institutional review board granted approval.

SAMPLE SELECTION

Purposive sampling, in the form of a total population sample, was based on consolidation of three lists of IEPs in the U.S. and Canada maintained by the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT), the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID), and the Canadian Association of Sign Language Interpreters (CASLI). The researchers consolidated the three lists to eliminate duplication and verified the institutional names and contact information through searches of institutional websites and inquiries to programs that had incomplete listings in the three resources identified above. The final list yielded 80 two-year programs, 41 four-year programs, and 4

programs in Canada. Four of the 41 four-year programs were identified as also having graduate programs. The total number of programs used in this study was 125.

INSTRUMENT

Researchers obtained permission and adapted the instrument from a parallel study in therapeutic recreation, conducted in regular intervals since in 1996 (Zahl et al., 2021) A cursory review of the instrument's evolution over years of administration provided valuable insight to this research team into how the instrument might be adapted for our own future studies.

After modifying the instrument to meet the contextual needs of the profession, the research team invited a group of experts in interpreter education to serve as peer reviewers to validate the item pool and confirm appropriateness of the study. The panel of experts individually analyzed the survey design, content, and relevance, suggested revisions to enhance clarity and readability, and proposed formatting and layout changes that would contribute to the goal of achieving the most comprehensive description of IEPs at this time. Following expert review, the research team clarified ambiguous questions and revised the survey based on the feedback.

The final survey included 67 questions designed for programs at associate, bachelor, or master levels and were organized into eight sections:

- unit characteristics
- faculty characteristics
- accreditation characteristics
- student characteristics
- Interpreter Education Curriculum characteristics
- internship characteristics
- graduation and placement rates,
- additional comments

Qualtrics provided a software platform to design, deliver, and remind participants about the survey, which included multiple choice, short answer, and one open-ended questions. Due to the anticipated time needed to complete the questionnaire (30-45 minutes), Qualtrics allowed participants to save and revise their responses and return to complete the survey later, if necessary.

DATA COLLECTION

Researchers distributed the survey via e-mail from within the Qualtrics system. Each program's contact person (125 programs) was entered into the Qualtrics contact library and organized into three sets: two-year programs, four-year programs, and programs in Canada. In anticipation of the survey arriving at a potentially busy time (toward the end of fall term, October 2023), the lead researcher prepared prospective participants by sending an introductory e-mail three days prior to the formal invitation with the study's background and purpose. The preparatory message included the survey's open and close dates and a link to a document about the type of information the survey would request. In hopes of improving response rates, the researchers provided prospective participants preliminary information that would help them prepare for survey completion in the least amount of time possible.

The invitation e-mail provided recipients with information about the study's purpose, approval by the institutional review board, instructions for completing the survey, and a link to the survey. The message requested the recipient to provide appropriate contact information for the correct person if the recipient was not the interpreting program director. The survey was initially designed to be open for a period of three weeks. Due to the pending winter holidays, the research team decided to extend data collection into the new year. Five e-mail reminders went to participants who did not complete the survey as of the date the reminder was scheduled, typically in seven-day intervals.

RESULTS

This report is organized according to the major sections of the survey, including university and unit characteristics, interpreting program faculty characteristics, and interpreting student characteristics. Surveys were sent to 125 interpreter education programs in the United States and Canada and 58 programs responded (46%). Of the 58 programs that responded, 28 were 2-year programs (35% of all 2-year programs in the U.S.), 27 were 4-year programs (66% of all 4-year programs in the U.S.), and 3 were in Canada (75% of all Canadian programs).

UNIVERSITY AND UNIT CHARACTERISTICS

Section one of the survey asked about the characteristics of the university. Participants were asked about the location of their institution, including region of the United States. Of the 58 respondents to the question about location, 55 programs were in the United States and three programs were located in Canada. Of the 58 programs responding to the question about private or public institution, 48 programs (83%) were in public institutions and 10 programs (17%) were in private institutions.

Institutions reported on the size of their university relative to total students and reported their enrollment in ranges. Using the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (2021) to categorize the institutions. Five (9%) were in the very small category, six (10%) were in the small category, 14 (24%) were in the midsize category, and 33 (57%) were in the large category. While IEPs reside in a wide variety of institutions, the majority of programs (57%) are found in institutions that Carnegie classifies as large.

Program directors reported the colleges and departments that house their interpreting programs. The survey provided dropdown options to obtain common college and department categorical data, and the option of *Other* was available to programs that did not fit the provided options. The primary options selected were *Other*, *Education*, and *Arts and Science*. The *Other* category revealed a variety of names for the colleges, including versions of Career and Technical Education, Arts, Social Sciences, Humanities, Education, Human Services, Health. Collapsing like colleges together, just under one half of the programs reside in Colleges of Arts and Science (i.e., arts, sciences, liberal arts, humanities), followed by programs residing in Colleges of Education and Human Services, and three are in colleges that focus on health programs. One program is in a college focused on deafness, and ten are in colleges related to career and technical education, business, and community engagement (see Table 1 for an organizational data summary).

Table 1. *Colleges Where IEPs are Placed (n = 58)*

	<i>N</i>	Percent
Arts & Sciences	24	41.4
Education & Human Services	20	34.5
Other	10	17.2
Health	3	5.2

Almost half of the programs were in departments that contained variations of *Interpreting or ASL interpreting* in their titles. The second largest category was departments with *Education* and/or *Special* or *Exceptional Education* in their titles, followed by a category in which *Communication (Sciences, Services or Disorders)* was in their titles. Other department names included *Languages, American Sign Language, Sign Language Studies, and Human Services* (data summary located in Table 2).

Table 2. *Departments where IEPs are Placed (n =58)*

	<i>N</i>	Percent
ASL Interpreting, Interpreting	27	47
Education	8	14
Communication	5	9
Languages	4	7
ASL, Sign Language Studies	3	5
Human Services	3	5
Other	8	14

PROGRAM STUDENT ENROLLMENTS

Programs ($n = 58$) reported the total number of students in their program using data from the fall 2023 semester and reporting in enrollment ranges. At the undergraduate level, 16 programs reported having between 1 and 20 IEP majors, 13 programs reported 21-40 majors, 7 programs had between 41 and 60 majors, 6 programs had between 61 and 80 majors, and 8 programs had between 81 and 100 majors (see Table 3 data summary of undergraduate IEP majors). At the graduate level, five programs reported having graduate majors with two programs (40%) having

between 1 and 10 majors, two programs (40%) having between 11 and 20 majors, and one program (20%) having between 51 and 60 majors.

Programs also reported the enrollment trends over the prior three years for Undergraduate majors, Undergraduate minors, and Graduate majors. Respondents ($n = 58$) indicated that 38% experienced decreasing student enrollment over the last three years in the undergraduate majors. Most programs (81%) did not have undergraduate minors and the majority of programs (90%) did not have graduate level programs (see Table 4 for enrollment trends). Programs were also asked to report the percentage of their students that are from underrepresented groups. Of the 49 programs that responded to this question, 41 programs reported having no students from underrepresented groups, three programs reported between 2 and 10 percent of their students were from underrepresented groups, four programs reported between 20 and 45 percent of their students were from underrepresented groups, and one program reported that 50% of its student population is from underrepresented groups.

Table 3. *Total Students In Undergraduate IEP Major*

Number of Students	<i>N</i>	Percent
0	8	14
1-20	16	27
21-40	13	23
41-60	7	12
61-80	6	10
81-100	8	14

Table 4. *IEP Enrollment Trends In The Last Three Years*

Enrollment Trend	Percent
Decreasing	38
Stable	33
Increasing	19
N/A	10

PROGRAM CHANGES

In the last five years, respondents ($n = 58$) indicated the top five changes that occurred as: IEP director or coordinator changed ($n = 26$, 45%), loss of faculty member to retirement ($n=23$, 40%), numbers of total IE faculty positions decreased ($n = 19$, 33%), numbers of total department faculty positions decreased ($n=15$, 26%), and unfilled position ($n = 13$, 22%). The top four anticipated changes considered to likely or extremely likely to occur include numbers of total IE faculty

positions will be increased ($n = 20$, 34%), IEP director or coordinator will change ($n = 18$, 31%), faculty member will retire ($n = 23$, 40%), unfilled position(s) ($n = 12$, 21%).

PROGRAM FACULTY CHARACTERISTICS

FACULTY NUMBERS, LINES, AND TYPES

Programs reported on the types of faculty lines or positions held by the IEP. Although 58 programs responded to the question that asked for the total number of full-time faculty teaching in the IEP, two responses were determined to be extreme outliers or reporting errors (e.g., claiming to have 100+ faculty in the IEP) and excluded from the results. This gave a total response of 56 for the full-time faculty question. In total, the 56 programs reported having a total of 183 full-time faculty. The total number of adjunct faculty reported by 57 programs was 283. Programs reported more adjunct faculty than full-time, and more non-tenure, full-time contract positions than tenure-seeking and tenured lines. There were 29 program ($n = 58$) without any tenured faculty in the program. Programs employed, on average, 2.3 persons of color and 3.4 persons who are Deaf. See Table 5.

Table 5. *Faculty Characteristics For All Programs*

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>
Adjunct/Part-time	283	4.96
Full-time	183	3.27
Tenure Seeking	67	1.15
Tenured	68	1.17
Non-Tenure, full-time	93	1.60
Ethnic Minority	136	2.34
Deaf	200	3.44

DEGREES AND RANKS OF IEP FACULTY

Programs reported the degrees held by their IEP faculty. Thirty-three programs ($n = 58$) indicated 1 or more faculty held a doctorate degree. The averages of master's-only ($M=4.5$) and bachelor's-only ($M=1.7$) were greater than doctorate holding ($M=1.1$). Programs were asked to report the number of faculty at each rank. Program directors ($n = 58$) provided the following: 169 instructor or lecturer, 48 assistant professor, 50 associate professor, and 48 professor. See Table 6.

Table 6. *Degrees and Rank of IEP Faculty (n = 58)*

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	% of Total Faculty
Bachelor's Degree Only	99	1.7	21
Master's Degree Only	263	4.53	56
Doctorate	62	1.06	13
Instructor	169	2.91	36
Assistant Professor	48	.83	10
Associate Professor	50	.86	11
Professor	48	.83	10

FACULTY CERTIFICATION AND MEMBERSHIPS

Program directors reported the credentialing status of its full-time IEP faculty, including national interpreter certifications, state licensure certifications, and EIPA certifications. All full-time tenured and tenure-earning faculty ($n = 183$) held national certification. The number of full-time faculty who held a state license or certification was less (86%, range = 0 -43, $M = 2.7$). Only 19% of the full-time tenured and tenure-earning faculty held an EIPA 4.0 or higher (range = 0-6, $M = .96$).

FACULTY LOAD, EQUIVALENTS, AND CONTRACTS

Program directors reported the typical percentage of time that full-time tenured and tenure-earning faculty spend on nine areas of responsibility. Responses were categorized into ranges (0, 1-25, 26-50, 51-75, 76-100) and are reported in Figure 1 below. In each area, some responses were not reported as a percent of time (e.g., N/A, part of service) and were classified as "other" in the table below. Examining the three primary areas of responsibility for most faculty (teaching, research, and service), half of the faculty spend 50% or more of their time on teaching, whereas less than a third (29%) of the faculty spend any time on research, and slightly less than half (48%) spend time on service.

For full-time, non-tenure track instructors, the percentage of time spent on specific areas of responsibility differed from that of the full-time tenured and tenure-earning faculty. Responses were categorized into ranges (0, 1-25, 26-50, 51-75, 76-100) and are reported in Figure 2 below. Slightly more than half (51%) of the instructors devoted between 75 and 100 percent of their time to teaching, the vast majority of instructors (91%) spent no time on research, and only a little more than half (57%) of the instructors spent time on service.

Figure 1. Areas of Responsibility – Full-Time Faculty

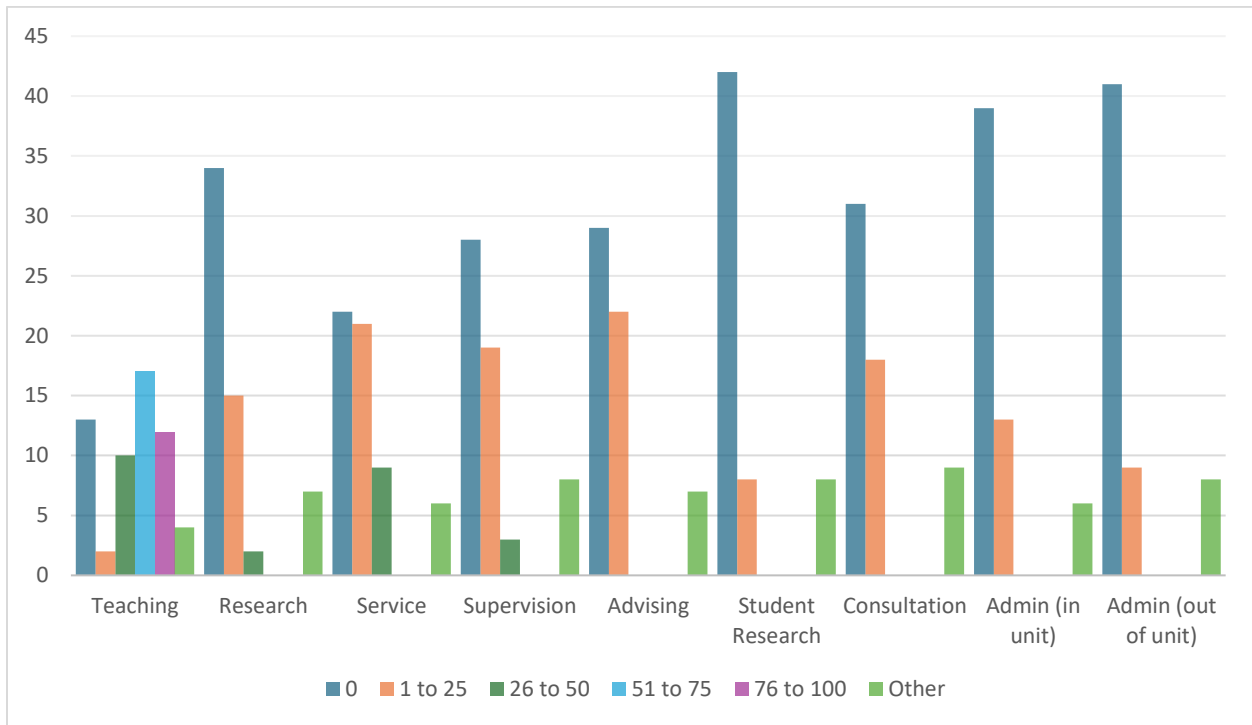
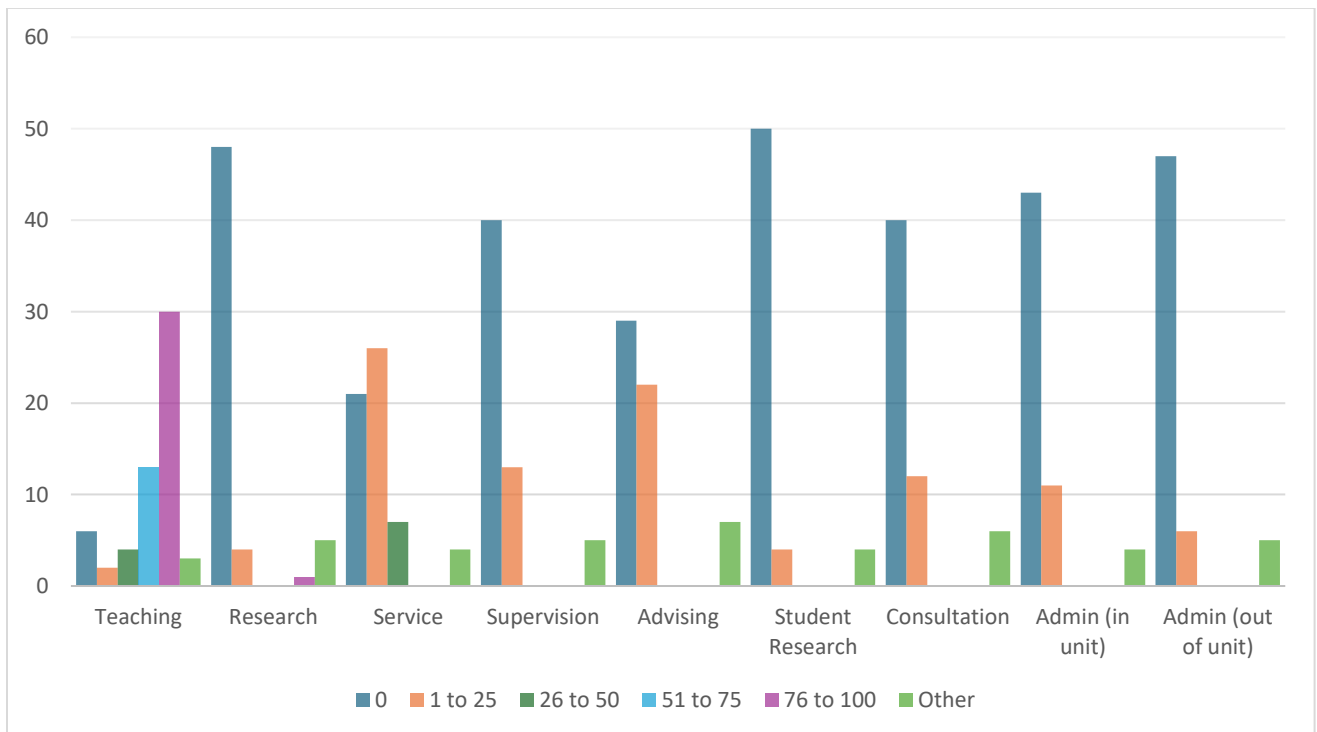


Figure 2. Areas of Responsibility – Instructors



When asked about the typical full-time teaching load for tenured and tenure-earning faculty, the greatest number of programs had a teaching load of four, 3-hour courses ($n = 16$), followed by a teaching load of five, 3-hour courses ($n = 12$) (see Table 7).

Program directors reported ($n = 59$) that the most common length of an IEP faculty contract was 9-months ($n = 37$, 63%) with the second most common being 10-month ($n = 9$, 15%), and the third most common being 12-months ($n=7$, 12%). Six respondents chose *Other* and their comments were either a variation of the lengths provided (e.g., 10.5 months), or the contract lengths varied by individual.

Table 7. Average Teaching Load Per Semester ($n = 58$)

	Tenured/Tenure-Earning		Instructor	
	<i>N</i>	Percent	<i>N</i>	Percent
One, 3-hour course	0	0	1	2
Two, 3-hour courses	5	9	3	5
Three, 3-hour courses	10	17	7	12
Four, 3-hour courses	16	28	23	40
Five, 3-hour courses	12	21	17	29
Other	1	2	2	3
Don't Have this Position	14	24	5	9

TYPES OF SUPPORTS AVAILABLE TO IEP FACULTY FOR TEACHING AND RESEARCH

The survey inquired as to the types of support for teaching and research that was available to faculty at their institution. The top four areas of support provided to faculty for teaching include (a) smart classroom/technology ($n = 47$), (b) professional development workshops provided on campus ($n = 45$), (c) funding for travel ($n = 44$), and (d) summer salary ($n = 40$). Interestingly enough, the area of support least provided to Faculty was graduate teaching assistants ($n = 6$).

The top four areas of support provided to faculty for research include (a) professional development workshops taught on campus ($n = 31$), (b) a sponsored projects/grants office ($n=27$), (c) funding for travel related to research ($n =26$), and (d) internal/university grants ($n=26$). The support least provided to Faculty ($n = 7$), was graduate research assistants. See table 8.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT STAFF

Program directors reported on compensation received for their leadership and administrative responsibilities. Respondents could choose from a predetermined set of responses, such as one course release per term, two course releases per term, or a financial stipend, and were able to

specify any other form of compensation they were given that did not fit the categories provided. The top three responses included (a) a financial stipend in addition to the regular contract ($n = 20$, 35%), (b) one course release per term ($n = 18$, 31%), and (c) no additional compensation ($n = 15$, 26%). Responses in the *Other* category indicated some form of course/credit release or statements that is no program director for a particular program.

Table 8. *Campus Support Provided for Teaching and Research*

Support for Teaching	<i>N</i> (59)	Percent	Support for Research	<i>N</i> (59)	Percent
Smart Classrooms	47	79.7	Professional Development	31	52.5
Professional Development	45	76.3	Grants Office	27	45.8
Travel Funding	44	74.6	Travel Funding	26	44.1
Summer Salary	4	67.8	Internal Grants	26	44.1
Teaching/Learning Centers	38	64.4	Reassigned/Release Time	21	35.6
Equipment Monies	31	52.5	Sabbatical/Leave	21	35.6
Sabbatical/Leave	25	42.4	Other	18	30.5
Support personnel	20	33.9	Support personnel	15	25.4
Undergrad Stdnt Wrkrs	19	32.2	Summer Salary	14	23.7
Other	7	11.9	Equipment Monies	14	23.7
Graduate Teaching Assist.	6	10.2	Research Center	14	23.7
			Research Consultants	10	16.9
			Graduate Research Assistants	7	11.9

Programs have a variety of Support staff, including ASL language tutors ($n = 38$, 66%), ASL lab staff were provided by 28 (48%) of the programs and ASL language mentors were provided by 23 (40%) of the programs. The top funding source for support staff was budget from the institution while students fees were also a predominant source of funding.

IEP STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

GRADUATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND POST-GRADUATION CHARACTERISTICS.

Respondents provided the approximate number of graduates per year over the last three (2020-2023). There were approximately 1,704 graduates at the undergraduate level and 107 at the

graduate level between 2020 and 2023. Few of the programs have graduate level IEP and so the numbers reported in the graduate category are small. In 2022-2023 the range of graduates from graduate level programs is between 0 and 25, in 2021-2022 the range is between 0 and 25 and in 2020-2021 the range is 0 and 15. See Table 9.

Table 9. *Approximate Number of Graduates Per Year*

	Percentage of IEP graduates					
	2022-2023		2021-2022		2020-2021	
	Undergraduate (N=58)	Graduate (N=48)	Undergraduate (N=58)	Graduate (N=2)	Undergraduate (N=58)	Graduate (N=3)
0	7	94	5	50	7	33
1-5	33	2	22	0	19	0
6-10	29	0	35	0	33	33
11-15	19	2	19	0	24	34
16-20	3	0	7	0	9	0
21-25	3	2	7	50	3	0
26-30	3	0	2	0	0	0
32-35	0	0	2	0	0	0
36-40	0	0	0	0	3	0
40+	2	0	2	0	0	0
unknown	0	0	0	0	2	0

Program directors identified two types of facilities that have employed the greatest number of their graduates in the last two years. The top three facilities are (a) *K-12 educational schools/districts* (73%), (b) *sign language interpreting agencies* (66%), and *Video Relay Service companies* (31%). *Government agencies/offices* was the least reported type of facility (3%) and both healthcare systems (including hospitals) and general, multi-lingual interpreting agencies were not selected by any respondent.

ACCREDITATION

Respondents reported on their program's national accreditation status. Of the 58 respondents, 15 (26%) reported being accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE) and 43 (74%) responded their programs are not accredited by CCIE. Of the accredited programs,

($n = 15$), the top three sources of funding were (a) college ($n = 8$, 53%), (b) department ($n = 5$, 33%), (c) university ($n = 4$, 27%) and (d) program ($n = 4$, 27%). All of the accredited programs ($n = 15$) indicated they would seek reaccreditation when they become eligible (ten years after initial or previous accreditation).

For the IEPs that have accreditation ($n = 15$), the top five reasons why they sought accreditation include: (a) provides competitive edge with other departments in the state, province, or region ($n = 15$, 100%), (b) provides indication of quality of department, curriculum, and faculty ($n = 15$, 93%), (c) supports mission of improving curriculum across the country ($n = 12$, 80%), (d) supports mission of improving curriculum across the university ($n = 12$, 80%), (e) provides collaboration and respect with the Deaf community ($n = 11$, 73%).

Of the respondents to the accreditation status question ($n = 58$), the IEPs that are not accredited ($n = 43$) reported the reasons why they had not sought accreditation. The survey provided seven dropdown options, including *Other*, where respondents could provide narrative responses. Respondents were able to select all that applied. The top five reasons why the programs had not sought accreditation included: (a) lack of funding to support accreditation process ($n = 26$), (b) Other ($n = 17$), (c) Faculty do not have the time or other resources to complete the self-study ($n = 16$), (d) IE program does not meet the new accreditation standards ($n = 12$), (e) accreditation is not valued by the college or university ($n = 9$). The responses provide when “other” was selected provided additional insight into reasons why programs have not sought accreditation. These responses are provided below, categorized by program level.

Comments from 2-year programs

- *I was not aware of an accreditation process. I thought the accreditation came from the college as a whole.*
- *Staff and Faculty working toward other goals we currently deem higher priority.*
- *It does not make financial sense for our community college. We do not need it for recruiting or retention, and it would be a costly process that would tie up our faculty.*
- *Working on transitioning this program to a Deaf Studies track for a 2+2 at a local university.*
- *We are in Canada so not typically discussed but are now considering because we don't have an equivalent here.*
- *Currently working towards accreditation.*
- *Unaware of the new accreditation standards.*
- *[Our college] doesn't recognize the [IEP] as a separately named degree; courses are linked to a "pathway to a 4-year degree."*
- *We are aiming for accreditation, hopefully will be ready by 2025.*
- *As of 2020 we only have 1 full time faculty member and don't qualify, but we do use the standards as a guide.*
- *We're actively working on the standards [and] when they are completed, we'll apply. The money for the application is already set aside. This is a current goal for our team.*
- *Previously accredited, limited resources and lack of value so did not reapply after 10 years.*
- *Department chair (not the program coordinator) is disinterested.*
- *Lack of IE faculty*

- *The feedback we have gotten is the lack of respect or consideration for 2-year institutions.*
- *The process seems biased towards 4-year institutions.*

Comments from 4-year programs

- *Lack of guidance and support from CCIE.*
- *[Our college] has a master's program and CCIE was/is not ready to accredit such a program.*

CURRICULUM

Part of the survey focused on the curriculum of the IEP. Questions sought information regarding program admissions, average class size, recent curricula revisions, program delivery methods, primary language of instruction, and the number of credits needed to complete the program.

PROGRAM AND COURSE CHARACTERISTICS

Admission requirements were provided by 59 respondents for both undergraduate and graduate programs. The top five reported responses for the undergraduate programs were (a) taking prerequisite courses ($n = 58$, 62%), (b) a formal application ($n = 58$, 38%), (c) none, other than the university entrance requirements ($n = 58$, 33%), (d) ASL proficiency assessment scores ($n = 58$, 31%), and (e) an interview ($n = 58$, 28%). For graduate programs, the majority of responses 83% indicated that they did not have graduate programs as indicated through the “other” option. For those that had graduate programs the top 5 responses for admission requirements into the major were (a) none, other than the university entrance requirements ($n = 58$, 6.9%), (b) total cumulative GPA ($n = 58$, 6.9%), (c) ASL examples such as a personal statement ($n = 58$, 6.9%), and (d) an interview ($n = 58$, 6.9%), and (e) a formal application ($n = 58$, 6.9%).

Respondents ($n = 59$) indicated the delivery method for courses in both their undergraduate and graduate programs. At the undergraduate level, 21% of the program directors responded that their program is delivered completely face-to-face while only 5% of the respondents indicated they have a fully (i.e., 100 %) online program at the undergraduate level. At the graduate level, three programs ($n = 48$) indicated their graduate programs were delivered completely online and 2 program replied that their graduate programs ranged from 1 to 10% online.

Undergraduate programs varied in the total number of credits needed to graduate with 24% of the respondents indicating their programs require between 60 and 119 credits to graduate ($n = 59$) and 50% requiring 120 hours or more. The language of instruction for 50% of the respondents' programs ($n = 59$) is American Sign Language (ASL), for 17% it is English, and for 33% it is both ASL and English.

Average class sizes varied among programs. Program directors responded with the average class size at both the undergraduate and graduate level for courses in three categories: (a) ASL classes, (b) interpreting skill classes, and (c) other interpreter education program classes. At the undergraduate level, the average class size of ASL classes ranged from 1-400 ($M=29$), for interpreting skill classes the range was 4-40 ($M=13$), and for other interpreter education program

classes, the range was 4-36 (M=16). At the graduate level, the average class size of ASL classes ranged from 6-30 (M=21), for interpreting skill classes the range was 1-20 (M=10), and for other interpreter education program classes, the range was 1-30 (M=14). Table 10 includes the data reported by Program directors regarding average class sizes.

Table 10. Average Class Sizes – Undergraduate

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	Range
Undergraduate			
ASL Classes	55	29	1-400
Interpreting Skill Classes	56	13	4-40
Other IE Program Classes	46	16	4-36
Graduate			
ASL Classes	4	21	6-30
Interpreting Skill Classes	10	10	1-20
Other IE Program Classes	8	14	1-30

CURRICULAR CHANGES

The IEP program directors reported changes or revisions to their undergraduate and graduate curriculum in the last five years as well as anticipated changes to the curriculum in the upcoming five years. Program directors indicated that 62% of the undergraduate programs were significantly revised in the last three years (i.e., 2021-2023). Two of the undergraduate programs are completing curriculum revisions during the current academic year. At the graduate level, three of the four responding programs (75%) indicated they completed significant curriculum revisions in the last two years (i.e., 2022-2024), and the fourth program's last significant revision to the curriculum was in 2017 (see Table 11).

Respondents were asked to identify the degree to which certain standards, preferences, and practices influenced the recent curriculum changes. Program directors ranked a list of standards and preferences and practices as very important, important, somewhat important, not important, or not applicable. There was also an option provided for them to add other influences. The top three responses for *Very Important* were (a) Professional Standards of Practice ($n = 32, 55\%$), (b) National Certification Standards ($n = 24, 41\%$), (c) CCIE Accreditation Standards ($n = 22, 38\%$). The top three responses for *Important* were (a) Professional Standards of Practice ($n = 22, 38\%$), (b) Input from professional practitioners ($n = 20, 35\%$), and (c) Input from colleagues at other universities ($n = 20, 35\%$).

Table 11. *Most Recent Significant Curriculum Change*

Year	<i>N</i>	Percent
2024	2	4
2023	14	25
2022	8	14
2021	14	25
2020	4	7
2019	4	7
2018	4	7
2017	2	4
2016	3	5
2010	1	2
None	2	4

The most frequently occurring significant changes to undergraduate IEP curriculum in the last five years ($n = 59$) included: (a) student assessments were modified to include specific outcome measures ($n = 30, 52\%$), (b) one or more new courses were added to the IE program ($n = 28, 48\%$), (c) assignments/requirements were increased within IE courses ($n = 25, 43\%$), (d) IE curriculum was significantly revised ($n = 23, 40\%$), (e) online courses were initiated ($n = 23, 40\%$), (f) some IE courses were removed from the program ($n = 23, 40\%$). Several comments were added to the “other” category that identified additional areas of significant curriculum revisions. and deserve a review. These responses are provided below. Table 12 provides the full results related to curricula changes.

- *Introduced new teaching style with updated information.*
- *More remote options made available.*
- *Online courses were initiated and decreased due to the pandemic, then decreased back to nearly 0.*
- *In-house ASL curriculum developed.*
- *Prior to my work here there were ZERO signed assignments, and ZERO Deaf event hours. That has changed!*
- *A Deaf Studies major and minor, an adult Transition to Interpreting program, and 3 certificates were added.*
- *Internship requirements were increased.*

Table 12. Changes in Undergraduate Curricula

	<i>N</i>	Percent
Student assessments were modified to include specific outcome measures	30	52
One or more new courses were added to the IE program	28	48
Assignments/requirements were increased within IE courses	25	43
IE curriculum was significantly revised	23	40
Online courses were initiated	23	40
Some IE courses were removed from the program	23	40
Other (please specify)	15	26
Online courses were increased	14	24
The number of IE courses or credit hours were increased	9	16
Assignments/requirements were decreased	8	14
The number of IE courses or credit hours were decreased	5	9
Internship requirements were decreased	3	5
A new IE minor was added	3	5
Fewer supportive coursework requirements	1	2
IE program was temporarily put on hold	1	2
IE program was initiated	0	0
IE program was closed	0	0

For graduate curriculum, the most frequently occurring significant changes ($n = 7$) included: (a) *IE curriculum was significantly revised* ($n = 4, 7\%$), (e) *online courses were initiated* ($n = 4, 7\%$), (b) *assignments/requirements were increased within IE courses* ($n = 4, 7\%$), (c) *student assessments were modified to include specific outcome measures* ($n = 3, 5\%$), (d) *some IE courses were removed from the program* ($n = 3, 5\%$), and (e) *one or more new courses were added to the IE program* ($n = 2, 3\%$). It should be noted that the 51 *Other* responses all indicated the respondent did not have a graduate program. Table 13 provides the full results related to curricula changes.

Table 13. *Changes in Graduate Curricula*

	<i>N</i>	Percent
Other (please specify)	51	88
IE curriculum was significantly revised	4	7
Assignments/requirements were increased within IE courses	4	7
Student assessments were modified to include specific outcome measures	4	7
Some IE courses were removed from the program	3	5
One or more new courses were added to the IE program	3	5
Online courses were initiated	2	3
IE program was closed	1	2
The number of IE courses or credit hours were decreased	1	2
Online courses were increased	1	2
Assignments/requirements were decreased within the IE program	1	2
Internship requirements were decreased	1	2
A new IE minor was added	1	2
IE program was initiated	0	0
Fewer supportive coursework requirements	0	0
IE program was temporarily put on hold	0	0
The number of IE courses or credit hours were increased	0	0

INTERNSHIP

Respondents provided information on their internships, identifying whether they have an internship, how many credit-based internship courses are required of interpreting students, the minimum number of hours required in the internship, and information about internship sites. Respondents indicated that 87% ($n = 58$) have an internship as part of their undergraduate program, while 13% do not. At the graduate level, three of the four (75%) respondents with graduate programs have an internship as part of their IEP. Most undergraduate programs have one ($n = 23$, 40%) or two ($n = 11$, 19%) credit-based internship courses associated with the internship requirement. Nine of the respondents ($n = 58$) had no credit-bearing internship course. The range of minimum hours required for the internship is between 2 and 450 hours ($n = 58$). Twenty-one

programs (36%) have 300 or more hours, the minimum required by CCIE for accreditation, while 29 programs have less than 300 hours as a minimum requirement for internship.

Many program directors ($n = 36$, 62%) indicated that their program has a pre-approval system in place for internships. Programs reported on the restrictions or conditions placed on the locations of internships for their interpreting students. The top response ($n = 24$, 41%) was that there were no conditions or restrictions on the locations of internships. Additional comments added under *Other* included that programs require supervising interpreters to be certified, that that quality and supportiveness of the agency is important in making placement decisions, and that often internship placement is an individualized decision made on a case-by-case basis. Table 14 provides the full details related to responses in this area.

When asked if students were restricted from completing internships during any particular terms, 28 respondents (48%) indicated that there were no restrictions on during which terms students can complete internships. Sixteen respondents (28%) indicated that summer internships were not allowed and two programs (3%) indicated that fall internships were not allowed. Programs were able to enter additional comments in the “other” category and those comments included ideas such as students being restricted to their final semester of the program and that while fall internships are not typical programs often make individual decisions based on student circumstances. All of the program directors indicated that students were allowed to complete their internships during the spring semester.

Table 14. *Restrictions on Internship Placements*

	<i>N</i>	Percent
There are no conditions.	24	41
Other (please specify)	14	24
Anywhere within North America (e.g., Canada, United States).	11	19
Geographical limits within a certain distance to the university.	8	14
Anywhere within the state or province.	5	9
Driving time limits within a certain distance to the university.	4	7
Depends on the student's GPA.	2	3

The majority of programs do not require students to pay any travel or supervisory expenses for their internship. While 95% never require students to pay, 3% always require students to pay and 2% only require students to pay if their internship is out of state. Program directors identified the methods that faculty use to oversee interpreting students during their internships. The majority use learning management systems, e-mail, video conferencing platforms, and telephones for their supervision of students. Just over half (59%) indicated that their supervision of students includes on-site visits. Table 15 presents all data relative to the supervisory question.

Table 15. *Supervision Of IE Students During Internship*

	<i>N</i>	Percent
Learning Management Systems (e.g., Canvas, Blackboard, D2L)	48	83
Email	48	83
Video conferencing tools (e.g., Zoom, Skype)	47	81
Telephone Communications	37	64
On-site Visits	34	59
Other (please specify)	10	17
Regular Mail	0	0

Program directors reported how the internship is graded. Half of the respondents ($n = 29$) indicated that the internship issues a letter grade, 34% ($n = 20$) of the respondents indicated that internship is graded as pass or fail, and 10% ($n = 9$) use a combination of letter grades and pass fail. Three programs (5%) indicated that no grade is issued. The majority of programs ($n = 41$, 71%) allow students to take other courses during their internship. Some programs ($n = 6$, 10%) do not allow students to take courses during their internship, and some of respondents ($n = 10$, 19%) indicated that this decision is made on a case-by-case basis.

GRADUATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND POST-GRADUATION

Respondents provided the approximate number of graduates from their IEP over the last three years and the types of organizations that employed the greatest number of IE graduates in the last two years. At the undergraduate level, program directors reported graduating, on average, an estimated 9.8 IEP students per year per program. Across the three years in question, the 58 programs graduated an approximate total of 1704 students. At the graduate level, five different programs responded and program directors reported graduating on average 14 IEP students per year per program. Two graduate programs graduated students each of the three years in question while the other two programs graduated one or more students only once in the three-year.

Program directors reported the top areas where graduates became employed were K-12 educational schools or districts ($n = 42$ 72%) and with sign language interpreting agencies ($n = 38$, 66%). No program directors indicated that graduates were employed by general, multilingual interpreting agencies or in healthcare systems including hospitals. Program directors were asked to provide information about how they maintain contact with graduates of their program. Of the schools that responded, contact with alumni was mainly through (a) informal contact ($n = 55$, 95%), (b) social media ($n = 46$, 79%), (c) email ($n = 41$, 71%), (d) formal alumni surveys

administered by the department or university ($n = 25$, 43%), (e) alumni receptions or gathering ($n = 11$, 19%), and (f) formal alumni surveys administered by the university ($n = 10$, 17%). Informal contact with alumni was the top means of communicating with graduates of the programs.

DISCUSSION

Interpreter education programs are predominantly located in large, public institutions and within colleges or administrative units related to either *Arts and Sciences* or *Education and Human Services*. Programs were most often located in administrative departments that included *ASL Interpreting* or *Interpreting* in their department names. The names of departments varied and included other descriptors such as education, communication, languages, and language studies. The variety of program titles suggests there is no one place for interpreting programs to reside within institutions, but the programs do tend to exist within departments focused on Human Services. It should also be noted that a variety of colleges and departments in which IEPs exist suggest that the programs often compete for resources and support with other academic programs that are often unrelated.

We often think of interpreting programs as being small and even low-enrolled programs. Certainly, when compared to other more traditional programs in post-secondary education, interpreting programs would be considered smaller programs. The enrollment at the undergraduate major level is relatively healthy with the majority of programs reporting over 20 majors. Enrollment at the graduate level suggest smaller majors with four of the five programs having less than 20 majors and one program with over 50 majors. Slightly more than a third of the programs experienced enrollment decreases over the last three years while a third of the programs saw enrollments remaining stable. The trend of decreasing enrollments in recent years is in line with general undergraduate enrollment in the U.S. which has decreased between 2010 and 2021 in degree-granting postsecondary institutions. At 4-year institutions, undergraduate enrollment increased by 4 percent while at 2-year institutions undergraduate enrollment decreased by 39 percent (Irwin et al., 2023).

The changes that programs identified as having occurred in the last five years and changes they anticipate occurring in the next five years present concerns associated with faculty within the IEP. Many programs lost faculty to retirement and anticipated faculty retiring in the near future. Programs experienced vacant positions that were unfilled following national searches and anticipate a continuation of this phenomena in the near future. In that most programs have a small number of full-time faculty to begin with, considerations and plans need to be made now for replacing departing faculty and for sustaining current faculty. There are very few programs preparing future interpreting faculty at the graduate level, which elevates the concern for maintaining current academic programs to prepare interpreters. The lack of adequate training programs, which need highly-qualified faculty, leads to the demand for interpreters surpassing the supply. This truth was recognized even in the earliest stages of our profession's development (Quigley, 1965)

Considering program faculty, a typical IEP has an average of three full-time faculty with perhaps one tenured professor and a tenure-seeking faculty member. The program uses five part-time faculty and among all of their faculty, both full-time and part-time, there are a small number of Deaf faculty and faculty from diverse ethnic backgrounds. On average, one third of programs have at least one faculty member with a doctorate degree and the number of assistant, associate,

and full professors were nearly identical. As one would expect, the majority of a faculty member's time is devoted to teaching, while research is only conducted by less than a third of the tenured or tenure-earning faculty. This snapshot of what might be a typical representation of an IEP faculty member's work raises questions about who is, and will be, conducting the crucial scholarship related to signed language interpreting, developing and revising curriculum, pursuing accreditation, or providing leadership to the profession.

Accreditation of IEPs has been a topic of interest and discussion for nearly 60 years (see Quigley, 1965), yet only about a quarter of the responding programs are accredited. If we accept that 125 is a valid count of IEPs in North America, the number of accredited programs (19, as reported by CCIE, (Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education, 2024), only 15% of IEPs are currently accredited. CCIE and the accreditation system was 20 years in the making and a closer examination of why programs are not seeking accreditation needs to be conducted. As we learned in this study, the lack of funding, faculty time, and perceived value of accreditation are all barriers that need to be addressed by our professional organizations invested in IEP quality (i.e., Conference of Interpreter Trainers, CCIE). While some barriers to accreditation are harder to address systematically (e.g., having inadequate faculty or internship requirements), others can be addressed through innovative practices and adjustments to institutional perspectives. For example, IEP program directors could be given a course release while leading and writing the accreditation self-study report, a part-time student assistant could be provided to assist with data collection and report writing, and a consultant could be brought in to assist with the development of the self-study report.

CONCLUSION

The exploratory nature of this study provides us with a starting place from which we can build a more comprehensive understanding of where we are and where we need to go in North American IEPs. One interesting, and somewhat disturbing, conclusion of this study is that the questions asked 60 years ago at the birth of the profession are still unanswered today. Each program appears to be substantially different from the others, and while we learned that there is some common ground between programs, numerous variables influence the constitution of our programs. Although 125 academic programs preparing interpreters have been established since academic interpreter education began, the best way to answer the pertinent questions, such as *who do we teach?*, *what do we teach?*, and *how do we teach?*, is not yet clear. Examining the state-of-the-art of interpreter preparation on a regular, consistent schedule will allow for a greater understanding of whether we are meeting the needs of the profession, what we are preparing interpreters to be able to do, and the needs within IEPs. Prior surveys used by Anderson and Stauffer (1991) and Cokely and Winston (2010) could be combined with the current instrument to create a more comprehensive tool for future data collection, and a more robust method for encouraging program participation is needed if we are to receive the maximum benefit from our results.

Limitations to this study included the use of an online survey. The nature of survey distribution from within an online platform increases the likelihood that survey announcements and reminders may be lost to spam folders and institutional protection protocols. While initial distribution emails and reminders that were undeliverable were returned to the researchers, emails received but placed into spam or junk folders or isolated by institutional e-mail parameters remained unidentified. A second limitation to this study was the length of the survey. The final

survey instrument included 67 questions and took an estimated 30-40 minutes to complete. While comparable to a similar study in another field (Zahl et al., 2021) and shorter in length to surveys conducted in 2007 and 2009 by the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers, which had 103 and 144 questions respectively (Cokely & Winston, 2010), the number and breadth of questions may have impacted the overall response rate.

There are areas of further study which the researchers intend to pursue. Despite being an issue of great importance from the earliest days of the interpreter preparation, accreditation has not been widely embraced or pursued. Studies that examine perceptions of accreditation, strategies for achieving, impact on faculty in the programs, their processes and financial requirements would be helpful to not only currently accredited programs, but to programs who may be striving towards accreditation and to the accrediting body as well. An additional area of needed study is in the actual curriculum taught, including an examination of course titles, descriptions, and sequencing. As noted earlier in this article, identifying what should be taught and even when it should be taught has been discussed, debated, and proposed for over half a century. Determining exactly what is being taught, in what sequence, and in what ways has not been clearly documented other than a few examples of specific programs.

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