



DEPARTMENT OF THERAPEUTIC SCIENCE
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY / PHYSICAL THERAPY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
1080 Medical Science Center
1300 University Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53706
Fax: (608) 263-6434

TO: To the File
FR: Dean Jane Ayer, Acting Chair
DT: May 10, 1990
RE: American Sign Language: A Summary of Background Information and Public Information

Basis for Decision:

During budget meetings in January, February and March, the program coordinators and the Executive Committee discussed staffing and funding for 1990-91, resulting in a decision to not fund the course on American Sign Language. This is different from cancelling the course, a misunderstanding of some community people who have responded to the issue. The action is only that the course will not be funded in the Department of Therapeutic Science for 1990-91.

Enrollment patterns were part of the consideration in that many students in the Department did not see this elective course as central to their program of study, nor did professionals from other schools or colleges.

Academic Home for American Sign Language:

Proponents for the course are stating that it should be viewed as a foreign language and that it should not be offered under the medical model of disability or disorder.

It is strange that when the course was offered in the School of Allied Health Professions under the Medical School, the same individuals did not protest that it was offered under a medical school and under a medical model. Some respondents see the decision to cancel the course as a School of Education decision when in fact it was a decision of a department executive committee, the same members of whom were within the SAHP and in a medical school, a contradictory position for those who are now protesting the charge.

Apparently there is a proposal to the Dean of the College of Letters and Science that American Sign Language be offered as a foreign language. The School of Education does not offer basic instruction in foreign language, and if it is viewed by its proponents as a foreign language, then it rightfully belongs in the College of Letters and Science.

ASL Memo to File
May 10, 1990
Page 2

Before we were informed by proponents of ASL that it is viewed as a foreign language, we considered an appropriate home to be in Communication Arts or Communicative Disorders. But these two areas of academic study have not been referred to by supporters so we assume we were erroneous in our views of a logical home.

We will support whatever movements occur to house the course in a logical school or college, but obviously because we do not teach foreign languages, the logical home is not the School of Education.

MJA:n1

Letters received to date and answered: 12

Letters with no address: 3 (same last name)

Petitions: 10 signatures including R.N. and L.P.N.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

University of Wisconsin-Madison • Office of the Dean
Education Building • Madison, Wisconsin 53706-1385



April 23, 1990

MEMO TO: J. Trey Duffy
FROM: John Palmer, Dean *JP*
SUBJECT: American Sign Language

I want to clarify who decided to terminate the ASL course in the Department of Therapeutic Science. It was not the School of Education or the Dean, but it was by unanimous vote of the faculty of the Department consisting of the individuals transferred from the School of Allied Health offering programs in occupational and physical therapy. Faculty determine what courses they will offer.

I concur with your suggestion that a number of persons who might have some stake in the offering of ASL be assembled to determine how the University might provide instruction in ASL.

JP:aw



Office of the Dean of Students

McBurney Disability Resource Center

905 University Avenue

Madison, WI 53715

608/263-2741 (Voice) 608/263-6393 (V/TDD)

DATE: June 20, 1990
TO: American Sign Language Supporters
FROM: Bambi Riehl
SUBJECT: UW - Madison ASL class

You will be pleased to know that UW - Madison will be offering an ASL class this fall.

On Monday, June 18, Dean John Palmer (School of Education) informed McBurney director Trey Duffy that the course would be offered in Rehabilitation Psychology/Special Education. This is a temporary situation until a committee can be convened to study the possible future locations for ASL courses.

At this time we have few details about this, but Norm Bervan (Rehab Psych) informed me that they plan to open the course up to the general student population. Beyond that, I cannot tell you much more. Again, this is not a long range answer for us, so we will need to continue to be involved with this issue.

Thank you for all of your efforts: letters, phone calls, petitions and attending meetings. Without your help, I doubt we would have had this success. Congratulations!!

I would like to suggest that you consider writing a thank you note to John Palmer. He is responsible for finding a new home for the course. You can write to him at this address:

Dean John Palmer
School of Education, UW - Madison
1000 Bascom Hall
Room 123
Madison, WI 53706

Thanks again for your efforts.