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Chairperson
Letters and Science Curriculum Committee
University of Wisconsin-Madison

November 19, 1984

Dear Chairperson:

The purpose of this letter is to ask your committee to review my request for a modification of the foreign language requirement for L&S students and substitute in its place the sequence of courses recommended as an alternate by your committee.

Since my enrollment at Wisconsin, ██████████ ██████████ ██████████ has kept me informed each semester as to the progress L&S was making on the proposed changes in the foreign language requirement.

Midway in my sophomore year, ██████████ ██████████ and I decided it was necessary to start taking a foreign language. We petitioned for taking Spanish 101 by correspondence and this request was granted.

The course turned out to be very much more difficult than I had expected. After the first few weeks in the course, I hired a tutor. We worked together for roughly forty hours during the semester and into the summer. He would review my correspondence lessons and with this help I had an average grade between A and A- on them. When he left Madison for teaching job, I then found another tutor who was a former teaching assistant in the Spanish department. We worked together about 15 hours to prepare me for the final exam. My final course grade was a C-, I was 1 point from receiving a D. Obviously, even though I tried my best, my performance was not very satisfactory.

I spent far more time on Spanish 101 than any other course I ever took at Wisconsin. I had started the course at the beginning of spring semester and was not able to finish the course until during this fall semester. I spent an average of 3 to 4 hours daily until I finally completed this course.

I would greatly appreciate your consideration in the modification of the foreign language requirements that are necessary for the completion of my degree in the School of Letters and Science.

Sincerely,

██████████ ██████████

November 18, 1984

University of Wisconsin-Madison
College of Letters and Science
Curriculum Committee

Members of the Committee:

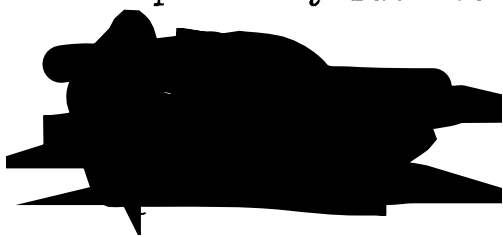
I am addressing this letter to you on behalf of [REDACTED]. In assisting [REDACTED] this past summer as a tutor for his Spanish course I encountered some unique language teaching problems. These difficulties came about because [REDACTED] is deaf, and most foreign language teaching methods put a great deal of emphasis on oral/verbal reinforcement of the written word. This oral/verbal aspect is crucial as it allows for a quicker acquisition of the new language and the aural patterns that permit students to make an easier correlation between the spoken and the printed word. Overcoming this methodology problem meant stressing only the written/visual aspects and concepts of the language. Needless to say this approach was extremely time consuming, with a total of 16 hours of intensive review in order to prepare for one examination. As a former Teaching Assistant at the University, in the Spanish Department, I can assure you that this is an extraordinary amount of time to spend in review.

Foreign language acquisition for those students like [REDACTED] with hearing impairments, is a particularly difficult problem, especially when viewed in terms of the methods that are most often used by the University. The Spanish Department, for example, stresses the use of the Laboratories for Recorded Instruction so that students may practice hearing and speaking Spanish. This method of teaching most definitely puts the student with hearing impairments at a disadvantage as the "Language Labs" are not at their disposal.

I can see two possible solutions to this problem, one, to hire a multilingual instructor that can provide intense, individualized instruction for those students with hearing impairments, utilizing visual techniques and spreading the required material over a longer period of time. This option would be costly and finding the qualified personnel would be questionable. The second option is to require 16 total credits to include, for example, Literature in Translation, History of Spain/Latin America, and perhaps a selection of course work in Art, Political Science, or even more literature/history work (in English) of a second foreign language.

It is my sincere opinion that these options would afford students like [REDACTED] a more equitable chance for academic achievement. The course work would still be challenging but not as frustrating as learning to speak a language that they can't even hear.

Respectfully submitted,

A large, irregular black redaction mark covers the signature area, obscuring the name and any handwritten notes or dates.

Report of the Foreign Language Review Committee

Regarding the request of [REDACTED], that he be allowed to substitute non-language courses to fulfill the language requirement of the College of Letters and Science:

The student, a junior in the College, is studying to be admitted to the School of Journalism. In consultation with [REDACTED], and with the permission of the Spanish Department, he took Spanish 101 by correspondence. This came about because [REDACTED] has a hearing impairment. He received a C- grade in the course, and concluded, "Obviously, even though I tried my best, my performance was not satisfactory, especially in terms of the amount of effort I made." He spent two to three hours each day on the course, worked with a tutor four to five hours a week, and spent sixteen hours "of intensive review" preparing for the examination. With the support of Dean Creeden, [REDACTED] requests permission "to substitute other courses for the foreign language requirement...."

The Committee considered [REDACTED]' hearing problem. While the members of the Committee have no doubt that, as his doctor concludes; the student has difficulty learning the spoken parts of a language, such considerations do not appear to extend to a mastery of a reading knowledge of the language, which is what he was attempting to accomplish in the correspondence course. The Committee also concluded that the amount of time [REDACTED] spent studying Spanish seemed not to be excessive.

The Committee recommends that [REDACTED] seek not teaching assistants but a tutor who is trained in traditional methods of learning languages, who would write things for him rather than say them. A correspondence course does not seem to be the ideal solution for him. He requires appropriate tutoring or instruction in a class. There is no real teaching in a correspondence course; the student is largely on his own.

Perhaps he should be advised to study Latin; he would be learning to read a language, not to speak it, and he would have the advantages of the discipline and structure of a class with faculty members who are trained to deal with the unique problems of learning to read the language. He has not had these advantages in the Spanish correspondence course. It is said that it is virtually impossible for a deaf person to learn a foreign language, but the problems of hearing impairment may become moot if [REDACTED] studies a language that is meant to be read only.

29 January 1985



University of Wisconsin—Madison

College of Letters and Science

Student Academic Affairs
104 South Hall, 1055 Bascom Mall
Madison, Wisconsin 53706
Telephone: 608/262-2644

February 22, 1985

Confidential

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]:

This is to inform you that your request to substitute non-language courses to fulfill the foreign language requirement has been denied. After a lengthy review by the Foreign Language Review Committee and in consultation with the Curriculum Committee, it was concluded that your disability does not preclude your learning a foreign language in an appropriate context.

While we have no doubt that you have difficulty learning the spoken parts of a language, such considerations do not appear to extend to a mastery of a reading knowledge of a language. We do not believe that a correspondence course is the ideal solution for you. We would suggest that you study a language, such as Latin, which is intended only to be read. An instructor who is trained to deal with the unique problems of learning languages would be able to provide you important assistance unavailable in a correspondence course.

We do understand that you are disappointed with this decision. We strongly believe that the intellectual and cultural benefits to be gained from the study of a foreign language are essential components of a liberal arts education.

Sincerely,

The Letters and Science
Curriculum Committee

WTW:bjh

Enclosure: Report of the Foreign Language Review Committee

the character of my hearing impairment in that my residual hearing is better in my right ear and that in both ears my hearing ability drops off rapidly in the important middle and high frequency ranges of spoken language.

The previously submitted documentation to your Committee gave no indication that my hearing loss was from birth. Persons with normal hearing who later lose their hearing have had the benefit of learning a language and this knowledge stays with them. In my situation, I did not have the opportunity to learn a language in the way that a child with normal hearing would have had. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] At the age of 4 my vocabulary was that of a 1 1/2 year old. To learn to speak normally, I had to learn where to place my tongue and teeth to make each sound. I still use this method since I can not hear the high frequency sounds I make when I speak. During my formal schooling, I have had professional help who followed this same method of teaching me speech and language. My mother was also able to give me considerable help in vocabulary since she has a degree in the teaching of the young child. I still work on increasing my vocabulary by trying to learn twenty new words each week. I have disciplined myself to do this because I know that it is the only way for me to learn the words others would normally learn by hearing them in the context of a sentence. Please understand that I have to work very hard just to learn English. Recently I have been working on my grammar and vocabulary; for my vocabulary I have been concentrating on word roots and prefixes while in grammar I have been learning punctuation rules and syntax.

Although there must be ample experimented evidence, common sense also dictates that a person like myself who has been severely to profoundly deaf since birth would experience considerable difficulty in spoken and written communication. I quote from the November 14, 1984 letter from [REDACTED], coordinator of students with disabilities [REDACTED], [REDACTED] who had reviewed the School District's support of myself "... he was very limited in the amount of information he could receive auditorily. To acquire information he must rely almost exclusively on the visual modality. In conclusion, certain adaptations must be made for him especially when the auditory modality would normally be the primary mode for acquiring information."

Ground Number 2: Communication Difficulties.

Since enrolling at the UW-Madison, I have had considerable help from the State of Wisconsin and the University in order to maximize the benefit of attending classes. In my classes, I always try to sit in the very front row since I depend on lip

reading as a major way of determining what the instructor is saying. I only concentrate on what the instructor is saying since it is impossible for me to both take notes and watch the instructor's lips. In every class at the University it has been necessary for me to have note takers which are paid from funds I receive from the State of Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The note takers, usually students who have taken the course in the past, give the class notes to me after each lecture. After reviewing these notes, I often go to my instructors after class to ask them about things that the note takers have written down. In this one to one environment, I can understand more from the instructor. In addition, I have had paid tutors to whom I have gone for help for almost every course at Wisconsin.

Any assignment that requires me to write something is a very difficult and time consuming task. My first step is to do the necessary reading and/or research and then write a rough draft. I next type this draft into a file on an IBM PC and take this copy to a special tutor that I have who only helps me with my writing. Sometimes I will also show this rough draft to my parents for their comments. My father teaches in the mechanical engineering department and has had considerable experience looking at the written work of students. He often suggests ways to improve my writing. He has given me help with the content and format of this letter. I take all of these comments and rewrite my paper on the IBM PC. I have a word processing program that helps with antonyms, synonyms and spelling. Often I will take my paper back to my tutor for final comments before turning it in. I feel this procedure is helping me to learn to communicate better even though it takes me much longer to complete written assignments.

Comments on the Committee's letter.

The letter I received from your Committee last February concentrated on the point that while I may have great difficulty in learning to speak a foreign language, I would likely not experience this difficulty in learning a non-spoken language, such as Latin. I believe this position is not valid both in terms of my experience with Spanish and the close relationship there is in any language between its spoken and written components.

Your February letter was very disappointing and discouraging. Only the encouragement and support of my parents to put the issue aside until the end of the semester kept me going last spring. This summer I have had time to reflect on my foreign language experiences of last year. I had enrolled in Spanish 101 by correspondence at the beginning of the spring semester and was approximately 50 percent finished by the end of that semester. I was taking only 8 other credits that semester and took this opportunity to spend the additional time on the Spanish course. In addition, it took me the three summer months and two months in

the fall semester to complete this course. Since this was a correspondence course, it was not necessary for me to learn to speak Spanish, only to learn to read and write it - as would be learning to read and write Latin. I had two excellent Spanish tutors (both with prior UW teaching experience) who helped me with each written lesson and to prepare for the exams. With their help, I did well on the homework assignments. However, I flunked both written exams even though I studied as hard as I could. I passed Spanish 101 with the absolutely lowest possible numerical grade. It was a very frustrating and humiliating experience for me to have to put so much effort into something and receive so little in response. I have never felt so depressed and often near tears as I did during the 9 months that I tried to learn Spanish. There is no question that I spent many more total hours on a regular basis for Spanish 101 than for any other course I have ever taken. I have never experienced as much frustration with any course, either in high school or in college. I feel Latin will be just as hard, if not harder, and I feel frightened just thinking about it. I recognize that the study of any foreign language requires a certain discipline. However, I believe that this discipline can be learned by alternative means such as through a linguistics course, for example.

I sincerely believe that I will receive a better and more complete education from the School of Letters and Science if I am permitted to substitute for the foreign language requirement a sequence of courses from the approved list of alternatives provided. I sincerely do not believe that taking a foreign language is the answer to my problem and hope that you will agree with me and accept my request for the substitution.

In closing, it occurs to me that your Committee might be wondering why a person with my disability is interested in pursuing a career in journalism. My interest in this field was kindled by a [REDACTED] High School Journalism teacher who talked me into writing for the school's newspaper as a Junior. His continued encouragement contributed to my seeking and attaining the co-editor-in-chief position of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] during one semester of my Senior year. In addition, I have thoroughly enjoyed my journalism courses at Wisconsin, especially the two directed study courses I took with Professor [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I intend to give this field my very best shot.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES
AND LITERATURE**

866 Van Hise Hall
1220 Linden Drive
Madison, Wisconsin 53706
Telephone: 608/262-2487

13 August 1985

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]:

The Language Review Committee of the College of Letters and Science met on 13 August 1985 to consider the new information that you provided in your letter to me of 9th August, and to determine if additional data were required.

At that time, the members of the Committee concluded that, on the basis of the new material presented by you, you shall be allowed to substitute courses for the Letters and Science language requirement.

You should now make an appointment with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of the College of Letters and Science to determine, in conjunction with the chairperson of an appropriate language department, the nature of the substitute courses.

I have discussed this decision with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of the College of Letters and Science, and I write this letter with his approval. He would normally be the person to write this letter, but because he is presently on vacation, and because it is crucial that you have this information before registration for the fall semester, I am writing it in his stead.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Review
Committee

xc: [REDACTED]