

RIT Now Offers Bachelor's In Interpreting

January 22, 2002

Addressing the nation's critical shortage of skilled interpreters, the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology now offers a Bachelor of Science degree in American Sign Language-English Interpretation, a first for New York State.

NTID/RIT is the first college in the world to formally educate sign language interpreters, and has graduated more interpreters than any other college.

A complement to its Associate in Applied Science degree in ASL-English Interpretation, NTID/RIT's new bachelor-level curriculum provides advanced, specialized training to develop greater interpreting skills, as well as practical experience and coursework in elementary, middle/secondary and postsecondary schools. It also provides training for working with oral deaf and hard-of-hearing people, and people who are deaf-blind. Classes begin in September.

"Since the passage of ADA, the needs of deaf people have gained more attention and respect," said Ben Hall, president of Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, the largest association of professional interpreters worldwide. "Out of this respect, more deaf people are receiving degrees, taking management positions, and are more involved in the business world and community, resulting in a demand for more, highly skilled interpreters."

Nationwide, only 25 bachelor level ASL-English Interpretation programs are available, and some 120 programs are offered either at the associates, certification or continuing education level.

RIT is the only campus in the world where 1,100 deaf and hard-of-hearing students study, live and socialize with 14,000 hearing students, giving those who enter the interpreter program a unique opportunity for daily interaction with deaf people, thereby enhancing their sign language, cultural and interpreting skills. RIT/NTID employs more than 100 full-time interpreters to support students' classroom, athletic, recreational, and other campus activities.

For more information about the degree program, contact: 585.475.6809 (v) or www.rit.edu/ntid/aslie.

For years, NTID/RIT has played an integral role in shaping ASL-English interpreter education. Through federal and state grants, NTID manages several programs designed to improve skills of interpreters, as well as develop videos, CD-ROMs and other products to enhance interpreter/ASL education.

NTID was established at RIT to enhance career opportunities for deaf and hard-of-hearing people. Over the past 33 years, thousands of highly qualified deaf graduates have entered professions that previously had not been open to them. Web address: www.rit.edu/NTID.