

Hungarian Officials Visit NTID

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Building on the success of a visit two years ago by Hungarian Ambassador Andras Simonyi, officials from PEN-International recently hosted a delegation of 12 Hungarians who spent one week learning about postsecondary education for deaf students at NTID.

Only half of Hungarian's approximately 9,000 deaf citizens attend high school and an even smaller number go on to college, according to Dr. Adam Kosa, president of the Hungarian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Simonyi and Dr. Kinga Goncz, minister of Child, Youth, and Equal Opportunities in Hungary, are determined to reverse that trend and want to use NTID's higher education practices as a model to help their country's deaf young people improve their chances of going to college.

The visitors attended lectures and seminars and toured various sites around campus, gathering information to take back to Hungary, a country whose deaf education practices reflect those of the United States in the mid-1960s.

"When NTID became part of this university 40 years ago, it transformed both RIT and the city of Rochester," said Dr. James DeCaro, director of PEN-International. "Its success came from a huge level of cooperation between the city, state, and federal governments as well as our university. Hungary now wants to create that same environment."

The Hungarian visitors were particularly interested to see how support services like interpreting, tutoring, and notetaking help raise NTID students' skills to the college level.

One week after the visit, DeCaro met with Simonyi and Goncz at the Hungarian Embassy in Washington, DC, to finalize three initiatives:

1. RIT will establish a scholarship for a deaf Hungarian man or woman to pursue a graduate degree at RIT. The scholarship may be tied to providing a leadership opportunity for a deaf Hungarian to study deaf education at NTID and then help provide support services for deaf college students in Hungary.
2. PEN-International will develop a 10-week internship program for professionals from Hungary to come to NTID to study how support services help students succeed.
3. Hungary will develop a pilot project to educate deaf men and women at a Hungarian university, utilizing support services and compensatory education.