The University of Georgia

University Council
Athens, Georgia 30602

January 9, 2015

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Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal to create a new prefix, AMSL, American Sign Language, will be an agenda item for the January 16, 2015, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

William K. Vencill

William K. Vencill, Chair
University Curriculum Committee

cc: Provost Pamela S. Whitten
Dr. Laura D. Jolly

The University of Georgia

College of Education
Department of Communication Sciences and Special Education

To: College of Education Curriculum Committee
From: Anne Marcotte, Department Head
Re: Request for new "AMSL" course prefix
Date: September 30, 2014

The Department of Communication Sciences and Special Education seeks approval to establish a new course prefix, "AMSL," for our American Sign Language courses.

The department currently teaches a four-semester sequence of American Sign Language, which students in many majors across the university use to satisfy their three-semester or four-semester "foreign language competency" requirement. As of Fall 2014, we have three full-time American Sign Language faculty members, each teaching four courses per semester. Most of those courses are over-enrolled every semester, as compared with recommended class sizes in the discipline. We are also in the process of developing proposals for additional courses and a minor, among other possible expansions.

We would like to change to using a dedicated "AMSL" prefix for courses related to American Sign Language for several reasons. Organizationally, our department includes three sets of overlapping and interwoven programs in special education, communication sciences and disorders, and American Sign Language. We currently use the prefix "SPED" for special education courses, giving those related programs an "umbrella" identity. However, we use the prefix "CMSD" for both communication sciences and disorders courses and American Sign Language courses, something that in subtle and not so subtle ways limits the potential of both sets of programs. At one level, using the communication sciences and disorders prefix is simply inaccurate for American Sign Language courses; American Sign Language is a language, not part of the disciplines traditionally referred to as "communication sciences and disorders" (i.e., speech and voice science, speech-language pathology, audiology, and other related fields). At a more practical level, we have expanded and will continue to expand our course and program offerings in American Sign Language and in Deaf Studies. Having a searchable, marketable, and identifiable prefix will help to establish these programs in a way that we believe to be necessary if they are to reach their full potential. Finally, at a more philosophical level, our American Sign Language courses need to be removed from any implication that they are related to a "disorder."

Thank you for your assistance with creating an "AMSL" prefix. Please let me know what other information the department could provide in support of this request.

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