I. **Name of Program:**

MA¹:
- Concentration in Interpreting Studies
- Concentration in Interpreting and Translating

New Program Overview: 21-24 credit hours; for professional interpreters² and/or interpreter educators who wish to further their education with an advanced degree. We propose these two new degrees for interpreters who have demonstrated competence in interpreting – the MA with a Concentration in Interpreting Studies focuses on foundational knowledge and research, while the MA with a Concentration in Interpreting and Translating focuses on enhancing the professional's interpreting and translating skills with foundational knowledge and skills courses.

II. **Rationale for Program:**

- These programs are designed to respond to the professional development needs of professional interpreters and interpreter educators, the increased demand for interpreters – especially at advanced professional and academic levels – and the need for more highly educated teachers of interpreting. There is an existing pool of professional interpreters and interpreter educators who demonstrate one or more of these needs, who value and wish to obtain a Masters degree, and who already have the experiential and/or educational base of interpreting. Therefore, these programs would increase enrollment by tapping into a population that has the desire for these types of programs: shorter, more focused programs for working professional interpreters.

- The NCIEC Interpreter Practitioner Needs Assessment Final Report (2007) states that “... a total of 22% (852) [of] working interpreters” plan to retire within 10 years. This represents a “subset of the RID population – approximately 50%. If the trend were assumed for the entire RID membership, the number would be closer to 1,700 working interpreters retiring in the next 10 years” (p. 23). In the NCIEC Interpreter Education Program Needs Assessment Survey

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¹ We are aware that the name may need to be MA in Interpretation: Concentration in Interpreting Studies and MA in Interpretation: Concentration in Interpreting and Translating. However, we need to distinguish the new program from our current program (MA in Interpretation) and are investigating how to do that.

² The term “interpreters” is used to include interpreters and translators, and interpreters/translators who are Deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing.
Currently under analysis, 10 four-year Interpreting Education Programs projected that they would graduate approximately eight interpreters per year, for an annual total of 160 interpreters across the 20 programs. Given these numbers, "...the gap could increase substantially in 6-10 years when the greatest numbers of interpreters plan to retire" (Winston & Cokely, 2007:23).

- With the advent of increased numbers of BA degrees in interpreting, there are greater numbers of potential students who have undergraduate (AA and BA) degrees in interpreting and who have also been working professionals for a number of years. These programs would provide an avenue for those experienced interpreters who received their undergraduate degree(s) in the field of interpreting and do not require the interpreting education offered in the MAI program, but do wish to continue their study in the field with a different focus. There are also professionals who received their undergraduate degrees in a field other than interpreting and who now wish to further their education in the field in which they are professionals. The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID) has raised the bar in the field by requiring interpreters to obtain a BA degree prior to sitting for certification beginning the summer of 2012. This new degree will allow working interpreters an opportunity to raise their own education level in their field as their colleagues entering the field obtain higher academic credentials than previously required.

- The Concentration in Interpreting Studies includes an overview research course followed by two semesters of guided research courses in which students conduct original research with the goal of producing a solid study in publishable form. This would be the only MA with a Concentration in Interpreting Studies that focuses on ASL – English interpretation. The Concentration in Interpreting and Translating includes skills courses to enhance the students’ interpreting and translating skills, including language refinement skills, self-assessment skills, and the ability to analyze and discuss the work of interpreting and translating. These concentrations provide a means for applying the work, thereby increasing awareness and effectiveness of decision-making as well as increasing implications of the decisions an interpreter makes which affect the lives of the people with whom they work. Interpreting is a complicated cognitive process (Gile, 1995). These degrees provide a means for examining the work, thereby increasing our understanding of and improving the effectiveness of the cognitive process. These concentrations would provide a strong foundation in the tasks involved in interpretation and translation, while allowing the professional/student to choose her/his further focus on research and interpreting studies or interpreting/translating skills.

- The field of interpreting has seen significant growth in the last 10-15 years with Masters and Bachelors degrees. These additional advanced degrees will continue to elevate the profession by producing more educated leaders in the field who are able to research and discuss the tasks involved in interpreting and
translating, as well as provide higher quality interpreting and translating services.

- These programs have the potential of growing the expertise and career opportunities for Deaf professionals in the areas of translation and education of interpreters/translators (Boudreault, 2005).

- With the continual increase in number of Deaf professionals and academics with advanced degrees and knowledge, there is a need for interpreters who have commensurate education and knowledge in order for interpreters to work effectively in the vast arenas in which Deaf people operate. These degrees would provide additional interpreters to this pool (Hauser Finch, & Hauser, 2008).

- These degrees would also increase the pool of potential mentors and educators of interpreters and translators. This would not only impact the field at large by addressing the lack of qualified interpreter educators (Jackowski, 2006) but also specifically benefit Gallaudet University’s growing number of BAI students in need of mentors and educators. Additionally, this would augment the pool of potential candidates for the Ph.D. in Interpreting program at Gallaudet University.

- The provision of interpreting services is an ever-growing need as the arenas in which interpreters work expand (i.e. to include VRS and its oversight by a non-Deaf oriented agency, the FCC). Consequently, there is an increased need for gaining new knowledge and for that knowledge and research to be read and understood by the professionals in the field, thereby encouraging further research production. Working interpreters have the experience to generate useful research questions that serve the profession and the Deaf community, and often have access to sources of data. This program will take steps to prepare these working interpreters to become producers of research in areas that are ripe, as well as to become more critical consumers of research.

- Interpretation programs for spoken language interpreters are recommended by AIIC to be held at the graduate or post-graduate level. This new program serves active professionals in pursing an advanced degree, in keeping with what are regarded internationally as practices in the field of interpretation at large.

III. Goals of Program:

This proposed program is consistent with Gallaudet University’s mission through the following: The two concentrations would serve the intellectual and professional development of d/Deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing professionals working in the field of interpretation and translation. Classes taught by faculty in the Department of Interpretation are taught in ASL, and the nature of the discipline requires a focus on (at least) bilingualism and multiculturalism. These programs would prepare the
graduates for advanced career opportunities in the field of interpretation and translation.

The proposed program is aligned with and supports the goals of Gallaudet University’s Strategic Plan in the following ways:

Goal A: Grow Gallaudet’s enrollment of full-time undergrads, full- and part-time graduate students, and continuing education students to 3,000 by 2015.

- Historically there has been a limited number of professional interpreters who pursue a MAI. We aim to increase enrollment by opening new avenues to professionals who want advanced degrees, want to enhance their skills, and want to increase their knowledge in their field. Our recruiting efforts will include non-traditional students who are working professionals, as well as traditionally underrepresented groups through professional organizations such as NAD, CIT and RID Deaf caucus and “special interest groups”, as well as NAOBI. Our recruitment plan will be addressed further in the next part of the NPR process.

- By offering programs that will further empower professionals with the knowledge and practical skills essential to enhancing their personal and professional success in the field, we believe these programs would become the first choice for the most qualified applicants.

- This program will increase awareness of the Department of Interpretation’s programs, potentially enticing working interpreters to consider not only the new program, but – for those practitioners who do not yet have a BA degree – our BAI program.

- The graduates of this program will become available to serve as mentors to our BAI program, which is annually in search of qualified mentors. By increasing our pool of qualified mentors, we will be prepared to serve a larger pool of undergraduate students. In addition, these programs will increase the pool of adjunct instructors, which offers the potential of additional course offerings in the department so that current courses could be offered more than once a year.

Goal B: By 2015, increase Gallaudet’s six-year undergraduate graduation rate to 50%.

- This new program will provide fresh avenues for graduate degrees for those undergraduates who are looking at higher education. In addition, it will provide avenues for graduate students to continue their education at the doctoral level at Gallaudet University. By increasing the potential number of mentors and educators we can provide expanded opportunities to BAI students in their junior and senior years thus increasing preparedness for a timely graduation.

- Our BAI students currently have an option for a fast-track MA degree. By increasing the number of working, experienced professionals in those courses,
the MA program is enhanced and should be more enticing for BAI students, thereby giving them focus to complete the BAI (and an MAI) in six years or less.

Goal C: By 2015, secure a sustainable resource base through expanded and diversified funding partnerships and increased efficiency of operations.

- Students will be encouraged to apply for funding partnerships and grants for their research projects.

- The Department of Interpretation, in collaboration with OSP and the development office, will seek external funds to support students in this and all programs. For example, VRS companies may be willing to provide support (to individual students in the form of scholarships, or to the university through contributions to the program) with the goal of increasing the skills and knowledge of their interpreters/employees.

Goal D: By 2015, refine a core set of undergraduate and graduate programs that are aligned with the institutional mission and vision, leverage Gallaudet’s many strengths, and best position students for career success.

- This program will strengthen the graduate programs in the Department of Interpretation by expanding the programs that align with the Gallaudet University mission and vision, offering potential students career advancements. These advancements include graduates who will be better prepared to: translate and grow the field of translation, especially for Deaf translators; interpret for (Deaf) professionals and academics by furthering their own education and expanding their own knowledge; conduct and disseminate research; teach interpreting and mentor interpreters.

- The Department of Interpretation introduced graduate level academic ASL papers two years ago (2009) and has since integrated them alongside English papers into courses, qualifying exams, and comprehensive exams. This type of innovation is a draw for Deaf and hearing students, expanding their knowledge and skill sets while positioning them for greater career success.

- By incorporating established professionals as students, new and younger professionals will have the opportunity to see the efficacy of life long learning and further academic study.

- Applicants will be fluent ASL users and fluent users of at least one other language. This provides continued potential for international students, especially Deaf international students who wish to interpret and translate between two or more signed languages.

Goal E: Establish Gallaudet as the epicenter of research, development and outreach leading to advancements in knowledge and practice for deaf & hard of hearing people
and all humanity.

- The MA: Concentration in Interpretation Studies will require students to conduct research that will add to the body of existing research and increase the pool of researchers in the field of interpretation and translation. With this experience, graduates can continue their investigative interests through further education and study.

- This program will support and expand the Department of Interpretation’s Research Interpretation and Translation Center (ITRC) through additional students who will conduct and disseminate research on interpretation and translation. This will further Gallaudet University’s role in becoming the leading international resource for research in interpretation and translation while developing partnerships with professionals from not only across the country, but also with Canada and other international locations. The Ph.D. program has established collaborations nationally and internationally with scholars in the field of signed language interpretation and translation, and students in this proposed program would have the opportunity to learn from and work with these scholars, thereby contributing to a growing body of research in the field. Incorporating experienced professionals into this research collaboration will increase the Department of Interpretation’s productivity in scholarship, resulting in further distinguishing the department and Gallaudet as a center of research, development and outreach related to interpretation and translation. This scholarship and distinction will lead to advancements in knowledge and practice for Deaf & hard of hearing people and all humanity in the areas of interpretation and translation.

This new program, with a choice from two concentrations, is a vital way of expanding our already existing programs to meet the needs of the communities of people who use interpreting and translating services, as well as the needs of the discipline and field of interpreting and translating. The new program aims to use existing resources to increase enrollment for the university by filling a vacancy in the field (MA degrees in interpretation and/or translation for professionals). This will be addressed in detail in Step 2 of the NPR proposal. Simultaneously, the new program will elevate the demand for and conduct of research aimed at improving our understanding and production of interpreting and translating services both on-campus and in the community at large.

IV. References


