

Resolution 019

A Resolution to Recognize American Sign Language as Satisfactory for the Completion of the Language Requirement

Sponsored By: Senator Birth

Co-Sponsored By: Senator Besendorfer, Senator Holcomb, Senator Janik, Senator Marsden, Senator Roscoe, Senator Sijgers,

Whereas,

The University already offers American Sign Language courses ASL 101 and 102, however it is not enough for one to become proficient in the language, and cannot count towards distribution requirements.

Whereas,

The Catholic University of America offers lesser used languages such as Latin and Gaelic which can be used to fulfill distribution requirements or contribute to major or minor courses¹.

Whereas,

American Sign Language, or ASL, is a language with its own grammatical structure, phonemic components, regional dialects, history, culture, and other indicators of an independent language.

Whereas,

ASL is a recognized language in the majority of states within the U.S., as well as recognized in Washington D.C.²

Whereas,

ASL is gaining recognition as a widespread language and can be useful and desirable in many settings and notably the future workplaces of Catholic University students.

Whereas,

Inclusivity for the deaf and hard of hearing community has been notoriously overlooked in predominantly hearing spaces.

Whereas,

Over 500,000 people in the U.S. use ASL, including some in our own university community, and it is claimed to be the third largest language in the United States.³

¹<https://arts-sciences.catholic.edu/academics/undergraduate-programs/advising-handbook/distributionreq.html#Foreign>

²https://www.nad.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/List_States_Recognizing_ASL.pdf

³<https://www.startasl.com/american-sign-language/>

Whereas,

The majority of schools in the D.C. area do not offer ASL despite that a growing number of schools across the nation do, and The Catholic University of America has an opportunity to be a leader in the local academic sphere.

Whereas,

Catholic University is in close proximity to Gallaudet University, a primarily deaf and hard of hearing institution, therefore offering ASL is a significant way to foster community amongst the two universities.

Whereas,

The Catholic University of America’s mission statement shows that we “welcome the collaboration of all scholars... (and) are dedicated to advancing the dialogue between faith and reason" which can be greater achieved by broadening the languages provided within the curriculum.

Be it enacted that

The Student Government Association Senate, acting in its official capacity as the representative of the undergraduate student body of The Catholic University of America, hereby requests that American Sign Language courses be instituted at the 103 and 104 level or greater, or that these classes be provided through the Washington Consortium of Universities, and subsequently that ASL courses be eligible to fulfill undergraduate language requirements.

Agreed to by a vote of ★ yeas to ★ nays on this date: ★ with _____ abstaining and _____ not present.

Gerald Sharpe
President of the Student Government Association

Gemma del Carmen
Vice President of the Student Government Association