

Resolution 034

A Resolution to Recognize ASL as a Foreign Language

Sponsored by: Senator McCarthy

Co-Sponsored by: Senator Ewing, Senator Foley, Senator Martin, Senator Noory

Whereas,

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

Whereas,

It is more relevant than ever to learn ASL because the deaf community is increasing its presence in the workforce, which is why many Catholic University of America (CUA) students express a desire to learn it.¹

Whereas,

There are currently 1,000,000 deaf Americans.²

Whereas,

CUA offers lesser used languages such as Latin and Gaelic which can be used to fulfill distribution requirements or contribute to major or minor courses.³

Whereas,

ASL is a recognized language in the majority of states within the U.S., as well as recognized in Washington D.C.⁴

Whereas,

CUA is only two Metro stops away from Gallaudet University, America's oldest college for the deaf.

Whereas,

Catholic University students are already capable of taking ASL 103 and ASL 104 at Gallaudet University where their credits transfer over to CUA via the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area.

Whereas,

Washington D.C is home to a lively deaf community, such as the Starbucks on H Street where the

¹ Laurene Simms, Melissa Rusher, Jean F. Andrews and Judy Coryell. "Apartheid in Deaf Education Examining Workforce Diversity - JSTOR." Galludet University Press, November 4, 2008. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26234535.pdf>.

² RE;, Mitchell. "How Many Deaf People Are There in the United States? Estimates from the Survey of Income and Program Participation." Journal of deaf studies and deaf education. U.S. National Library of Medicine. Accessed March 21, 2023. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16177267/>.

³ <https://arts-sciences.catholic.edu/academics/undergraduate-programs/advising-handbook/distributionreq.html#Foreign>

⁴ https://www.nad.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/List_States_Recognizing_ASL.pdf

workers know ASL. There is also a strong deaf community at the bars near Gallaudet University.

Whereas,

Students from the National Catholic School of Social Work can already take ASL as a foreign language and many students at CUA already take ASL to fulfill their humanities requirement.⁵⁶

Whereas,

Many prestigious universities have accepted ASL as a foreign language course for years. For example, Harvard, Yale, Boston University, Boston College, George Washington University, University of California Los Angeles, University of Maryland, University of Virginia, and many others have all had ASL programs running for some time.⁷

Whereas,

Other Newman List schools such as Benedictine College⁸ and Walsh University⁹ recognize their ASL courses as a foreign language courses.

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 the third largest language in the United States.¹⁰

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:

1. The American Sign Language courses, ASL 101 and ASL 102, at The Catholic University of America are able to fulfill the foreign language requirement for all students.
2. The ASL courses, ASL 103 and ASL 104, offered to Catholic University students at Gallaudet University fulfill the foreign language requirement for all students.

⁵ University, Catholic. "Undergraduate Courses Offered by the School of Arts and Sciences." The Catholic University of America. Accessed March 21, 2023. <https://arts-sciences.catholic.edu/academics/courses/course-descriptions/undergraduate.html>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ "2022-2023 Best Colleges | College Rankings and Data | US News Education." Accessed March 20, 2023. <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges>.

⁸ "Benedictine College Course Catalog." Accessed March 20, 2023.

<https://www.benedictine.edu/Assets/uploads/files/academics/benedictine-college-course-catalog.pdf>.

⁹ "American Sign Language (ASL)." American Sign Language (ASL) & Walsh University. Accessed March 20, 2023. <http://catalog.walsh.edu/courses/asl/>.

¹⁰ <https://www.startasl.com/american-sign-language/>

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

Anthony Crnkovich
President of the Student Government Association

Maevis Fahey
Vice President of the Student Government Association

