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The PEPNet Listserv

Past Posts

DEAF-FRIENDLY COLLEGES

PEPNet Listserv subscribers are not only interpreters, speech-to-text services providers and disability service providers, but also parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing college-bound students. Colleges and Universities all over the United States responded to a mother's request for information on where to find Deaf-friendly colleges. All postings in this document are from January, 2006.

Since the discussion in 2006, PEPNet has developed an online College Guide. This guide, available on the PEPNet website (www.pepnet.org), is a way for parents, teachers and students to find an updated listing of colleges and universities who serve Deaf and Hard of hearing students.

I'm new to the list. I joined because I'm the mother of a 17 year old student who is severe to profoundly deaf. She is oral, attends our local high school and is maintaining a B average with the help of computer notetaking.

I am trying to do research into colleges where she is likely to find people who understand deafness and services that will help her succeed. We know, of course, about Gallaudet and NTID and CSUN at Northridge.

Each of these has drawbacks from my daughter's point of view, so I am trying to investigate other alternatives. I have the Gallaudet listing of deaf friendly programs but many are community colleges or only have 2 or 3 deaf students.

Does anyone have suggestions about other campuses which are "deaf friendly" either because they have a large deaf population, exceptional support services or programs which educate the hearing students (and faculty) about the needs of deaf students? Any suggestions will be very welcome.

Mother of a Deaf/Hard of Hearing Student

Hofstra University in Hempstead Long Island, Nassau Community college in Garden City Long Island, Adelphi University Garden City Long Island all have pretty good support services. Nassau Community has a top Notch coordinator and Hofstra is right up there. Good Luck.

New Jersey/New York

University of Texas San Antonio, University of Texas Austin, San Antonio College, San Antonio, Texas, Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas.

Texas

I'm not sure what part of the country you are from but if you are interested in a college in New England, the University of Vermont provides all kinds of accommodations for deaf students. We have interpreters, notetakers, FM loops, captioning, CART and will have typewell by fall 2006 (computer notetaking).

We currently have 9 students with different degrees of hearing loss. All are oral (some know ASL as well). We are currently working to make extracurricular activities accessible as well. Right now, there are captioned movies showing on campus weekly and we provide interpreters for most social events as requested by the students. We do have a deaf community in the Burlington area that also has social events as well.

I am profoundly deaf myself and a specialist in the ACCESS office so I have personal experience as well. If you have any questions, feel free to email me directly at emmorse@uvm.edu. To find out more about our ACCESS program, check out the website: www.uvm.edu/access

One quick note - you said that your daughter has only used computer notetaking. Has she ever tried CART or interpreters? It might be worth investigating those colleges that offer more than just notetaking. I mention this because like your daughter, I entered college having only used notetakers. College is a very different learning environment than high school and I found it necessary to use other support services. I would be more than happy to share some suggestions for you if you would like.

Good luck with your college search!

University of Vermont—Burlington, VT

This may sound bias, smile, but I think the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) is very "deaf friendly." We have about 50 students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing in a total university population of 27,000. We also have a good number of deaf and hard-of-hearing faculty and staff members. Many of our students are actively involved in the Student Signing Association, a student organization that our students recently instituted. Intramural sports activities with other college students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing is another activity in which many of our students are involved.

The UWM Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program has full-time and part-time staff interpreters, full-time speech-to-text service providers, full-time dual service providers (interpreters also trained in speech-to-text services), and a full-time student advisor. Our program is well established, having just recently celebrated our 20th anniversary, and well connected as an outreach site for the Midwest Center for Postsecondary Outreach (MCPO). MCPO is the Midwestern part of PEPNet.

Feel free to gather more information about our program at www.dhh.uwm.edu. You may also want to consider attending our annual "Preview Day" for high school students and parents to learn more about the university and our program. (March 3, 2006)

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

You may want to look at New York University, Columbia University, Hunter College and Northeastern University in Boston. The demographics change from year to year but they usually have significant numbers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Northeastern Technical Assistance Center, New York

As the interim director of the National Center on Deafness at CSUN, I know I speak on behalf of my staff in saying we would welcome the opportunity to discuss the "drawbacks" you daughter sees at CSUN to see if we could make them into positives. Please feel free to contact me at gary.sanderson@csun.edu and I will put you in touch with our student services unit. Thanks for considering us.

California State University at Northridge

May I suggest Madonna University in Michigan. We have been providing services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing students for 30 years. Every semester we have approximately 20-30 Deaf/HH students who use a variety of accommodations, from note-taking to oral interpreters to sign language interpreters to FM loops, etc. Please contact me directly at rshriner@madonna.edu or call at 734.432.5642 and I will be glad to discuss more with you.

Madonna University, Livonia, Michigan

New Jersey has two state Regional Centers which offer comprehensive support services to students who are Deaf/HOH. Bergen Community College is in Paramus, NJ which is the northern part of the state and Camden County College is in Blackwood, NJ which is in the south. Both institutions have been working with Deaf/HOH students for over twenty years. The average population is between 40-65 and there are very dedicated and talented folks working on both campuses. Hope that helps.

Bergen Community College, Paramus, New Jersey

For the last four years, Austin Community College in Texas has been offering courses for Deaf/Hard of Hearing students taught by instructors who sign. Currently, there are over 120 Deaf students registered at ACC. This spring we will be offering 3 Developmental Math courses, 4 Writing and Grammar courses, 4 Reading and Vocabulary courses and 2 ASL Grammar courses. For more information on the English/ASL courses you can refer to the following website:

<http://www.austincc.edu/deslac/esoldeaf.php>

In addition to these academic programs, ACC has a very active student life group, the Deaf Studies Association, which provides Deaf students with the opportunity to socialize, advocate for their needs, educate the hearing public about Deaf culture and develop leadership skills.

Austin Community College, Austin, Texas

I would like to point out that Carolyn is looking for a four-year school, not a community college, as implied by the following sentence. "I have the Gallaudet listing of deaf friendly programs but many are community colleges or only have 2 or 3 deaf students."

I can only think of five four-year schools outside of the big three that have more than just 2 or 3 d/hh students. Utah Valley State College, Arizona State University, Boston University, Northeastern University, and Western Oregon University.

(School name unlisted)

There are several Universities that have very good services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students as well as a relatively large population of students using those services. Hopefully responses to your e-mail will provide you with an idea of those Universities.

You are welcome to contact me or our Disability Access Consultant (Lance Harrop, 480.965.9239) at Arizona State University. We have between 25-35 Deaf and Hard of Hearing students who use a variety of services we provide to meet their individual needs.

Arizona State University

We have 25 (one of them will be on our Men's soccer team this year!) =0)

California State University at Fullerton

Western Oregon University, nestled in the Willamette Valley near Salem, Oregon has several Deaf (numbering approximately 15-30) students in both, the undergraduate and graduate levels. With a student body numbering over 4,000, this liberal arts university has a nice emphasis in Education and teaching preparation programs, as well as graduate programs in Teaching Preparation for the Deaf (TPD) and Rehabilitation Counseling Education with emphasis on Deafness (RCD). Additionally, WOU boasts an excellent interpreter training program. There are several instructors who use ASL.

Among the available accommodations:

Sign Language Interpreters

Notetakers

Books on tape

Extended testing time

Segregated testing

FM Systems

Special seating

www.wou.edu/student/disability/

Western Oregon University, Monmouth, Oregon

UW-Milwaukee is a great school. We have four full-time Deaf faculty and over nine Deaf adjunct professors. Over 1,000 students take ASL 1 through 6 every year!!! Tons of students, Deaf and hearing, know ASL here. We now have a new major and minor in American Sign Language Studies!!! Classes in Deaf History, Deaf Culture, and ASL Literature...and that's just for starters.

If interested, send me an email or call, bethu@uwm.edu or 414-229-3975. I'm the academic advisor for the ASL Studies, the Interpreter Training, and the Deaf Education programs.

(Editor's note—Jen Hayes is now the new advisor for this program. You can reach her at jrhayes@uwm.edu)

University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee

I recommend either Gallaudet, CSUN or NTID to RIT.

If your child is very academically, then Gallaudet. I recommend Gallaudet for deaf undergraduate who want to go on to "hearing" graduate schools (better to have degrees from different colleges/universities to make your resume more appealing).

One of the drawbacks for deaf students at colleges/universities, even if there are interpreters services and a few other students there is the social activities and extracurricular. At Gallaudet (and CSUN and NTID), there are both, plus sports. Gallaudet is cheaper than most universities than to a generous federal financial assistance from the federal government (your tax dollars at work).

Disclosure: I'm biased, Gallaudet 1991.

(School name unlisted)

Our university is in Orange County, California and we have an excellent Radio/Television/Film major here. We kind of have to seeing as we're here in SoCal! Haha

We do use real-time captioning for about 25% of our students.

We also have a young man who is an incoming freshman playing on the Men's soccer team for us right now. He is profoundly deaf and an awesome player (I believe one of the top players in south county high schools), but was not recruited specifically for our team. So I'm sure your daughter would have an equal shot on the women's team. The coaches and the rest of the team work well with him. It's actually been a great experience for all involved.

Good luck on your continued search and whatever college your daughter chooses I wish her much success!

California State university at Fullerton

As you can see from the responses so far, there are quite a few colleges and universities that have good services AND a fair number of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. I'm glad to see that my colleagues are proud of what they offer, smile. Many of them aren't included in the "College and Career Guide for Deaf Students" -- maybe because they chose not to send in the information (or they didn't know about the publication), or the editors didn't know about them, or their services increased since the last issue was published.

I agree that it's important for the student to feel welcome on campus. A critical issue in student retention is feeling connected to others on campus. Those "deaf-friendly" institutions are nice because the student isn't the first one to request services, or doesn't have to take on a never-ending role of explaining things to faculty and staff. That's already been covered by other people. It's also terrific to have a peer group of other d/hh students, which may be a new experience for someone who's been mainstreamed.

What's also important is for the student to find the right *fit* in a school. This includes the right services, but it also includes the major they want, the size of school they prefer, the setting and location/distance from home, and numerous other factors. Because services are much more readily available than they were a decade ago, the student has the luxury of selecting from many more options.

I'd encourage your daughter to look for schools that fit the other criteria and, at the same time, contact the DSS office to find out more specific information about their experience in providing the kinds of services she'll use. She can also use that opportunity to find out more about the student body, including the number of d/hh students usually enrolled. Visiting colleges while they're in session is a good idea, but it's not always possible. If she hasn't settled on a major, she might also want to look at schools that offer good support for career planning, or a "First Year College Experience" kind of program. If she's considering a certain geographic area, she can contact the PEPNet regional center <www.pepnet.org> that covers that state/region to get a better idea regarding schools with a critical mass of students and experience providing the kinds of services she's looking for. The state coordinator for deaf services from vocational rehabilitation may also be a resource for her. Good luck!

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

I would suggest checking out St. Petersburg College at <http://www.spcollege.edu/>

At the Clearwater Campus, we currently have 5 full-time staff interpreters (four who hold both National Certifications awarded by Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and one who holds the highest level awarded by Florida Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. SPC has an enrollment of 30-45 deaf and hard-of hearing students each semester who are able to register and attend classes from their choice of more than 6 campuses. We have an Office of Services for Students with Disabilities on the website and a list of contact information as well as contact names. SPC has a very good reputation in the community for serving deaf and hard-of hearing students. Whatever your decision may be, I hope that you find the best fit for your daughter's needs.

St. Petersburg College, Clearwater, Florida

I'd have to second to Michael. I, myself am a Gallaudet alumnus of 1990. (Biased too- wink!) Gallaudet have been the best experience for me, academically and socially. If your daughter is a liberal arts type, Gallaudet is it for her. NTID is more of "technical" type and also surrounding "hearing" environment (RIT) although they do have few liberal arts majors such as Social Work. Other great colleges in Massachusetts are Northern Univ and Boston Univ, as well as Northern Essex Community College (NECC), in Haverhill. At NECC, we provided all kind of accommodations- C-Print, CART, interpreter, FM system, Notetaking, and Support Ed services. We also have an unique program, English Language Cluster for the Deaf and H.H. students who wish to focus on improving their writing, writing structure and reading skills taught by a Deaf professor. Any questions, you can e-mail me or go to www.necc.mass.edu Best of luck in your college research. Smile

Northern Essex Community College, Haverhill, Massachusetts

As a graduate of NTID/RIT and the past president of the NTID Alumni Association, I feel obligated to chime in that NTID is a fabulous school. Today, more than 50% of NTID's students cross register to RIT's programs. Yes, the campus is a mixed campus of deaf and hearing students, but that's not a bad thing.

Regarding the social work program, I'm sad to say it will be eliminated in about a year. However, options are being explored to set another program up with a collaboration between NTID and another university.

All of the colleges that have chimed in on this question of "deaf friendly" colleges are of merit. It's great to see that deaf students have so many wonderful choices today!

(School name unlisted)

University of Minnesota is a great school to attend. We serve around 55 Deaf students and 30 Deaf Staff with both Interpreting and Captioning services. We have 4 full time Captioners and 19 full time Interpreters. If any one wanted more information about what we have to offer you could see the UMN website at www.umn.edu or ours at: www.ds.umn.edu

To discuss our registration process contact us at 612-626-1333 and ask to speak to a specialist for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. To discuss service provision contact our interpreting/captioning Supervisor Mari Magler at: 612-624-3730.

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota

University of Arizona in beautiful Tucson... :) We have 18 students who use interpreters and 6 who use CART.

University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona

I'm the mom who sent out the original request for "deaf friendly" colleges and universities. I wish I'd found this list a long time ago because I got more information here in one week than I've gotten from six months of Google searches.

Some of you asked for more info about what my daughter is seeking. We live in the Midwest (Ohio) but we have family on both coasts so location isn't the most important issue. She's hoping to study video production which does narrow the field some though I know that what freshmen think they are going to study and what they actually end up studying are often quite different.

She's oral so information about CART providers and services has been especially helpful. Also, she hopes to play college soccer so we're looking for a school that has a team but isn't so big that good (but not Olympic caliber) players don't have a chance.

Mostly, I just want to thank all the people who have been so generous in responding to our question. I had been feeling as though this was a very lonely project and now we're both feeling upbeat and optimistic about finding a school that's "right for her." Thanks.

Mother of a Deaf/Hard of Hearing Student