

**Building Inclusive Experiences****for Deaf Students:**

Strategies for Strengthening  
Your College's Capacity

**2022 AHEAD Conference**

National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes  
*Lore Kinast & Kate Lewandowski*



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**Access Check**

- Visual Descriptions
- Interpreters
- Captions
- Other Access Needs



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## National Deaf Center

As deaf people leave high school and prepare for college or careers, NDC wants them to succeed.

Our research shows that deaf people are not completing college degrees, getting jobs, or earning as much as hearing people.

We're here to change that.




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## National Deaf Center

Our mission is to share information, networks, and strategies to improve continuing education and training for deaf people.

We envision a future of equitable opportunities for deaf people.




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## Agenda

- Data
- Root Causes
- Systems Transformation
- 10 Minute Break
- Barriers
- Access on Campus
- Assessment Tools & Resources




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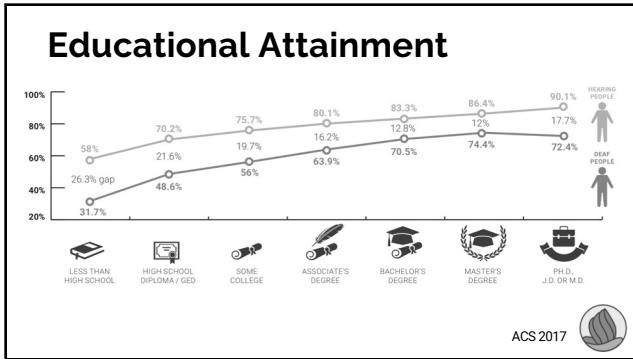
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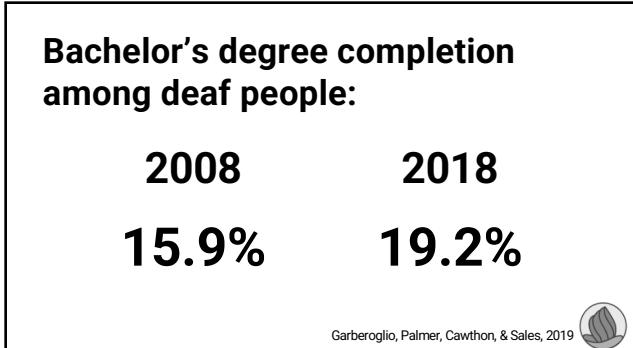
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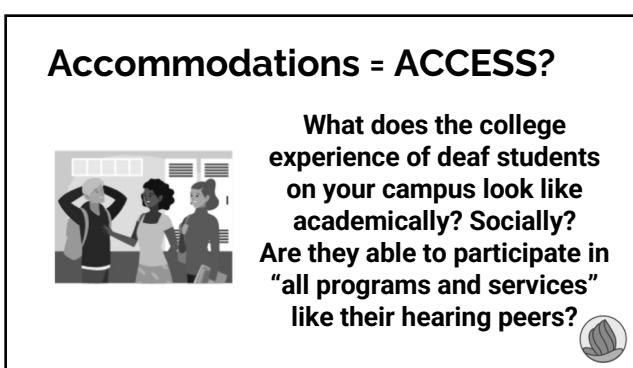
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## Student's Experience

**"Even if I planned ahead, I still don't get interpreters because a lot of functions are only a week's notice. It's very isolating. I become drained and exhausted trying and attempting to read lips. I usually just smile and nod or don't go."**




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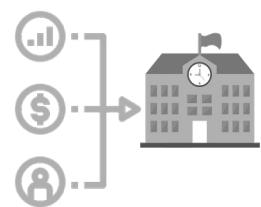
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**Systemic factors impact postsecondary outcomes for deaf people because systems were not designed with deaf people in mind.**




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## Root Cause



- Lack of Qualified and Experienced Professionals
- Reduced Social Opportunities
- Negative Attitudes & Biases
- Limited Access to Language & Communication




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## Systems Transformation

Achieving sustainable systems transformation is more likely when addressing three levels of system change: structures, relationships, and attitudes.



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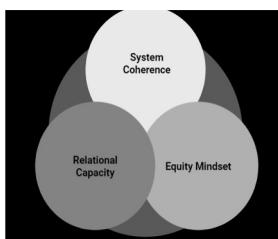
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## Systems Transformation



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## Group Discussion



What is lacking in your institution's system to provide an inclusive college experience for deaf students?



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**Inclusion to a holistic college experience should be afforded to all students.**




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### **Student's Experience**

**"Lack of interpreters and captions at events or anything outside the classroom. I cannot just do things. I cannot spur of the moment decide to go to an event. I always have to set up access beforehand and often people are hostile or annoyed or have no idea how to set up access for me. It is isolating."**




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**Matriculation and retention of deaf students on campus improve when**

**they can access:  
networking opportunities,  
campus resources, and  
extracurricular activities.**




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## 10 Minute Break



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today I'm depressed because my university ASL club told me they can't afford an interpreter for meetings... none of the members are fluent in sign... so I, a Deaf person, can't join the school's sign club... 🥺

9:58 AM · Sep 15, 2021

1,86.6K 433 Copy link to Tweet

Tweet your reply



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## Barriers



1. Negative Attitudes & Bias
2. Budget
3. Absence of Policies & Procedures
4. Lack of Training
5. Lack of Awareness



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## Negative Attitudes & Bias



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## Student-Centered Approach



"At this point, I've decided to stop talking to disability services because their answer is always no."



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## Strategies for Systemic Change: Attitudes & Biases

- Seek opportunities to include deaf role models on campus; partner with campus clubs and organizations to bring deaf presenters to campus.
- Provide cultural competency and awareness trainings for students, staff, and faculty.
- Routinely collect deaf student feedback on access in and out of the classroom.



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## Budget



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## Accessibility Laws

The ADA and Section 504 require post-secondary institutions to ensure an opportunity for people with disabilities to access services and benefits, including all aspects of academic offerings and student life that is equal to the opportunity provided to others.



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## Strategies for Systemic Change: Budget

- Conduct an analysis of the costs and benefits for utilizing staff, hourly, or contract services.
- Develop inter-agency agreements for shared services with other colleges nearby.
- Use creative scheduling tactics to coordinate services.



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## Absence of Policies & Procedures



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## Structure and Processes



- Decentralized
- Centralized
- Blended System



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## Strategies for Systemic Change: Policies & Procedures

- Establish a request process for campus events and activities.
- Encourage the use of access statements on event marketing and materials.
- Provide proactive accommodations for large-scale and high profile events (e.g. graduation ceremonies).



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## Lack of Training



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## Strategies for Systemic Change: Training & Technology

- Make communication technology available at offices, information desks, campus security, and in residence halls for deaf students to have frequent brief interactions with staff members.
- Offer, introduce, and train deaf students to use a range of accommodations to maximize experiences and learning across campus.



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## Lack of Awareness



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## Strategies for Systemic Change: Building Awareness & Capacity

- Include your campus' DEI office at the table with increasing campus-wide awareness on the inclusion of deaf students in all academic & non-academic settings.
- Encourage networking opportunities (internships, teaching assistant positions, mentoring) to strengthen relationships among faculty, students, and the larger college community.




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## Group Discussion



"All of my courses are online, and I don't always get captions and transcripts in a timely manner. I usually have to wait 3 weeks (or more) to get access to materials, and sometimes, I never get them at all."




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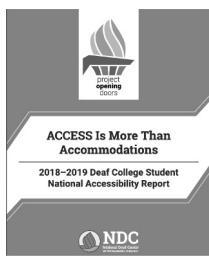
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## Access on Campus



**Attitudes**  
**Campus Technology**  
**Communications**  
**Environment**  
**Services**  
**Social Engagement**




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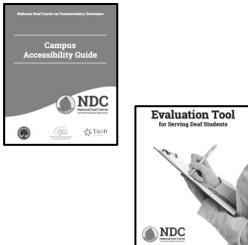
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## Assessment Tools



### Campus Accessibility Guide

### Evaluation Tool for Serving Deaf Students




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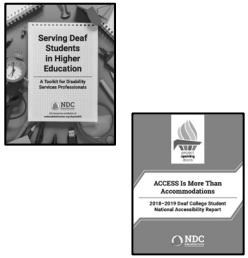
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## Resources



### Disability Services Professional's Toolkit

### ACCESS Is More Than Accommodations




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## Final Thought...

**To support deaf students' postsecondary experiences, we must reconfigure access to transcend beyond just providing accommodations.**




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# Thank you!

Visit our website! [Nationaldeafcenter.org](http://Nationaldeafcenter.org)

Email Us! [Help@nationaldeafcenter.org](mailto:Help@nationaldeafcenter.org)



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