

May 2012 Issue**Director's Message**

In 2010, the National Consortium of Interpreter Educators Centers (NCIEC) wrote a report entitled "The AA – BA Partnerships: Creating New Value for Interpreter Educator Programs."

The work by the NCIEC in this endeavor is critical because as of July 1, 2012, any person who wishes to take the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf's (RID) National Interpreter Certification (NIC) exam must have a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree.

In the 2010 report published by the NCIEC, the need for creating new value by requiring bachelor degrees in Interpreter Education Programs (IEPs) is critical. Some of the suggestions in this report provide avenues for Associate of Arts (A.A.) programs to create partnerships with B.A. programs. These partnerships may include: articulation agreements, dual degrees, integrated baccalaureates, university centers, community college baccalaureates, community development partnerships and university extension centers. The VRS Interpreting Institute (VRSII) is assisting in this endeavor by establishing partnerships to accomplish the goals outlined by the NCIEC report. For example, the VRSII has established a partnership with the University of Arizona for VRSII "School-to-Work Program" interns to obtain college credit. Also, the VRSII currently has a partnership with the University of North Florida for educators to obtain a Master's of Arts (M.A.) degree. These types of partnerships are critical for the success of interpreters and interpreter education. The key to the success of the interpreting field rests heavily on discovering new paths to form partnerships for bachelor's degrees. The VRSII is committed to seeking and obtaining partnerships that will provide avenues and choices for graduates

of IEPs to work toward their bachelor's degrees. It is vital for the field to look toward the transition from A.A. to B.A. degrees as the NCIEC has recommended.

Take advantage of the exciting partnerships the VRSII has established, and look for future opportunities regarding these partnerships at the VRSII.

For more information on the NCIEC A.A. to B.A. reports, please visit www.interpretereducation.org. For more information about VRSII educational opportunities, visit www.vrsii.com/training.

Congratulations School-to-Work Program Graduates!

On March 30, the VRSII celebrated graduation of its winter 2012 School-to-Work Program (STW) class. Twelve graduates from across the U.S. participated in the program, designed to bridge the gap from IEP graduation to work readiness and prepare graduates to take the performance portion of the NIC test. Class members also fulfilled working internships in the deaf community as part of the program.



School-to-Work Program graduates, L to R: Christine Hitchcock, Alyson Reid and Ashley Cadalbert

Graduate Hillary LaFrance said, "Saying thank you is not adequate for everything we have gained this semester. The School-to-Work Program was a life-changing experience."

IEP graduates accepted to the program are chosen based on their scores from a stringent written, performance and interview process. The intensive 12-week immersion program is held at the VRSII campus in Salt Lake City. Sorenson Communications sponsors the program to give back to the deaf community and help raise interpreting standards across the nation.

Graduates were addressed by Cheryl Moose, former RID President; Christopher Wakeland, Sorenson Communications Vice President of Interpreting and Carolyn Ball, Executive Director, VRSII.



School-to-Work Program graduating class - Winter 2012

Moose emphasized the importance of trust between interpreters, interpreting colleagues and deaf people. She counseled graduates to recognize milestones, be open to criticism and expect accountability from colleagues. Wakeland cautioned students to remember that they are not the "boss," and when interpreting, to be respectful of deaf people's desires. Ball concluded by telling the students to always follow their instincts and their hearts.



Graduates listen to VRSII Executive Director, Carolyn Ball

Students presented the VRSII faculty with framed pictures surrounded by balloons, representing the STW Program taking interpreting to greater heights.

VRSII Welcomes New Faculty Member: Jeni Rodriguez

The VRSII is pleased to introduce its newest staff member, Jeni Rodrigues. Rodrigues previously managed Sorenson Communications' Burbank and Riverside Interpreting Centers. She applied to the VRSII in order to fulfill her life-long dream of being a professor and, in her words, to work with "the best educators in the country." Rodrigues began learning sign language in college when friends taught her the signs to a song so she could try out for a show. She has been an interpreter for the past 15 years. "I fell in love with the language and culture and never turned back," she says. Rodrigues is a first-generation American of Portuguese heritage. American Sign Language is her fourth language. Rodrigues obtained a bachelor's degree in Women's Studies from the University of Southern California, a master's degree in Interpreting Pedagogy at Northeastern University and is currently studying for her Ph.D.



Jeni Rodrigues

While Rodrigues enjoyed interpreting for Video Relay Service, she says she equally enjoys the pace of an academic setting that allows her to be creative in the classroom. "Working with the next generation of students and watching them grow is inspiring. I love

knowing that I am responsible for a little part of that growth," she says.

Rodrigues is currently teaching in the VRSII's School-to-Work Program and will also teach other courses at the VRSII. Rodrigues holds a Certificate of Interpretation (CI) and a Certificate of Transliteration (CT) from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) and Professional Level Four Advanced Certification from the National Association of the Deaf Certification.