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Prestigious Award Given for Excellence in American Sign Language Interpreting Programs

St. Catherine University and Augustana University Honored

SALT LAKE CITY – (Oct. 16, 2017) Sorenson Communications, LLC, the company that revolutionized Video Relay Service (VRS) communication for Deaf people, is pleased to announce the winners of its SVRS® Excellence and Innovation in Interpreter Education Award (Award of Excellence). The Interpreter Education Program (IEP) at St. Catherine University of St. Paul, Minn., was chosen as the winner for the 2014-2015 academic school year, and the IEP at Augustana University of Sioux Falls, S.D., was chosen for the 2015-2016 academic school year. Both universities' IEPs will be honored at the upcoming Conference of Interpreter Training conference, Oct. 26 through 28, 2016.

Each academic year, Sorenson recognizes one outstanding IEP that exceeds typical educational standards, leverages technology and incorporates interaction with the Deaf community in its program. The award is open to all two- and four-year degree-granting IEPs in the United States, Puerto Rico and Canada. Award winners are showcased among their peers at the Innovator Showcase, typically held in Salt Lake City. Winners also receive a monetary grant as well as materials to reinvest in their programs.

Sorenson founded the SVRS® Award of Excellence and Innovation in Interpreter Education Award to recognize IEPs working to raise interpreter education standards. Since 2009, Sorenson has supported this program to enhance the overall quality of professional interpreting, provide the Deaf with the highest-quality, professional interpreters and to give back to the Deaf community.

St. Catherine University Chairperson of the ASL and Interpreting Department Paula Gajewski Mickelson says the success of her program is not achieved in isolation. The department works closely with the Deaf community, the interpreting community, alumni and students to support and enhance the students' experiences at the university.

Augustana University says it is fortunate to have the support of both the state of South Dakota and its Deaf community. Augustana staffs its language lab with Deaf staff who mentor interpreting students seven days a week. IEP director Marlee Dyce says, "I tell students when they enroll in our IEP that they should be prepared to change their lifestyles. We want to ensure they know, before they get here, that this is a commitment to a culture."

Chris Wakeland, vice president of interpreting at Sorenson Communications says, "In order to strengthen the quality of ASL interpreting in the U.S. and Canada, Sorenson continues to invest in the interpreting community – by recognizing excellence in interpreter education, training, language development and service learning. We honor those schools and institutions of higher education that provide future interpreters

opportunities to train with the Deaf. We are proud to be part of increasing access for Deaf and Hearing people to connect by ensuring better-trained and socially-conscience interpreters.

About Sorenson Communications

Sorenson Communications, LLC® (www.sorenson.com) is a provider of industry-leading communications products and services for the Deaf and hard-of-hearing. The company's offerings include Sorenson Video Relay Service® (SVRS®), the highest-quality video interpreting service; the Sorenson ntouch® VP and the ntouch® VP2 videophones, designed especially for use by Deaf individuals; ntouch® PC, software that connects users to SVRS by using a PC and webcam; ntouch® for Mac®, software that connects users to SVRS by using an Apple® computer; ntouch® Tablet, which turns the Apple iPad® with a front-facing camera into a larger-screen mobile VP; and ntouch® Mobile, an application empowering SVRS communication via mobile devices.

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