

## September 2013 Issue



Dr. Carolyn Ball,  
Executive Director

### Director's Message

#### VRSII Interpreter Educator Symposiums: A Unique Opportunity

One of the most outstanding and unique offerings of the VRSII is the VRSII Interpreter Educator Symposium. The symposium is an excellent way for the VRSII to fulfill its mission of providing innovative educational experiences that empower interpreter educators and interpreters to achieve

professional excellence. The VRSII symposium provides an opportunity for interpreter educators and interpreters from all over the United States and Canada to attend meaningful, up-to-date training and also earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs) to maintain their Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) certification.

The VRSII symposium is unique because many interpreter educators would like to pursue professional development opportunities, but their own institutions do not have the funds to support faculty development. The symposiums provide unique opportunities for faculty development and an avenue for faculty to network with other peer professionals.

As awareness of the VRSII and its programs continues to grow, we look forward to providing quality educational programs to an even greater number of interpreter educators as we fulfill our mission of empowering interpreter educators and interpreters to achieve professional excellence. Please look for our new 2014 schedule of interpreter educator courses available in coming months at [www.vrsii.com/training](http://www.vrsii.com/training).

### VRSII Fall Interpreter Educators Symposium Attended by Record Numbers

#### *Symposium Focus: Improved Practicum Design for Improved Student Outcomes*

The VRSII's 2013 fall Interpreter Educators Symposium, "Improved Practicum Design for Improved Student Outcomes," held Sept. 27 through 29, in Salt Lake City,

was the largest VRSII symposium to date with more than 80 educators from across the country in attendance.



Symposium attendees listen to lectures

Tina Jenkins, from Mt. San Antonio College in southern California said the symposiums are valuable to her because the material she gains at the symposium can immediately be implemented in her Interpreter Education Program (IEP). "This is never a waste of time," Jenkins said. "Everything discussed is valuable and can be used in our program."



Participants share information and ideas with peers

Kim Pascoe from Golden West College appreciates the networking opportunity the symposiums provide. Before the symposium had begun, and speaking of the group with whom she is attending, she said, "We had more opportunities to collaborate on the flight and last evening than we have had in the last six months."

“The opportunity for educators to network at these symposiums provides a support system that can last forever,” says Dr. Carolyn Ball, VRSII executive director.



**Symposium participants create curriculum materials**

The VRSII symposiums offer educators a forum to study with industry-leading trainers and by sharing ideas and techniques, develop innovative curriculum and best practices that can be integrated into their existing programs. While at the symposium, educators collaborate and network with contemporaries to gain expanded understanding and multiple perspectives on the concepts and ideas on which the symposium focuses.

Bringing IEP educators together is also helpful in standardizing teaching techniques and ideas at colleges across the country. Richard Laurion, of St. Catherine University in Minneapolis, expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to define practicum terminology at the symposium. “We need a more standardized definition for this terminology because everyone has their own perception of what these terms mean, which can cause problems in the profession,” he said.”



**The VRSII welcomed its first international symposium attendee from Ireland (middle) who is on sabbatical in the U.S.**

The VRSII fall symposium focused on the importance of standardizing practicum in IEPs. Currently, great variability exists in content, implementation and outcomes in IEP practicum, which leads to inconsistent and unpredictable levels of job readiness for IEP graduates. The symposium was an important step in

working toward the unification of IEP approaches to standardized practicum.



**l to r: Sharon Neumann Solow, Dr. Marty Taylor**

During their lectures and discussions, symposium presenters, Sharon Neumann Solow and Dr. Marty Taylor, addressed requirements for shared language (practicum, internship, co-op, service learning and mentorship); what competencies interpreter education students should have before, during and after completion of practicum; and best practices for supervision and documentation of practicum experiences as well as the duration of practicum. Educators and trainers also discussed the idea that practicum competencies may vary within different types of degreed programs, e.g. Associate of Arts degree, Bachelor’s of Arts degree, etc.



**Attendees participate in an activity on the first day of the symposium**

During the symposium, attendees had many opportunities to meet new peers to share ideas and techniques used in practicum, internship and mentorship experiences. Working in groups, attendees designed materials to provide measurable outcomes that will meet the real-world needs of graduating students. Attendees left the symposium with these materials which they can apply to their existing curriculum.

Symposium fees and travel costs are compensated by the VRSII for attendees, but at each symposium attendees are asked to donate \$50 to be used as a donation for a local deaf organization. At this symposium, more than \$3,300 was collected and awarded to the Jean Massieu School of the Deaf. The school principal, Michelle Tanner, was visibly stunned by

the generous donation and thanked symposium participants, saying that the money would be used to finance student travel to the 2013 Shakespearean Festival and to sports competitions.

If you are interested in attending a future VRSII symposium, visit the VRSII website in coming months at [www.vrsii.com](http://www.vrsii.com) to see the 2014 schedule.

## The VRSII Congratulates School-to-Work Program Graduates

On Sept. 5, 2013, graduation ceremonies were held for the sixth cohort of School-to-Work Program (STW) interns. With this graduation, 71 interns have now successfully graduated from STW.



2013 School-to-Work Program graduation ceremony

“Words can’t describe the experience we’ve had here. This has made such a difference in our lives,” said Kaitlin, a graduating intern.

At the graduation, Chris Wakeland, vice president of interpreting for Sorenson Communications counseled students to be kind to each other and bring a good attitude to their career. “Remember, being an interpreter is hard work. It takes dedication to be part of the deaf world,”



**Chris Wakeland**  
Vice President, Interpreting,  
Sorenson Communications

said Wakeland. He cautioned students against comparing themselves to others, as every interpreter has different strengths. Wakeland also admonished the graduates to continue to learn, keep an open mind and use good judgment throughout their lives and careers. Wakeland stressed the importance of acquiring diversity of experience and

not becoming too comfortable in their role, saying, “The ability to try something new is a wonderful asset.”

Graduates were also addressed by Lisa Perry Burkhardt, a certified deaf interpreter with seven years experience in Sorenson Communications’ professional development department. Perry Burkhardt emphasized the need for



Lisa Perry-Burkhardt

exist.

graduates to consider their values and improve throughout their careers. Perry Burkhardt stated that interpreters not only need knowledge, but understanding as well. She counseled graduates to overcome emotional barriers and focus on moving forward. Perry Burkhardt described interpreting as a world in which a partnership between language, culture and power must



STW Graduating Class, Summer 2013

STW is a 14-week immersion program for the top IEP graduates in the nation. The program includes one-on-one mentoring, intensive training and professional internships in the deaf community. The goal of STW is to bridge the gap between IEP graduation and work readiness. Fees and expenses for those graduates selected to participate are compensated. To learn more, visit [www.vrsii.com/training](http://www.vrsii.com/training).