

# SIUE Office Of ACCESS Expands Deaf Services With ASL Interpreters

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EDWARDSVILLE - During a time when higher education is experiencing a national shortage of American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters serving the d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing community, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville has met the challenge of serving the hard-of-hearing community by building comprehensive d/Deaf services.

“I’m pleased to announce our first team of staff American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters – Amy Miller and Taylor Bodenbach,” said Dominic Dorsey II, director of Accessible Campus Community & Equitable Student Support (ACCESS).

“According to a report entitled Undergraduate Enrollment of Deaf Students in the United States, 1.3% of all enrolled college students are deaf, and research from the National Deaf Center (NDC) on Postsecondary Outcomes shows that roughly 5% of deaf or hard-of-hearing adults under 65 were enrolled in higher education, equaling more than 190,000 people.”

“The NDC has also been keeping track of a growing national shortage of ASL interpreters available to provide the necessary services to ensure equal and effective access to d/Deaf college students,” continued Dorsey. “To combat this and to be proactively prepared to serve d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing students, ACCESS has hired Amy and Taylor.”

Miller got her start at John A. Logan College (JALC), graduating with a certificate in interpreting in 1993. She also holds an associate in applied science in interpreter preparation from JALC. Miller earned a bachelor’s in workforce education and development from Southern Illinois University Carbondale in 2008. In 2014, she graduated with honors from Capella University with a master’s in mental health counseling. She holds national certification with the Registry of Interpreter for the Deaf (RID) and has master certification with the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI).

“Her passions are equity and access to education, services to the d/Deaf, interpreting for the public and collaborating with community partners to create fun and creative learning environments for students,” explained Dorsey.

Bodenbach graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor’s in American Sign Language Interpreting from MacMurray College in Jacksonville in 2016 and holds an Intermediate BEI certification/licensure in both Illinois and Missouri, noted Dorsey.

“She is extremely passionate about serving the deaf community,” said Dorsey. “She strives to empower students so they are able to advocate for themselves and access resources for an equitable college experience.”

“We at ACCESS believe equity should never be an afterthought,” he continued. “We intentionally take a proactive approach to supporting our d/Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing (HoH) students by creating an environment where they feel included and valued, while being encouraged to participate in and take advantage of every aspect of college life.”

“Ultimately, our goal is to create a campus where d/Deaf and HoH individuals are fully integrated into an inclusive and welcoming campus,” added Dorsey.

The first step in achieving that goal is a division of comprehensive d/Deaf Services at ACCESS.

It includes:

- Providing resources including advocacy, education, equipment, and education of rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) in accordance with ACCESS Learning Outcomes
- Providing access to communication, hearing, and assistive technologies and support to increase independence and enhance the college experience for d/Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and HoH campus community members
- And, serving as an information and referral source for those individuals and the public

Accessible Campus Community & Equitable Student Support (ACCESS) is dedicated to providing reasonable curricular and co-curricular accommodations to diverse learners with major life impairments at SIUE. Each year, ACCESS assists hundreds of students with a variety of diagnoses as they pursue their academic disciplines. ACCESS also provides resources which students can use to increase skills in learning, time management, and test-taking. Both accommodations and resources are offered to students who have provided appropriate documentation and are approved through the application process.