Classroom Communication Sessions, Spring 2025

Session 1 - Introduction to Faculty Communication Expectations - Transcript
February 28, 2025

>> Jess: We have a full agenda so please take your seats. Let everybody settle a second. Hi, everybody. Can everybody see me? Let's see eyes. Is everybody with me? Are you alive? What's going on? Let's try again everybody look at me, doing the hand waves. Thanks so much.

We're all working because we love our students, right? That's what brings us here. That's our priority, right? Our students. This is required. So the next 4 sessions that we're going to be hosting are no it's OK — please, make sure you attend all of the sessions, and our society is changing, clearly. Big time. I mean it's unimaginable. The last five years have been incredible. Technology has really taken off.

And what does that mean for us and for our students? How is that going to impact our teaching and our how we approach our students? That's why we want everybody to come together. Several times, for the next several months. So that we can have ourselves on the same page. I'm going to turn it over to Gary now.

>> Gary Behm: This is Gary Behm speaking. Good morning everyone. Happy Friday. I know it's been a very long week. Happy Friday. We've picked Friday because we thought it would be the best time for all of us to get together. I want to respect people who have to teach class now. They're busy, they're teaching class, or they're working with students.

We respect that. We do have note taking happening. We have C4 and we also have interpreters and Firoza here taking notes. Now, the interpreters are not here for our communication. We are going to communicate with each other. So we don't need an interpreter, but they are here for the purposes of note taking.

We're going to share the captioning with other people who can't come today because they are otherwise engaged OK. So we're going to talk about what? Communication. So currently, you know, have you seen the movie the Perfect Storm? Who's seen the movie the Perfect Storm? It's a very scary movie. Very frightening. There's a ship in the ocean, there's a storm. And it wreaks havoc. I kind of feel like our ship is being tossed around by the waves. Currently, our students out there are changing, the population is changing, the faculty is changing as well.

The expectations have changed. So there's a lot of shifting that's happening in our world right now. So, we want to have a talk about that. So, the goals of these communication meetings are on the slide here.

I asked both Jess and Matt to join us because I don't want you just looking at one man and it's a team effort, all of this.

So, the first part is that we want to communicate with each other with respect. We have more diversity than ever in our college. I'm very proud to say our faculty is primarily signing whether they're hearing or deaf, compared to when I was a student a long time ago, there was a lot of hearing professors that teach class, and now we have more deaf and signing faculty.

At the same time, we have a population of students, where's Rick? Is Rick here? No, he's staff. He wouldn't be here anyway. Rick has explained to us many times that the student population is very diverse, increasingly a lot of them do not sign. Many of them are non-signers.

We do not require students to sign. If they want to sign, that's fine. But our federal support requires us to support all students regardless of the communication modality. And that's very important to recognize.

So, regarding the classroom environment it's diverse, we are very unique because we have hands-on labs. We have experiential instruction, students experiment with equipment they're using, instrumentation, running tests, so it's very hands on. Some courses do not have labs, it's just a classroom lecture only. The VCS department is a great example. There's film and animation and graphic design and computers.

Our classrooms here within NTID are very diverse as well, one size does not fit all. Either of you have comments yet? No. OK, now the third bullet here is very, very important. Our responsibility is to prepare students for employment. We all know that it is our responsibility to make sure the students get their education, they get their degree, and then they're successfully employed in a career of their choosing.

That's the goal, to get our students working. Now, employment. What does that mean? That means they have their technical skills that they need. They have their hands-on instruction that they need to satisfy the demands of today's workplace.

So, how do we prepare them to communicate in the workplace with their coworkers, their supervisors? There's a lot of challenges out in the real world. We're preparing students who need access and we give them all the access they need, but when they get to the workplace, communication is much, much different. We don't expect students to meet those challenges of communication in the workplace by always requesting interpreters.

We can't call Brittany from the workplace and say I need an interpreter from DAS right now. That's not something that can happen. I'm not saying it's forbidden, we do have Access Services when students are on co-ops. I remember when I worked at IBM. There are a lot of deaf people working there.

I would say, you know, communication with hearing co-workers can be a challenge. So we need to plan to work with our students to develop their ability to be able to communicate regardless of there being an interpreter or captioning there or whatever. There are a lot of resources that we need to help our students avail themselves. They'll have to be able to communicate successfully.

A lot of deaf children of hearing parents, hearing brothers and sisters. Do they have interpreters at home? There's no interpreting at home. They figure it out. That's how they're going to do it on the job as well. Should large meetings have access services? Of course. But there are degrees of access and there are degrees of the ability to demand access. It's not beneficial to us to be stubborn and inflexible in our needs in the workplace. You have to develop those relationships.

I'm not saying that we need to depend less on interpreters, but deaf people need to model their ability to communicate with whoever is in front of them at the time. Hearing people appreciate that it's a partnership of communication. We have a long — those relationships go a long way. They lead to

networking, they lead to job opportunities, they lead to career path opportunities. So we need to make sure that our students are able to communicate in the workplace.

So that has to start here at NTID. We need to prepare them, not just academically with the technical courses and the knowledge, but we need to prepare them with regard to communication and their attitudes. We want them to give people a chance. You want to work with your access service providers. You want to work with each other as peers in the classroom and work with your faculty. OK, Anyway, I'm exaggerating a bit and I went on and on, Jess?

>> Jess: Yeah, with our current presidential administration. You know, they're removing interpreting services, which means we're going to have even more demand on students being able to work with people who are hearing in the working world. So I just wanted to add that bit of information to you.

>> Gary Behm: You're very right about that. OK, so again. We need to make sure I'm not talking about the government, the DOGE, I'm not talking about that. I want to talk about the most efficient use of our resources. We need to be careful about how we use our resources, whether it be captioning or interpreting. We want to make sure we can do the best job possible for our students and we need to be responsible with the resources that we have.

Obviously, Brittany is here. She's joining us today. Thank you so much, Brittany for being here. She's trying to help all of us to understand the challenges that she faces every day as the director of Access Services. Interpreters don't grow on trees. It's not like an apple. You can pluck one off and you have a bushel of interpreters. I wish we had that. That'd be lovely. But we have to be really wise about how we use our resources.

And we have to further cultivate future interpreters. Of course, the nature of communication is very different than it was in the old days. When I was here in the 70s, there was a lot of simcom.

I went to a Residential School for the Deaf and I got here and everyone was using Simcom. I learned how to simcom. That's not a language. It's a modality for communication. And of course that has evolved over time. I'm not saying it's right or wrong, it's just a natural evolution of communication.

Now, people are using more ASL with the appropriate linguistic, semantics, structure, and all of that. It's impossible for everyone to know ASL, so we have some challenges about how we will communicate with one another. Again, I would like to emphasize our Mission.

Gerry has made this famous, any meeting he starts, he displays our mission so we can all be reminded of the reason we are all here. So you'll notice. It says living and working in the mainstream.

The world is a mainstream place. And we're very mainstream here. We are mainstream. We have deaf and hearing people together, all the time, and it's the same way in the corporations of any country.

So they're going to be working in a mainstream workforce. That means communication has to be flexible. We need to educate them and prepare them with their skills, but we need to prepare them with how they're going to communicate in that mainstream setting.

This is NTID's Secondary Mission. So again, this applies to all of us. We are professionals in this setting. Our goal is to help to make the world more accessible. More accessible to the community, accessible to

our students. So how do we work with corporations and outside entities to be more accessible? We're preparing. We prepare interpreters to support the need in the community or we prepare students to become teachers, teachers of the deaf. So we're part of that network or web services as well. Jess.

>> Jess: Just talking about this secondary mission. Talking about MSSE, sorry, I keep stepping out of the light. The MSSE program, but there are other students who aim to become professionals that will be working with deaf community that we need to focus on. Communication styles are varied in the deaf community, so our students are learning how to interact and communicate with any different communication preference. So I just wanted to add that as well.

>> Gary Behm: Very good point. I'll let you read this slide. So deaf, hard of hearing, and that single "h" is hearing. So we have a communication challenge now, the students who are coming to NTID, that population is changing. And what does that mean for all of us? We cannot force them to learn ASL. We are not allowed to do that. We are here to prepare them for employment.

We're not here to force them to learn ASL. If they choose to learn ASL, that's great. We have a huge number of courses to teach them ASL. We have No Voice Zone. We have performances. The entire performing arts program.

If people want to learn sign, that's great. And I think it would benefit them. And it's more for their benefit if they decide not to learn ASL, that is their choice. Any comments, Matt?

>> Matt: Yeah, this is Matt. There's something I want to add to this slide. This slide really represents that we don't have a one-size-fits-all model here at NTID. We really need to accommodate all the varying needs. Just as Gary has mentioned. There are some students who have like a chemistry lab or have a lecture within a liberal arts discipline.

Each of these environments requires different demands you might need. We have interpreting program, the MSSE program. Different types of communication skills are necessary. We are not trying to force one mode on everyone. We want to make sure that folks are responding flexibly in the classroom. And responding to the communication needs for every student. So that's the point of this part of the discussion.

>> Gary Behm: One simple example is someone came into my office and they don't sign. I sign. So I figured it out and we communicated with one another. I'm not asking that person to learn sign language. It's important that I'm flexible enough in my communication style to be able to talk with them. Six months later that same student came in and was signing fluently with me. I was surprised very pleasantly. And I didn't tell them to learn sign language, they just did.

And it has more. How did you learn sign language? Well, my hearing friend was in ASL class so I thought I should learn too. I was like, well there you go. A hearing friend convinced a deaf person to learn sign language. Who knew? Whatever, but they are now more flexible in their communication. Next slide, please.

So, I want to remind you and all of us, the POWs are very unique. All the other colleges of RIT don't include communication in the faculty POW. We do. It's specifically called out. There's teaching, communication, diversity and service. Tenure track have teaching, scholarship, research, communication and diversity, and service. So within our POW, it's very, it makes us very unique and we know it's a

challenge for the students, faculty and staff. We want to encourage everyone to keep up with your communication flexibility to work to accommodate the students that you are interacting with.

I think we'll move to the next slide.

>> Jess: There's a keyword up here I want to draw your attention to. For me, it's imperfect. That word imperfect, none of us are perfect. We're not asking you to strive for perfection. Students aren't either. The important thing is how we interact with everyone and accept each other's imperfectness if you will. It's a just a style of life. It's, you know, you don't need to be perfect. We just need to accommodate and do our best.

>> Gary Behm: All right. This is Gary again. So for the next 4 meetings, there's today and then we have three more. This is going to be discussed continuously. We're asking for your involvement. We want to improve ourselves, all of us. We want to accommodate student needs. Obviously, without the students, we wouldn't be here today. We're here because of the number of students we have and we want to keep serving them. They deserve it. We're here to work every day to serve their needs and show empathy towards each other. Support each other.

We've hired a lot of new people. I mean, there's a hiring freeze right now, but hopefully we will be able to hire more people to join our group and they will be a part of this structure as well. So, we'll talk more about that moving forward.

So, really this is my last slide. I want to thank all of you department chairs as well

>> Jess: Everybody please stand. If you're a department chair, please stand. I'm thanking each one of you for all of your hard work and dedication.

>> Gary Behm: It seems like everybody's out there in the front or hiding in the back, but you have an incredibly important role. Most importantly, you are working with our faculty who work with our students every day. So, thank you for coming, attending today, and learning more about this. I'm going to turn it over to Jason and Brittany. Who else is going to be presenting at this point? And Brittany, and Alesia.

>> Brittany Taylor: Good morning everyone. This is Brittany. If we haven't met my name is Brittany Taylor. This is my sign name. I still call myself new to this role. But I've been here for a year and a half. I was hired as the Director of Department of Access Services.

Today, I'd really like to start by thanking everyone for inviting me to come today. It's an honor to be here. My goal for today is just to share some information.

I want to start with the idea of transparency. I've given a lot of thought to this. What does transparency really mean? What does DAS provide to faculty and staff in the way of transparency? I'm not sure we've been transparent enough.

I don't know that we've fully illustrated what we do, what our challenges are, how we've tried to meet the challenges you all face. Our demands, our needs, how we provide good service, I don't think we've shared enough about that.

So I'd like to take the opportunity to be more transparent today. Of course, today is also, it's a unique, you know, opportunity for you as faculty and staff to get together and talk, share thoughts about how we do serve our students.

We have 250 people in our department. It's hard to pull everyone together. And you all as a department have committed to get together several times to talk about this, and I think that's incredible.

If there is time, I'm going to ask you to think about how our DAS can be a part of this communication effort. I'm sure that there are things we can improve on. For example, an idea here is maybe we could have a 21-day report from DAS for all of you, about numbers, what the impact has been. I'm sure you have plenty of ideas that you could brainstorm as well.

We could maybe host workshops that could elicit more ideas. And I want you to please share with us anything that you're thinking. The rest of my day has been cancelled actually, so if you want to meet with me and have further conversation, I'm available. Please reach out to me. I'm here for you.

In the effort of transparency, I want to start with our current numbers. And this also shows our past numbers as well what life has looked like for our department over the past several years. I pulled this down from the annual report. The numbers start in 2014. Prior to the CAN (Communication Access Now) protest, remember that movement by the students? So it started in 2016 until 2017.

I'm sure many of you are kind of surprised to see these numbers changed. Some of you maybe not. Our student population truly is changing. Their needs are changing. COVID had a huge impact as well. I wanted to just give you some idea of how it's impacted our department.

Many of you may already be aware that the interpreting field is actually decreasing, our recruitment strategies have been very challenging. Especially in wintertime. If you look out the window, you see people, you know, saying I'm leaving this place. I'm going to go to a warmer climate. So it's been harder to pull people from the West Coast and southwest to move to Rochester.

And that has a huge impact. Our number of staff, though, has remained stable. Our department has had to make adjustments. And we're not able to cover everything. We're not there yet. We are trying to strategize and figure out ways that we can improve our coverage of demand on campus.

Not including MSSE, that's not included in this data, nor ASLIE. Because they are all signers in those classrooms. But of all NTID classes this semester, we provided 41% coverage for all — for 41% of all NTID classes we provided coverage. So those are the numbers.

Numbers do have meaning and impact. So I just wanted to share those with you. Again, it's possible that later on you will develop ideas of how we can partner better, how we can communicate better together. Please share those ideas with me.

>> Audience Member: I have a question. The slide before, is that only NTID interpreting support, not RIT interpreting support?

>> Brittany Taylor: Yes that previous graph was just representing NTID access. It included both captioning and interpreting services. But only access.

>> Audience Member: But only access — but only it's not cross registered students included in that. Those numbers, correct, the slide before the one you're on now.

>> Brittany Taylor: Correct. The previous slide was just NTID classes. More than 9000 hours every year are provided for NTID. That's just the NTID college classes. That doesn't include meetings, doesn't include one-on-one events. Just classes is what that previous slide represented, yes.

And here again, my goal is just to share information. Today we are ready to partner with you. We're ready to brainstorm with you. If you've got ideas, please do share them with me. If you have things that come up, please include DAS in your ideas about strategies for classroom communication.

We are all housed under NTID. We all have the same mission, same goals for serving our students the best way possible.

Here, again, I just wanted to re-emphasize that our students truly are changing. The field is changing. The needs are changing. So it's a great time for us together to get together, talk about what's possible. I remember before my time at DAS, they did recruit a task force of different people throughout NTID to discuss what should be prioritized for access services.

That was implemented over 20 years ago. The community has changed since then. It's really important for us to revisit what those changes are. And what we do what we need to do to make changes to accommodate things moving forward. And adjustments within DAS are for us to take a look at. How can we become more efficient as a department with our access services. How do we communicate to the community better? What would that actually look like?

So, we are taking time to do a deep dive into what adjustments we need to be making moving forward as a department. Here are some important people to know in our department.

They specifically are assigned to taking care of NTID as a college. I'm the director, Billy Windhorn is the interpreting manager for the NTID interpreting team. Only for interpreters. Not for captioning. Brenna Cialini, many of you probably know her name. You've probably received a lot of emails from her. This is her face. She would like to get together with us as well.

So these are the three of us in this effort. So please include us going forward. Thank you for inviting me today. I look forward to the continued conversation. Thank you.

>> Alesia Allen: OK, this is Alesia. Hello, everyone. So my part comes from the perspective of building safe spaces. When you're going to be more open hearted and open minded in a diverse communication community, it means that you need to have the space to be safe. I always say safe because what's safe for one person isn't the same as what's safe for another person. The concept of safety ultimately is for people to feel safer to communicate and let us know your thoughts, share your ideas.

So we're on this similar journey of honoring each other's ideas and honoring each other's modes of communication. So how do you suppose we're going to do that? This is something that I do all the time. Oh by the way, I forgot to introduce myself. I assumed you know me. My bad. My name is Alesia Allen. I'm the Assistant Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion here at NTID.

I've been in this role for about 5 years. I do a lot of work and I feel like, you know, I want to make sure that we all have a place. NTID is welcoming for faculty staff and students. So the point is, I'm also enthralled to say I'm one of the faculty. I'm a faculty member. Prior to my role now, I taught as an adjunct and I made community agreements for all of the classes that I teach. I do community agreements before I do a presentation sometimes.

It's part of DEI and is part of our culture. It's part of cultivating a safe space for people to talk. So with that, the community agreement goal is to ensure that people who are in the classroom, not just in the classroom, but in any space within our college. Have goals so they can feel safe enough to speak their minds.

So when we're talking about how we're going to do something within this diverse community, we need to talk about community agreements. And before I jump ahead, I'm going to let you read what's on the slide. Please take a look at that. Everybody good?

Community agreements are a way to identify and acknowledge and take accountability for what's necessary in a space. Next slide, please.

I want to encourage all of us. This is a big, big group so in order to establish community agreements in a short time, that would be impossible in this venue. However, I do community agreements all the time. These are some of the most popular community agreement aspects. Almost all community agreements have these 7 aspects.

Just as an aside. I'm willing to come to your department meetings to establish community agreements. I've gone to Jason's department. I've done it with various different staff and departments, so I'm willing to work with you on the side to establish a community agreement structure for you to talk about with your departments. I'm very happy to provide resources for that.

These are the most popular ones. The platinum rule is the most important rule. Many of you have probably heard of the golden rule. Have you heard of the golden rule? I've heard about that. OK, so have you heard of the platinum rule? OK, a couple people have. Wow. All right, great.

The golden rule is I will treat you the way I want to be treated. Sounds pretty good. I'll treat you that way, but how many times do people make decisions about how they're going to treat me and that's not how I want to be treated?

So the platinum rule — I'm using this sign for platinum. The platinum rule says I will treat you the way you want me to treat you. We can't make assumptions for other people. We need to check in and ask how they want to be treated.

Also, assuming positive intent. You coming into a space and that person who enters your space, assume that they mean well. Does that mean it's going to prevent harm? No. Sometimes we cause harm without realizing it, but we must assume that they mean well and we work to repair that harm.

The Las Vegas rule. Everybody knows what happens in Las Vegas stays in Las Vegas. So when you're having discussions, you don't carry that information and say so and so said this and so and so said that. You keep that discussion in that space. Use I statements. I feel. I think. I know. I see. I feel. Speak for

yourself. Oh, I feel like this is really a tough discussion. Speak from your own perspective, not you said this and you said that. That's more competitive.

Also we need to be accountable. Just in general be accountable. Not just only for yourself, but for each other, support each other in this learning process. I can't emphasize how many times that we go to a DEI meeting and a colleague who is hearing says, please just be mindful of the interpreters.

Alesia is accessing visual language. We only have an hour, so please don't speak at lightning speed. So it's not on me all the time to control the communication flow. Other people take accountability. Know that the space is shared by others. When you talk about sensitive topics, give yourself permission to change your mind. You don't have to pick an opinion and stay with it till the end.

Suppose someone wants to add something? Maybe we're going to have this series of communication meetings. If you want to add something to the community agreement let me know. We will follow these as a group for the next three meetings. I'm going to give you time to have a think about this. If you have some objections, please do voice your objections, but if you feel pretty comfortable with it as a group of a collective faculty of NTID, are we comfortable with following this agreement?

Seeing a lot of thumbs up. Beautiful. Thank you. And again, this is a process. If we get to a point where we need to add something, we can absolutely add to our community agreement. I'm not sure if I'm invited to the next three meetings, but please do make Jess or Matt Lynn or Gary aware of adding to the community agreement. This will guide our discussions in the next three sessions.

Again, I want to emphasize why do we do community agreements? Let me say this. What is this for? We have to maintain their vision and our mission. We have to make agreements, so we have to keep our mission in mind in order for all of us to be successful.

The second block there of text. We will have discussions about this. I was a student here in 1990 through 2004. I was on the staff in 2013. Left. Came back in 2015. This topic is something that never goes away. Communication is always important.

When you're talking about communication with deaf and hard of hearing people, it's even more sensitive because they're so left out historically. It can be messy, it can be complicated, it can feel icky, but it can also be beautiful, discussing communication with the goal to be more inclusive within this environment.

Community agreements aren't just for bells and whistles. It's good for the entire university if you accept this concept of a community agreement establishing your classroom. Establish your community agreements in your own personal life when you have family meetings. You can have very specific community agreements that you use within your family.

You can model this behavior within the different communities of which you are a member. I think that would be a great opportunity for us at NTID to show model how we really cherish and care for one another, and we are, we are duty bound to communicate with one another in a safe way as RIT Tigers.

Lastly, we need our faculty, staff and students to stay here, right. We want to make sure this place is sustainable. We want to make sure that people feel a sense of belongingness and unity within this community. That belonging is impacts a lot of things.

So thank you for your time and attention and I will hand it off to Jason.

>> Jason Listman: Thank you, Alesia. This is Jason. Well said. Promoting community engagement and belonging is wonderful. You might not know me, but my name is Jason Listman. I'm the Department Chair for the ASLIE Department, the Interpreting Department.

As Chair, I thought we might have an open discussion about what communication and language look like and how are communication and language different. So I thought about my part today. What would I want to speak on today? I do want to hear from you. I want to see what you feel about communication here at NTID. So rather than me just standing here lecturing at you, I want you to answer some questions.

Please follow this QR code and answer this survey. Obviously, we're not going to quickly find a solution through this survey, but it might give us a state of where we are currently and what is everybody's view on the communication status of NTID. These will help inform what we do with the next three meetings that we have together. Yeah.

OK. I have so many participants already. This is fabulous. 21 responses already. Can you scroll down a little, Brittany? Wow. You're fast! I can't believe everyone can read text so quickly.

We want to understand the difference between language and communication. Communication is how we interact with each other. We have different strategies. Language is one of them, but we have many tools to create understanding amongst ourselves. So NTID has a general philosophy. We want to communicate with diverse students. Is there only one approach or is there varied approaches? Of course, the answer is that there's varied approaches.

So let's move on to the next question. So this is your teaching philosophy and the college's philosophy. Are they in line? Are they aligned? I know I'm a researcher and so I'm always curious to know people's views, but this is helping us see each other's perspectives.

So, it seems a high percentage of you do feel that your teaching philosophy aligns with the communication philosophies of NTID. Some, 23 have said I think so. Couple of no's. Next question, please.

So, do you struggle to match the individual needs of your students? I love that everyone's giving thumbs up. So, it seems a number of you feel confident. About the same number say occasionally, that you need to ask for feedback of what's needed. And it seems you're advocating for that. That's great.

Some of you also feel that there is a struggle, but you're committed to finding solutions. Some do feel challenged and need more training. And some people say they haven't thought about it but are willing to learn. All right, next.

This is, you know, the varied communication modalities, sign language, gesturing. How does that influence the dynamic of the classroom? This is fascinating data. Seems a lot of people say improving understanding and advocacy and meaning making interactions. I thought the third one would be higher, but challenging. Challenges, delays or misunderstandings.

Access to information require expectations to change and being able to adjust to changing needs. Adaptability of both the students and the faculty. This is great OK. Next question, please.

How do you support students? Have you already identified ways that you do that? So a lot of you do seek out feedback from students. Seems many of you employ different communication strategies, including writing and signing. Some of you are committed to accessibility, but want to learn more strategies. Some of you recognize the importance, but have yet to establish that effort in your classroom. Next slide.

Time to check in. Alright. This is Jason. Again, it's clear to all of us that we have several strategies and lots of ideas of how to better meet our students, where they're at. The reason why we ask this question is because this is our community. We want to know what your experiences are, what your perspectives are on communication needs.

We want to know what the state is currently so that we can make plans for the future. Our workshops going forward are to develop strategies, brainstorm. Help us take a look at what resources we have and what we can do to better support you in the classroom.

We don't expect everyone to have perfect ASL, including the students. We want to come together as a community to figure out how to make adjustments to accommodate our own needs. Like Jess said, nobody's perfect, but this is a great way for us to come together, share perspectives, and improve the entire environment.

Thank you for your feedback and for participating in this Mentimeter right now. Thank you. It's called Mentimeter.

So I've sort of summarized all these points that you see on the slide now. The data here is to help improve communication for our community, so your feedback is incredibly vital. Also, as Alesia mentioned, we want a community agreement to develop a dialogue where people can share their feelings and experiences and we can grow together.

Of course, we want to come to this with an open heart and an open mind. As Gary said, Gerry always reiterates our Mission. We're here for our students. What does that look like for us here? What does that look like in our classroom? So that's the entire purpose of us being here. I'm going to turn it over to the others to wrap it up.

>> Gary Behm: This is Gary. Nice job, everyone. Thank you for your participation. Hats off to Jason. Nice job. Very interactive. I'm more of a lecture guy. Jason's more of an interaction guy. Good job.

Again, one of the things that really inspired me from those answers is flexibility, it was one of the biggest words in the word cloud. So you saw Brittany's comment about, you know, what shocked you about her comments and what surprised you about the challenges that you're facing?

>> Audience Member: The percentage of NTID students or classrooms that have interpreters. 42%. Yeah. And that the number of interpreters is declining. So how are we going to meet the need if we have fewer interpreters.

>> Gary Behm: Yeah. What other challenges is Brittany facing? Recruiting. She's got recruiting challenges. Another comment.

>> Audience Member: 10,000 hours is a lot.

>> Gary Behm: It is. It's a huge number it's not small potatoes. It's a huge monster. I'm sorry, Brittany. It's not a monster, but it is a huge responsibility. It's a huge service responsibility. So when we talk about communication with our students, we need to be flexible. At the same time, we want to think about Brittany and DAS and how we can support everyone and how we can support them.

You don't want to assume if you need an interpreter, you'll get an interpreter. I think we have to be much more flexible in our approach. I remember talking with an oral student. I was not a hearing person. We were working hard. I was sweating to communicate throughout the semester. They graduated and as part of the graduation ceremony, the family came and the students said to his family Gary Behm's one of my favorite students.

I just stood there and smiled. I just, I was so shocked, but I remember I gave him a hard time. Like I'm a hearing person. Why do I need to sign? You know, if you can't, if you can't communicate, we'll call for an interpreter. At that time, we didn't have enough interpreters. I had no choice. So I had to roll up my sleeve and we had worked together and really, it paid off big time.

That student was so successful and I impacted their life. So our work has a huge impact on students. We have more of an impact than access services does. I want to make sure that I am personally accountable for the impact that I have on the students. It's important for us, for our legacy to support our students. Is there a comment?

>> Jess: There's a question in the back.

>> Audience Member: This is (name removed). This is a question about what Brittany mentioned in one of her slides. The statistics from 2014 until 2024. That's when the data range was. That's interpreting requests. Is that from students or from faculty only?

>> Brittany Taylor: It's a mix. This is Brittany. That's it. It's a mix. It's a mix. Most of the time, it comes from students, but faculty as well. So it is a combination.

>> Audience Member: So what's the number of — what's the number based on? Which number are you referring to 2014 is a small percentage and then there's a huge increase in the number of hours. Is that based on the number of student requests and faculty requests both.

>> Brittany Taylor: This is Brittany. Yes. It's both. In the past in 2014 it was only students making requests at that time. Back then, there was FDI. Flexible direct instruction, which meant that talking to students we would find out what their needs were and if they were approved, we would go ahead.

Often times it took several weeks to have that process completed and provide an interpreter, but after the academic year of 2016 and 2017, we allowed Access Services in the classroom in the request launched because of CAN.

So the floodgates sort of opened. And so once that was permitted, we received a lot of requests. Additionally, I forgot to add this to my slide, but the College of NTID is the fourth highest of all the campuses, colleges, on campus to request services. The fourth.

First is CAD. The College of Art and Design. That's because their course times are five hours, typically. That's rather than three hours, so the requests are stronger. COLA, Liberal Arts, because all students are required to take courses in Liberal Arts for cross registered students. And College of Science is the third largest and NTID is the 4th largest.

>> Gary Behm: This is Gary. I remember when we had about 1100 or 1200 students and I would say almost half, 500 or 600 were cross-registered students here. About 500 to 600 hundred students. So we're split 50/50 between cross-registered and NTID. So they're in 7 to 8 different colleges over there. So we've got 600 students in eight different colleges, and we've got 500 students who account for the bulk of interpreting requests.

So then, of course, cross-registered numbers have grown over the years. Next year, who knows how many, We might have another record crop of students coming next year, so we need to keep up services for the cross-registered for students. At the same time, the demand is increasing at NTID.

>> Brittany Taylor: This is Brittany. Most of our cross-registered students have hearing professors who speak. However, we have varied needs at NTID, So the dynamics are different. Another question from the front.

>> Audience Member: Yeah, I'm wondering why DAS. I understand they have to coordinate for all the colleges, but how can we take a look at the students and ask for them to provide solutions as well? We know that they — are they satisfied with their services? I know we're making adjustments, but I feel like students might need to do that as well.

>> Gary Behm: This is Gary. That's a great question. The question about students, I'm assuming you know they're demanding interpreters or they haven't revolted. So they're getting what they need. But they've grown up in the mainstream. They have interpreters all the time. Expectations change.

Remember, in mainstream schools they are required by law to provide an interpreter. When they get here as a college student, they may not be ready for RIT. So they start at NTID and they expect the same: Having a full-time interpreter going to all their classes. We don't have that because often we have direct communication, which is very new for these students who grew up in the mainstream. All the teachers are hearing. Interpreters always there.

When they get here, the situation is very different. So we have to counsel the students. That's when we have to introduce, introduce them. They don't have to figure it out on their own, but they cannot be expected to have an interpreter in each course.

When I got here. I grew up. I went to a residential school. I got here and then I started taking RIT courses. That was very different, and I had to have an interpreter. No disparaging interpreters. But my point was it wasn't direct communication. In the end, I loved interpreters, but I didn't know how to work with interpreters.

You know, the teacher was lecturing. The interpreter was there. The slides were somewhere else. It forced me to get used to it. I did graduate from RIT and I got a job, and I think the biggest thing I learned was how to work with interpreters because you have to use interpreters wisely in the workplace.

So being exposed to interpreters as a cross-registered student did benefit me. And I didn't have that direct combination that I was used to growing up. You're right. There are protests. So we have to make sure that people are feeling valued and protected and served.

>> Gary: Oh, I'm sorry, we have. I thought we had another hour. If people don't mind staying for another hour, that'd be great. We have to get out of here. I know people have other commitments, so we're going to stop. We have 4 minutes left, so we're going to hold these questions,

>> Jess: Yeah, so this is just next meeting. We want to see all of you here again. It's been a great turn out. I'm super impressed. I'm thrilled to see so many of you here and I'm happy that we all get to work together. Our next meeting is going to be March 7th from 11:00 to 12:00. So that's next week.

>> Gary Behm: Is that next week? Is that here bamboo room yeah it'll be in the Bamboo room. That's right. So over in the SAU, we're taking a field trip. Maybe I'll get a bus. We'll all get in the bus. I'm kidding we're going to walk. It's not that far. It's in the center of campus.

>> Jess: Yeah, and this is Jess. So please join us at the Bamboo Room. Come with ideas. Any suggestions you might have? And we're going to have a brainstorming session during our next gathering.

>> Gary Behm: This is Gary. Who's responsible to lead that next meeting?

>> Jess: Each session is led by different folks. I'll do a quick review of the community agreement at the beginning of our next meeting. Gary will be reviewing challenges that we are currently facing. Then I probably will be the one to submit questions for you to think about. And then we'll split into groups and do some group brainstorming.

>> Gary Behm: And of course, Brittany is invited again. You're going to enjoy those growing pains with us Brittany.

>> Jess: So please give some thought this week. That's your homework, right? It's your favorite right homework.

>> Gary Behm: Happy Friday, but here's your homework. Right. Exactly so it's now 11:59am I promised we would finish on time. This is Gary, so we are done. Thank you so much again for coming. We appreciate it. Have a great weekend. Stay warm. I heard it's going to get cold again, but stay warm as possible.