Rochester Institute of Technology

Office Memo

To   Dean's Student Leadership Advisory Group

From   Jim DeCaro

Date   January 4, 1991

Subject   Communication Task Force Final Recommendations

Attached to this memorandum is a copy of the documentation
regarding the final recommendations of the Communication Task
Force. These materials have been forwarded to all NTID faculty
and professional staff. As I promised, I am also sending you a
copy of the document for your review and feedback.

Attached, you will find a student feedback form. Please share
the attached document and the feedback form with members of your
respective organizations. I look forward to receiving feedback
from students in your organizations.

STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM

Please complete and return to the Office of the Dean (Roon 2845, LBJ) by 31 January 1991.

TENURE

_____ I <u>support</u> the recommendations as they pertain to tenure.

_____ I <u>don't support</u> the recommendations as they pertain to tenure.

PROMOTION

_____ I <u>support</u> the recommendations as they pertain to promotion in rank.

_____ I <u>don't support</u> the recommendations as the pertain to promotion in rank.

COMMENTS:_____

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Office Memo

To	All NTID Faculty and Professional Staff Members
From	Jim DeCaro
Date	January 2, 1991
Subject	Attached Proposal

Prior to the holiday break, our Communication Task Force forwarded me their final set of recommendations. During the break, I took the opportunity to read and carefully study their recommendations and all the feedback that was presented to the committee. I am now prepared to offer the recommendations to our tenured and tenure track faculty members for review and ratification.

Attached to this memorandum is a <u>ballot</u> for tenured and tenure track faculty members and a <u>feedback form</u> for other members of our faculty and staff. <u>Ballots</u> for tenured and tenure track faculty members contain a number in the upper right hand corner which represents the rank of the individual to whom the ballot has been sent. The <u>feedback form</u> provided for all other members of our community contains no such designation.

Please note that the cover memorandum from the task force details the major changes made to the document as a result of the final round of feedback (I have underlined the critical points). In addition, I have had pages 17 to 32 copied in a different color since these pages contain the critical components of the recommendations.

At this point in the deliberations, I would be remiss if I didn't make my perceptions regarding the final recommendations known to you. First, it is my assessment that the task force has responded in a constructive fashion to the critique which they received. Second, the recommendations are realistic and the level of communication expectations designated are achievable. Third, the proposed implementation guidelines constitute a positive academic process. It is my personal assessment that these recommendations are balanced, reasonable, and worthy of ratification.

cc: Dr. Plough
     Dr. Castle

Office Memo

One Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester, NY 14623-0887
(716) 475-6300

To: .   James J. DeCaro, Dean

From: The NTID Communication Task Force
Date: December 10, 1990
Subject: Final revision of CTF Recommendations

The Communication Task Force (CTF) has completed its review of the second and final round of faculty feedback. In light of this final feedback and review process, Sections I, II, and III remain unchanged. The CTF has made the following changes to Section IV:

√ • The concept of an advanced-level target goal has been specified for all faculty.

• The sign language expectation for documenting skill achievement at tenure review has been √ changed to Intermediate Plus on the SCPI and all related explanations have been adjusted accordingly.

√ • A sign language expectation for promotion to Assistant Professor has been specified as Intermediate Plus on the SCPI and all related explanations have been adjusted accordingly.

√ • The guidelines for documentation have been reworded to better reflect our original intent.

These recommendations are proposed for a period of five years which encompass:

√ • The recommended three-year phase-in period.

√ • Two years of implementation.

√ At the five-year mark from approval, these recommendations should be reviewed for possible revision based on the cumulative analysis of the data collected over five years from the start of phase-in. It is assumed that adjustments will be made accordingly in line with the reality of the data.

An overview of the faculty response to the Revised Expectations and Guidelines (1st Revision, June 25, 1990) is attached for your information. This important feedback guided us in this final revision. We submit these revised recommendations to you without reservation.

Attachments

Membership of the Communication Task Force

Gary E. Mowl, Chairperson
Sidney M. Barefoot
John W. Cox
Carol L. De Filippo
Margaret A. Hoblit
Barbara R. Holcomb
Florene N. Hughes

T. Alan Hurwitz
Ronald R. Kelly
Mitchel S. Levy
Edward B. Lord
Beverly J. Price
Rose Marie Toscano

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEAN, NTID

for

Institute Expectations and Guidelines for Faculty Communication Skill Development

by

COMMUNICATION TASK FORCE
October 15, 1987 to May 15, 1989

CTF Members:

Gary E. Mowl, Chair of CTF

Sidney M. Barefoot

John W. Cox

Carol L. De Filippo

Margaret A. Hoblit

Barbara R. Holcomb

Florene N. Hughes, Faculty Council Liaison

T. Alan Hurwitz

Ronald R. Kelly

Mitchell S. Levy, Student Representative

Edward B. Lord

Beverly J. Price

Rose Marie Toscano

1st Revision
June 25, 1990

2nd Revision
November 30, 1990

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INTRODUCTION

A. Dean's Charge

B. Preamble

. THE NTID TASK FORCE ON COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF FACULTY

PREFACE:

The National Technical Institute for the Deaf continues to be committed to selecting and using the best elements of all communication systems to meet the educational and future employment needs of its students. The classroom environments at NTID usually have a broad mix of students with various skills in oral/aural communication, signed English, and ASL. While the present philosophy of eclecticism regarding communication skills will continue to be intrinsic to NTID's educational policies, it is clear that further elaboration is necessary in the areas of defining both the expectations of faculty for communication skills and the related procedures and documentation for assessing those expectations. The primary focus of this need is to develop clarity for the communication skills criterion in the promotion and tenure procedures. Another important focus is to continue NTID's commitment to maximizing communication among all deaf and hearing people within the academic, professional, and social environments of NTID.

To this end a task force is established.

CHARGE:

Clarifying Institute expectations of faculty and related documentation pertinent to the communication skills criterion of the promotion and tenure procedures (while "writing" is also an expectation of tenure and promotion, the specific focus of this task force will be the expressive and receptive communication skills used in one-to-one and group interactions as defined in the "charge", item 1 below) -- make recommendations to the Dean by February 1, 1989. A progress report to the Dean is expected in May, 1988.

1. Develop and recommend statements of Institute expectations of faculty for communication skills. For this assignment "communication skills" refers to expressive and receptive skills used in one-to-one and group interactions (this may include, but is not limited to sign language, speaking, simultaneous communication, and receptive understanding). The Institute expectations of faculty should be in relation to:

   a. academic, professional, and social situations
   b. all primary areas of professional responsibility for faculty
      1) teaching
      2) research
      3) counseling/advising
      4) support service provision
      5) academic administrative
      6) clinical work

   Furthermore, the recommended Institute expectations should be stated in terms of target levels within a range expressed over time.

2. Develop and recommend a reasonable plan and framework for implementing consistent assessment and documentation across the Institute (i.e., Institute approved procedures for documenting how one addresses the criterion for communication skills). Components of this plan may include:

    a. student evaluations from classes
    b. administrative/peer observations by qualified people
    c. performance evaluations from participating in sign communication classes
    d. validated assessment tools
    e. other

This framework will then be utilized in the various peer/administrative review processes to provide the basis of judgment for how well an individual meets the Institute expectations of faculty for communication skills.

NOTE: Depending on the specific expectations, appropriate NTID training efforts will have to be made available.

CTION IB

PREAMBLE

Motivations/Precipitating Factors

The desired "ideal world" for NTID is one in which all faculty/staff would make a personal commitment and sincere continuing effort to develop and maintain a high level of sign language skills, as well as the oral skills necessary to interact effectively with people who are deaf. In this ideal world, all deaf and hearing people would be able to participate in a dynamic educational community to learn and exchange information, thus fostering the opportunity for full and equal participation by all members of the community. If such an ideal world existed at NTID, there would probably not be a need for a Communication Task Force. But alas, the realities of the current world at NTID and the practical needs of the tenure and promotion processes have brought this NTID Communication Task Force into being to define and clarify the Institute expectations for faculty pertinent to communication skill.

Focus

In developing the recommendations for this report, the Communication Task Force (hereafter referred to as CTF) focused specifically on expressive/receptive communication skills needed for one-to-one and group interaction among students and faculty/staff. Purposeful effort was made to avoid confusing the issue of communication in this defined context with attitudes and teaching styles. The specific concern is whether an individual faculty member can effectively communicate and interact with students and faculty who are deaf at a level commensurate with a college environment. To cite a perspective expressed during student interviews, students continue to be frustrated with having to interact with faculty/staff who communicate using sign skills representative of elementary school levels in terms of vocabulary and expressive/receptive abilities. Because all students, faculty, and staff have a need to understand and be understood in this environment, NTID needs to provide clear Institutional expectations and support for this to occur.

Complexity is added to the issue of effective communication in the NTID environment by the ever present need to meet the diversity of communication skills in the student population. For example, in a typical entering class of freshmen, about 30% have excellent sign language skills, about 50% have fair to good sign language skills, and the remaining 20% range from some to no sign language skills. When we factor in the variations of hearing abilities and aided potential, along with speechreading and speaking abilities, the combinations of communication needs become even more complex. Recognizing the necessity to address the diverse communication needs of our students and to clarify expectations for communication skills, we have focused on developing, documenting, and assessing individual faculty members' sign language fluency and oral communication strategies and techniques.

Continuing Commitment to English

Finally, it needs to be clear to everyone that in no way do the recommendations herein contradict or hinder the long-standing Institute commitment to facilitate development of English language competencies of NTID students. As per the NTID Guidance Paper Looking to the 1990's (January, 1988), NTID is committed to initiating a variety of strategies to address the development of English language competencies across our entire curriculum (p. 10). While English will always be a critical NTID focus, it needs to be emphasized without excluding other complementary communication/language options. It is the perspective of the members of this CTF that the facilitation of improved communication interaction between students and faculty (be it by sign language, oral strategies and techniques, or combination thereof) is not only critical to any learning environment, but crucial to the language development of students.

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SECTION II

INVESTIGATION AND INQUIRY

LEADING TO THE

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Review of the Literature

B. Review of Previous Communication Committee Reports

C. Faculty and Student Perspectives

SECTION IIA

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is a paucity of literature concerning assessment of adults' communication competence whether through sign, or speech, or both. Assessment in this area remains a multifaceted problem, as reflected in a 1983 Gallaudet College report (Johnson, 1983). It may be indicative of the complexity of the problem that the recommendations of that report are only now beginning to be considered at Gallaudet.

Throughout the Johnson (1983) report, numerous issues become apparent such as (a) the target behavior – language or communication, (b) the orientation toward testing – diagnostic (to focus on specific strengths and weaknesses) or proficiency (to indicate broad-based abilities), and (c) the criterion of performance – test-based or established independent of any test. In addition to these kinds of decisions, the Gallaudet College faculty was faced with a controversy over their philosophy of communication which became a primary concern among assessment issues.

Authors of an earlier document, called the Francis report (cited in Johnson, 1983), had tackled some of these issues, but were prepared to accept other, untested assumptions in order to move ahead with an assessment plan. Authors of the Johnson report were critical of any plan that did not handle the "big issues" first. There was disagreement on what issues were relevant to implementing communication assessment. The Johnson report appeared to be a reaction to both the recommendations of the previous report and the then-current system of communication assessment for Gallaudet faculty.

Faculty at Gallaudet had been evaluated via "traditional" procedures for their competence in "the simultaneous method" in use at that time (Gallaudet Faculty Handbook, 1986). An expressive test required faculty to use the simultaneous method in delivering a brief monologue and an assigned paragraph, to be judged satisfactory or not by a panel of four students and seven faculty. For the receptive test, they were to give a verbatim transcript of sentences and answer questions on a story or dialogue delivered by three students using the simultaneous method, part with voice.

Interview Assessment Techniques

Francis recommended the Language Proficiency Interview (LPI) as a replacement for the panel of judges. The LPI evolved from the Oral Proficiency Interview, developed by the U.S. Foreign Service Institute. In the LPI, an interview is conducted by native users of the language who rate the individual on a functional scale from Low Novice to Superior. Guidelines for proficiency goals (the description of skill levels) in various modalities (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) were written by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in conjunction with the Educational Testing Service (cited in Johnson, 1983) and workshops were held on oral proficiency interviewing and rating techniques in the early 1980s.

Johnson challenged the appropriateness of substituting the LPI, as defined by Francis, for the panel of judges. Because the LPI ratings were developed for an oral language, he questioned what the proficiency levels would mean for a visual/gestural language. Does a native community of language users exist for simultaneous communication (SC)? Who would have the native intuitions necessary to judge use of SC on an LPI scale? Inconsistency in the use of SC was also seen as working against the validity of the LPI rating system.

The solution devised in the Johnson report was a modification of the LPI scale to fit a new assessment approach and communication philosophy. Johnson wanted a blend of diagnostic and proficiency orientations to testing. The goal was to reduce the punitive overtones of the test situation and lessen

anxiety, while giving faculty a sense of control over their own skill development. To accomplish the latter, the evaluation procedure was accompanied by proposed courses to teach the required skills. It appears to have been accepted that the evaluation would specify language behaviors as opposed to communication behaviors. It was reasoned that the LPI scale deals explicitly with language behaviors and that, since language is the basis of communication, assessment of language behaviors is one indication of communication competence.

The reference for the language behaviors was specified after a discussion of the many "language varieties" represented on the Gallaudet campus. In particular, the difficulties of signing and speaking simultaneously were reviewed. The authors also gave support to their views that face-to-face communication should not have the purpose of teaching English, that English teaching is most successful as a separate activity, and that English teaching was not to be a consideration in determining the College's philosophy of communication. The particular language variety of choice was descibed as a version of Fluent English Signing or Pidgin Signed English. In this variety, signing is based on an approximation of English syntax, with the inclusion of ASL features to preserve the integrity of the message, with limited use of English speech movements, and without focus on simultaneity of signs and voice. The simultaneous use of spoken English was neither desired nor encouraged.

The Gallaudet proposal. Three scales were developed by modifying the LPI rating system. A "global" scale, used for personnel decisions, rated the individual in terms of "function" (situations and tasks an individual could handle with a given level of skill), "content" (topics the person might be able to discuss), and "form" (details of production). The other two scales, receptive and expressive, were to be used for developing training goals.

The interview was to be conducted by two raters with lifelong signing experience, a tolerant attitude, and no connection with the Gallaudet training program. (Newell, 1989, has also cautioned against creating a conflict of interest by having the same individuals serve as evaluators and as trainers.) Levels of expected performance were stipulated for the end of the first and fourth years of employment, along with recommended consequences, including termination. A training program was specified for new and continuing faculty members to aid in achievement of the criteria. A minimum level of achievement ("Basic Plus") was established, regardless of job assignment; a second level ("Intermediate Plus") was established for faculty with instructional or other one-to-one student contact.

The Sign Communication Proficiency Interview. Aspects of the recommendations from the Johnson report were echoed in a position paper issued by the NTID Sign Communication Department (SCD) (Aron & Cagle, 1988). The SCD faculty favored another modification of the LPI, called the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI), which was developed at NTID. As described by Caccamise, Newell, Fennell, and Carr (1988), and Caccamise and Newell (1988), the SCPI is an interview technique. A videotape of a conversation with a skilled interviewer is later viewed by three trained raters. The topics of the interview vary according to the interests and communication needs of the interviewee. It incorporates natural conversational strategies and attempts to put interviewees at ease in order to allow them to demonstrate the best sample of their comunication skills, both expressive and receptive.

The SCPI rating scale is adapted from the LPI and is based on an ideal native-like signer. It ranges from Zero (no functional skills) or Novice (single sign responses and very limited comprehension) to Superior-Plus (native-like signer). Two types of interview are available, one to assess American Sign Language (ASL) communication skills and a second to assess general sign communication skills. The latter includes evaluation of sign vocabulary; clarity, control, and fluency of sign production and fingerspelling; use of sign grammar; nonmanual signals (e.g., facial expressions); and flexibility along the English-ASL sign continuum.

SCPI interviewers are practiced in exploring the breadth and depth of interviewees' expressive and receptive sign skills through their questioning. After estimating the probable highest level of performance, interviewers use probes to challenge interviewees to perform at an even higher level.

After interviewees are informed of the results, they are invited to discuss the results, with an emphasis on their strengths as well as suggestions for improving their skills.

Caccamise and his colleagues encouraged supplementing SCPI assessment with other approaches such as on-the-job observation. The SCD faculty also recommended a combination of assessment tools, such as SCPI with classroom observation and student evaluations. Recognition of the skills required for a given job assignment was apparent in both the SCPI literature and the SCD position paper. Caccamise and Newell (1988) detailed the proficiency standards -- related to job function -- that have been selected by seven programs nation-wide that use the SCPI. It was the position of the SCD faculty that NTID teachers achieve Advanced skills and that all other faculty and staff (non-teaching) achieve at least Intermediate skill level. Timelines were stipulated and benchmarks were established, from Survival level at the end of the first year to Advanced by the end of the fourth year. The concept of a minimum level and a preferred ("proficiency") level was suggested by Newell, Caccamise, Tebo, and McAdam (1988). These authors also provided data to demonstrate that a training program integrated with an assessment program can effect the gains necessary to attain required levels.

Importance of training. Training opportunities to aid learners in achieving the expected levels was stressed in both the SCPI literature and the SCD position paper. Newell and Holcomb (1989) have compiled a list of learning resources available to NTID faculty that include classroom instruction as well as examples of informal learning opportunities, such as advising student organizations. It is the opinion of Aron (1988), however, that provision of learning opportunities may not be adequate to ensure skill development. It has been her experience that faculty are not consistent in their attendance after enrolling in formal courses at NTID. The SCD position paper suggests a monitoring system to include chairpersons who will mentor faculty in their fulfillment of an individual communication and deafness training plan.

Definition of Expectations

A clear definition of exactly what is expected of a faculty member was emphasized in the Johnson report, the SCPI literature, and the SCD position paper. Memos from Parasnis (1987) and Caccamise (1987) indicated that a lack of clarity has been a source of difficulties in NTID promotion reviews in the past. As stated in the Parasnis memo, the practices of the SCD during their training activities became a de facto policy to many faculty in the absence of written Institute expectations. That is, they may have assumed that the model for classroom communication was represented in the techniques used for training faculty in sign communication. Similarly, Subtelny (1986) noted that specific SCD course offerings might shape both attitudes and skills of students and faculty. All of this points to the need for a written statement, from the time of initial hire, that describes required skills -- both the area of skill attainment (e.g., sign communication) and the level of attainment -- and how those skills are to be documented. These understandings should be shared by those who review faculty attainment and those who are under review.

Alternatives to the Interview Technique

Written policy statements cannot stand alone, of course, and must be followed by procedures for implementation; that is: How is one's skill to be assessed? So far, this review has considered only tools based on the LPI and focused on sign skill evaluation. Are there alternatives to the interview technique? In the area of sign skill evaluation, a search of the literature yielded but a single resource that dealt with adult learners. Seal (1986) presented an observation scale for documenting use of total communication by students-in-training at the college level. She identified 10 behaviors, each to be rated for frequency of occurrence on a scale from <u>never</u> to <u>always</u>. Some behaviors were broadly defined (e.g., "actively works to improve both receptive and expressive communication skills"); others were more narrow in scope (e.g., "fingerspells in a fluent and precise manner"). A self-evaluation was recommended in addition to that of two other evaluators. Length and setting of the observation were to

be selected as appropriate. Videotaping for later rating was an option. The authors reported only informal use of the scale to date. Given the informal nature of the scale and the unevenness of the rating items, it does not appear to apply to the assessment needs of NTID faculty.

Other authors have addressed assessment of sign communication by children. None of the schemes appear to have been systematized to the extent needed for application to NTID. Also, the behaviors are, appropriately, developmental and would not suffice beyond the survival level of skill development for college-level communication. For example, step 32 out of the 50 listed in Brown and Orvets' (1987) Behavioral Characteristics Progression for sign language is: "Produces signs for 20 action verbs without a model." Brown and Orvets also include a pragmatics checklist. This may be useful to indicate the scope of intents that the signer can control (e.g., "requesting an object", "protesting," or "analyzing and hypothesizing"). Further work would be needed, however, to add guidelines for determining how well each intent was expressed.

Pragmatics was the topic also of Luetke-Stahlman (1987). She went further, however, and recommended evaluation of form and content, as well as use. Borrowing from researchers in oral language acquisition, she compiled a pragmatic skills taxonomy and a list of milestones of pragmatic development through the fifth year of life. She also devised an adapted semantic taxonomy. Both are to be used in analysis of transcriptions of language samples. She gave an example of a bimodal transcription which indicates which part of the message was voiced, which was signed, the number of units used in each mode, the content (semantics) of the message, and its purpose (pragmatics). Application to adults is, again, questionable.

Another approach to the study of communication involving children is interactional analysis (Craig & Collins, 1970; Wolf, 1977). This, too, focuses on uses of language rather than degree of skill in expressing each use. A serious objection to interactional analysis is the tedious nature of this type of observation and the tendency to draw conclusions related to instructional style. One usually uses interactional analysis to determine relative frequencies of "teacher talk" and "student talk". There is an implication that classroom learning is facilitated by more of the latter and less of the former.

In a college environment, prescriptions for interaction, or even statements of preferred style, are probably inappropriate. Nevertheless, for professional development, interested faculty may want to pursue a scheme such as that developed by Craig and Collins (1970) which includes observation of mode of expression as well as intent. For example, H. Lang (Office of Faculty Development, 1989) has proposed a series of seminars and mentoring activities for new faculty, to be organized by the NTID Office of Professional Development, that include analysis of what happens in the classroom. Communication skill training is also part of the proposal and could be the focus of some of the classroom observations. The goal remains skill development, and not assessment, however.

In the area of oral communication, assessment techniques might be borrowed from oral interpreter training. Northcott (1984) discusses this topic in general. Castle (1984) has developed lists of techniques to enhance the oral message, but assessment procedures remain informal (via observation and judgment).

Study of the Nature of Communication Behaviors

It has been suggested (see the Francis report cited in Johnson, 1983) that a first step in instituting assessment is to study what happens when people communicate in relevant situations (those that are seen to be significant for evaluation). Johnson (1983) recommended conducting such a study in parallel with ongoing assessment of faculty skills, evidence perhaps of his confidence in the definition of the criterion behaviors. At NTID, a study similar to that suggested by both Francis and Johnson has been underway by D. Castle and her associates for several years.

The focus of the first NTID communication study by Castle and Pocobello (1987) described how 13 instructors used SC and its oral/aural components in the classroom. Comment was made by the investigators on aspects they identified as important: the oral/aural characteristics of articulatory movement, voice level and quality, speech rate and flow, gestures and expression, supportive written information, amount of English spoken, and location of hands when signing; and the visual/gestural characteristics of sign and fingerspelling production, sign vocabulary, facial expression and body language, grammatical structure through sign, speech/voice/lip movement, code switching, omissions, clarification and support techniques, and level of discourse. The results indicated deficiencies in both the oral/aural and sign components of the teachers' delivery for which the authors recommended specific curriculum offerings.

In a second stage of the study of SC, Stinson, Newell, Castle, Mallery-Ruganis, and Holcomb (1989) sought the opinions of 36 knowledgeable consumers. They arrived at a list of about 400 descriptors of effective SC through group discussion, followed by observation of brief segments of SC performed by three experienced signers. These were organized into 41 categories. Each of the 36 respondents then identified the three most important characteristics of SC, resulting in a table of summed rank scores for each category of comment.

Stinson et al. considered their respondents' rankings to be one way of summarizing the priorities and concerns of these consumers. The most highly ranked items, in order of importance, were clear lip movement, facial expression, body language/movement, grammatical features of the visual/gestural modality, sign production, sign choice, and pace. According to the authors, their results verified (a) the bimodal nature of SC and (b) the complexity of the process. Among the work remaining is validation of the effectiveness of communicators who exhibit clarity in each of the highly ranked areas.

Whereas Stinson et al. consulted adults employed in academia to define effective communication, Foster, Barefoot, and DeCaro (1988) consulted first-year NTID students. Again, the complexity of the topic emerged as a primary finding. Foster et al. conducted 23 open-ended interviews. The students' comments were then analyzed and inferences were made about the defining components of communication (called "dimensions").

To many of the students interviewed by Foster et al., communication meant "talking" in the generic sense; that is, some form of language encoded in some modality. To this first psychophysical dimension were added an overlapping affective dimension (e.g, self-confidence, interest, prejudice/tolerance), situational variables (Who was participating? About what? Where? How? And why?), and social-political considerations (identity with a particular "world").

Foster et al. concluded that the meaning of communication is multifaceted, an interaction of at least these four dimensions. Assessment and intervention, they continued, cannot focus exclusively on acquisition of technical skills. They must build on the everyday life experiences of the learner which may help to explain the learner's response to intervention. They should include the learner and the teacher in a dialogue, and in activities of self-discovery for both individuals concerning their perspectives on communication. Aspects of these conclusions were mentioned also by Park (1980) in connection with potential explanations for the difficulties experienced by second language learners.

The Psychology of Change

Clearly, assessment of communication skill entails an emotional response from all parties involved. This is evident, for example, in the memo of Lang (1989) to whom these are human rights issues. Cagle's memo (1987) also indicates that there are issues of accessibility and mutual respect which must be recognized. On the other hand, we have noted the critical need to enlist the aid and support of those who are the subject of any proposal for communication skill development. Listening, clarifying, negotiating, and validating are all essential for achieving changeability (Lippitt & Lippitt, 1978).

SECTION IIB

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE REPORTS

In addition to reviewing relevant literature as an aid in addressing the Dean's charge, the CTF also sought an historical perspective on the issue of communication at NTID. To do this, the CTF reviewed three reports by previous communication task forces:

1. Recommendation of the NTID Communication Task Force, March 20, 1980

2. DCO Communication Task Force Report to Division of Career Opportunities, April 1982

3. Division of Career Opportunities Communication Task Force Recommendation, 1986

The three reports focused on the importance of having consistent, high quality communication among deaf and hearing faculty, staff, and students. Each report identified areas of concern where improved communication appeared necessary.

The recommendations of the 1980 Communication Task Force went beyond identifying areas of concern based on their charge "... to develop a plan to increase the sensitivity of NTID staff to the diverse communication needs of hearing and hearing-impaired staff members" (p.1). The 1980 Communication Task Force recognized the "... lack of consistency in the use of adequate communication skills and behaviors to facilitate communication between hearing and hearing-impaired staff members" (p.2). As a result, they identified five target audiences and related outcomes for each. The five NTID audiences were NTID Administration; New Staff; Veteran Staff; Hearing-Impaired Staff; and Staff with Limited Hearing/Hearing-Impaired Contact. Listed below is a brief summary of expected outcomes for each of the five NTID audiences:

Audience

1. Administration

2. New Staff

Outcomes

a. Demonstrate awareness and accept responsibility for being a role model for effective communication behaviors.

b. Demonstrate appropriate communication behaviors to effectively conduct meetings involving hearing and hearing-impaired staff.

c. Have knowledge of appropriate communication behaviors necessary to communicate effectively with hearing and hearing-impaired staff.

a. Demonstrate sufficient comfort level to interact with hearing and hearing-impaired staff within the limits of newly acquired communication skills.

b. Have knowledge of appropriate communication behaviors necessary to communicate effectively with hearing and hearing-impaired staff.

c. Accept responsibility for acquiring a variety of communication skills.

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3. Veteran Staff

    a. Demonstrate awareness and accept responsibility for being a role model of effective communication behaviors.

    b. Demonstrate appropriate communication behaviors to effectively participate in meetings involving hearing and hearing-impaired staff.

    c. Have knowledge of appropriate communication behaviors necessary to communicate effectively with hearing and hearing-impaired staff.

4. Hearing-Impaired Staff

    a. Demonstrate awareness and accept responsibility for being a role model of effective communication behaviors.

    b. Demonstrate sufficient comfort to identify communication needs to others and suggest ways for others to meet those needs.

    c. Have awareness of own communication capabilities.

    d. Have knowledge of appropriate communication behaviors necessary to communicate effectively with hearing and hearing-impaired staff.

5. Staff with Limited Hearing/ Hearing-Impaired Contact

    a. Demonstrate sufficient comfort level to interact with hearing and hearing-impaired staff within the limits of communication skills.

    b. Have knowledge of appropriate communication behaviors necessary to communicate effectively with hearing and hearing-impaired staff.

    c. Accept responsibility for acquiring a variety of communication skills.

The recommended strategies for supporting these outcomes included: managing for motivation; simulation activity; panel discussions on communication problems among hearing and hearing-impaired staff; cross-cultural training; role model training; effective communication techniques; change agent training; and advanced sign language classes. As a result of efforts such as these, the 1980 Communication Task Force expected to sensitize individuals throughout the NTID environment and achieve the following:

1. In large group meetings involving hearing and hearing-impaired individuals, all NTID faculty/staff in attendance will take appropriate steps to facilitate communication. (For example, sit so that hearing-impaired participants can see others with minimum interference; make certain that hearing-impaired participants are watching before speaking; use audio/visual aids effectively.)

2. In all meetings involving hearing and hearing-impaired individuals, NTID faculty/staff will practice the communication skills necessary for each individual in the meeting to follow the discussion or presentation. (For example, use simultaneous communication, enunciate words clearly and naturally, face the audience when speaking).

3. In meetings involving hearing and hearing-impaired individuals, the staff members conducting the meetings will take primary responsibility for choosing and preparing settings that facilitate communication, and will serve continuously to facilitate and encourage effective communication in the meeting.

4. In one-to-one interactions between hearing and hearing-impaired staff members, each individual will employ strategies to ensure that their own communication needs are met and that the needs of the other individual are satisfied.

The 1982 DCO report was based on a survey that addressed five areas of concern:

1. perceptions and misconceptions
2. determining communication needs
3. formal communication set-up
4. TDD and telephone use
5. informal communication set-up

The 1986 DCO recommendations re-affirmed the concerns raised in the earlier report by focusing on: telephone use, interpreting, meetings, informal informational network, social functions, and other.

Summary

Clearly, the areas of concern identified by all previous NTID Communication Task Forces remain pertinent today. Despite efforts by previous task forces to resolve long-standing issues related to communication at NTID, many problems continue to exist. The complexity of the issues and the strong feelings which emerge when discussing issues of communication have influenced how much change the Institute has actually undergone in this regard. In addition, none of the previous efforts provide guidance for the establishment of NTID expectations for sign language skill levels, the development of oral communication strategies and techniques, and related assessment procedures. The value of the recommendations and reports of previous efforts is that they document the long-standing need for improved communication among deaf and hearing people within the NTID environment.

SECTION IIC

FACULTY AND STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

Because the Institute's past experiences with investigating issues of communication and implementing change have often been seen as administrative needs and because many questions have recently emerged regarding communication in the tenure and promotion processes, the CTF was committed to involving the entire academic community in its deliberations prior to writing the first draft of its recommendations. Throughout the two years 1987-1989, selected faculty, administrators, students, and professional staff were invited to meet with the Task Force to share perspectives. Open forums were held to discuss the issues with the Task Force. From these conversations, the following themes emerged. For a full compilation of views expressed to the Task Force, see the Appendix.

1. Source of the problem

Administration, rather than faculty, is an underlying source of the problem of inadequate communication skills throughout the Institute. There has been a lack of guidance in the form of (a) policy ("requirements") as well as (b) modeling of effective communication by administrators themselves.

Decentralization of faculty development activities has been a contributing factor. When left up to individual faculty members, plans to focus on communication skills often receive little or no administrative support and are "forgotten" in favor of other, more closely monitored or tangibly rewarded activities.

2. Clarity, consistency, & effectiveness

Expectations for faculty should be stated in a policy that is clear, consistent, and effective. Faculty should be able to understand clearly from the policy exactly what is expected of them. The policy should be applied consistently across schools and divisions. The policy should effectively motivate all faculty to achieve by being realistic in its expectations and even-handed in its application to all faculty (whether or not they are tenured). It will be effective if it facilitates decision-making by tenure and promotion committees.

3. Definition of communication/Scope of the policy

It is difficult to define communication. There are also wide-ranging and opposing opinions as to the bounds that should be imposed for the purposes of this policy.

To some, communication cannot be separated from the purpose or setting in which it occurs (e.g., instruction). Communication is a transmission of ideas, not a demonstration of technique through a particular modality. One must evaluate achievement of the ends (Did the student understand?) rather than the means (Did the instructor use the correct handshape?). Communication is one's adaptability to the audience and the context, and requires a right attitude. It would allow for compensation of weak skills by use of other skills. It is not consistent with an evaluation of how accurately one sends or receives ASL.

To others, what we are really talking about is the ability to sign. Sign communication should be our sole concern.

4. Level of expectation

In an ideal setting, the policy would result in all faculty being able to reach all students, both expressively and receptively. However, the concept of having a uniform, required level of competence is not universally accepted. Though the ideal is to achieve excellence, the concept of a minimum level of competence has some advantages. It might also sponsor mediocrity and fail to encourage ongoing learning. Faculty do not want their communication to be prescribed by policy, yet do require that the policy be explicit about what is expected.

5. Documenting competence

There are potential dangers in using "tests". Tests represent a threatening situation to some faculty. The evaluation process must be positive. A process orientation may be useful. Pretenure review might help keep faculty on track and provide relevant and timely feedback in a positive manner.

Testing must be conducted in a context that is relevant to the goals of the evaluation (such as successful communication in the classroom). Tests are not real situations. However, tests can be useful in isolating and thereby measuring observable behaviors.

There must be alternatives offered for documenting competence; determination should not rest on a single test result. The policy should be flexible enough to respect individual differences among faculty. Evaluation might include a mix of formal and informal means. Specifically, the appropriateness of the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) for this purpose has been both supported and seriously questioned.

6. Selecting the evaluators

Chairpersons are inappropriate in this role. Peer review might be considered, but would require adequate training and must be focused. Confidentiality is a critical issue in peer review.

Evaluation by students is subject to interpretation. Students may or may not be "the experts". Students often focus on irrelevant factors in their evaluations. If student input is used, there must be careful preparation of materials and training of students in their use.

7. Role of motivation

Motivation to develop competence is a critical factor. The policy might consider both internal and external motivators, though the effectiveness of external motivators is unclear. Communication competence should be respected and, therefore, shown to be worth something tangible. Motivation is increased when a policy is reasonable in its expectations. Faculty need time -- within limits -- to develop their competence. Job function is a factor which might be considered. It is important to provide motivation to involve veteran faculty in ongoing learning.

Section III

ASSUMPTIONS AND PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

SECTION III

ASSUMPTIONS AND PRINCIPLES
UNDERLYING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Each member of the Task Force brought varying perspectives to its charge and different approaches and strategies for addressing the identified problem. As we delved into the intent of the charge and as we talked with faculty, students, and administrators, certain working premises began to take shape. Not surprisingly, these premises continued to be reformulated as the Task Force went about its investigation and as we clarified our own thinking about this complex issue. What resulted from our discussion was consensus on certain basic principles and assumptions that guided our thinking as we framed our recommendations. A general fundamental principle was that communication skill development goals will contribute toward the academic, career, and personal-social success of NTID students as indicated in the Institute Mission Statement. Below is a description of the specific guiding principles that formed the basis of our work.

1. **The recommended learning and assessment experiences will be designed to be an important part of a positive academic process.**

    The Communication Task Force recognizes that language learning, particularly second language learning, happens best when done in a positive, supportive, and nurturing environment. It also recognizes that attitudes toward learning a language and being members of a bicultural situation are important to the success of language development. Positive attitudes are developed, not because they are imposed on people, but because people have intrinsic reasons to develop them. The recommendations and guidelines of this Task Force are not intended as substitutes for individual faculty motivation, but as stimulants that will prompt all members of the Institute to achieve greater communication ability. They are also expected to clarify the communication needs that must be met to consider NTID a healthy language community.

    NTID should have, as its basic premise, the objective of helping all individuals become more integrated members of its language community. In order to provide this help, the Institute needs to convey the message that the recommendations of this Task Force are not based on a punitive approach, nor are they restricted to evaluation measures. Rather, the recommendations and the spirit and intent supporting the recommendations are based on the notion that building and maintaining a language community requires the facilitating of each person's development through both learning and evaluation experiences. To this end, the following assumptions and principles are noted:

    a. The Institute will demonstrate that it considers the faculty's success with communication to be an integral part of academic achievement.

    b. The desired communication learning and assessment experiences will be an ongoing process for all faculty.

    c. The learning and assessment process will be based on an academic approach that rewards faculty for the acquisition and maintenance of communication skill. The Institute will encourage in the most positive manner possible the skill development of faculty and the appreciation of the diverse situational, cultural, and affective aspects of communication and deafness.

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d. Involvement in learning activities related to communication skill development will be given priority attention by the Institute so as to maximize opportunities for maintaining a positive attitude and adequate energies for communication skill development.

2. Communication expectations will be realistic for faculty.

The Communication Task Force recognizes the challenges that learning a second language poses for adults, both deaf and hearing. The Institute must address any expectations for communication skill development in a realistic way. Becoming fluent is a life-long endeavor, yet we can set up guidelines that will help faculty achieve levels that will address the needs of NTID students, faculty, and staff to understand and be understood as they communicate in a variety of communication situations. We can foster an attitude that developing competence will be an ongoing activity for all faculty regardless of tenure status or rank. To this end, the following assumptions and principles are noted:

a. Communication skill development goals will assure equal opportunity for hearing and deaf NTID faculty and staff to function without communication barriers.

b. The Institute will not expect types or levels of communication competence that are inconsistent with current knowledge regarding the communication learning potential of deaf and hearing adults.

c. Communication training within the Institute will reflect the current knowledge of adult language teaching methodologies, learning styles and rates, and other influencing factors.

d. Expectations for communication skill development will be defined in terms of behaviors that can be observed and evaluated, whether formally or informally.

e. Expectations will also be accompanied by clearly stated and realistic timelines for achievement.

3. The term "communication" will have a focused meaning.

The term "communication" has been defined in many ways. In its most general sense, communication is a part of the entire list of professional expectations for promotion and tenure. In order to establish expectations for communication that can be considered separately from the many other activities that involve communication, this Task Force has found it necessary to describe communication with a focused meaning. To this end, the following assumptions and principles are noted:

a. For the purposes of establishing expectations for communication skill development, the meaning of "communication" will be restricted to expressive and receptive face-to-face communication performance applicable to one-to-one and group situations experienced by NTID faculty.

b. Accountability for the communication skills required in teaching, research, and other professional activities will not be included in the recommendations. However, it would be expected that as faculty members develop sign language and oral communication strategies and techniques, they would also learn ways to apply them to the full scope of their activities.

c. Although achieving sign language proficiency is a complex task, a specific level of sign language skill is to be achieved by all faculty, and the description of this expectation is to be specified for at least tenure and promotion. This level, although realistic, must be higher than just a minimum level of proficiency.

d. Oral aspects of expressive and receptive communication will be included as an important component of the expectations. Evidence of learning will be expected in documentation, but levels of expected achievement will not be specified.

4. The Institute will provide a systematic support process for the communication skill development of its faculty.

Although historically the Institute has provided support for developing sign language and other communication skills, specific expectations have never been consistently defined or implemented. There needs to be a formal Institute policy that states that ample and appropriate communication learning opportunities will be provided to faculty on a regular basis in order to achieve and maintain stated expectations for achievement. To this end, the following assumptions and principles are noted:

a. There will be formal Institute support for the provision of ample and appropriate communication learning opportunities within the Institute.

b. Communication learning opportunities will be provided without incurring excessive workload and without conflicting with other professional expectations.

c. Current NTID faculty development programs and approaches initially will be the foundation of the communication support process. In its ongoing review process, the Institute will rely heavily on the recommendations of faculty in determining the most successful and attractive learning programs.

d. The Institute will aid individual faculty in their communication skill development goals, plans, activities, and involvement by providing support through department chairpersons, Assistant/Associate Deans, and the Dean of NTID.

e. The Institute will provide a uniform framework to guide faculty in documenting communication skill development.

f. Documentation of communication achievements for faculty members will include a combination of a specified assessment tool required of all faculty and other faculty-selected methods for documenting achievement.

5. Student views will be given appropriate consideration in the implementation of the guidelines for faculty communication skill development.

The Communication Task Force included student members and also obtained student input in other forums. As the guidelines for faculty communication skill development are implemented, it is expected that the Institute will continue to solicit student views.

SECTION IV

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTITUTE EXPECTATIONS

A. Institute Expectations and Guidelines

B. Rationale for Recommendations

C. Interpreting the Intent and Spirit of the Recommendations

SECTION IVA

INSTITUTE EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES
FOR FACULTY COMMUNICATION SKILL DEVELOPMENT

To foster the opportunity for full and equal participation by all members of the NTID community, NTID faculty are required to develop:

A. Sign language skills (expressive and receptive)

The Institute expectation for NTID faculty is that they will strive for, achieve, and maintain the ability to communicate in sign language at a level of vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, comprehension, and fluency that allows faculty to participate effectively in communication situations applicable to work and social topics.

There are two acceptable categories of signers: (1) those who sign fluently in an English-like word order with or without voice, and (2) those who sign fluently in ASL. Signers who use an English-like word order are able to incorporate signing space, directionality, and other features which are characteristics of ASL vocabulary and its principles. The expected level also indicates strong sign reception abilities.

The rationale for sign communication recommendations is described in Section IVB.1.
The intent and spirit of these recommendations are described in Section IVC.1.

B. Oral communication strategies and techniques

The Institute expectation for NTID faculty is that they will strive for, achieve, and maintain the ability to use oral communication strategies and techniques. Oral communication is considered to be speech, with or without voice, used expressively and/or receptively, alone or to complement a message communicated with signs.

Although no skill level is specified for oral communication, faculty are expected to participate in learning activities whereby they may develop a knowledge of specific oral communication strategies and techniques and their applicability in communication situations.

A description of some of these strategies and techniques and the rationale for including them among faculty expectations are described in Section IVB.2. The intent and spirit of the oral component of the recommendations are described in Section IVC.2.

In consideration of the needs of the academic and social environment of NTID/RIT, the target goal for all communicators is an _advanced_ level of knowledge and abilities. In recommending this level, we establish the concept of a "mark to shoot at" which reflects the same spirit of lifelong learning that we hope for in our students. At the same time, the CTF realizes that there are practical matters in translating this ideal into a reality (see "Interpreting the Intent and Spirit of the Recommendations"); therefore, the guidelines specify a reasonable level of expected skill achievement as well as require that faculty demonstrate progress toward the target goal of an _advanced_ level of communication skill (see especially p. 30-31).

Faculty expectations for both the sign and oral components relate only to the acquisition of communication knowledge and abilities; there are no requirements for what communication mode(s) a faculty member must use in any given professional circumstance.

Stages, expectations, and documentation

While it is impossible to provide a "magic formula" for guaranteeing the attainment of communication skills, experience has shown that regular participation in a variety of learning activities and ongoing interaction will greatly enhance communication skill development. In light of the distinction we have made above between expectations and the target goal, individual faculty members are responsible for developing documentation to show good faith efforts in the following:

a. participation in learning activities and efforts to develop communication skills and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues, and

b. development of communication skill.

Recognizing that faculty move through different stages in their communication skill development, the expectations described below are seen as ongoing in nature. They are provided to give faculty a sense of forward movement in communication knowledge and performance from their pre-tenure period continuing through to the attainment of highest academic rank. Expectations and documentation to be prepared at each stage are outlined on the following pages.

STAGE	EXPECTATION	DOCUMENTATION:
Pre-tenure Leading to Tenure Review .	1. Participation in learning activities/ efforts to develop communication skills and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues	**One or more** of the following is expected to be included regularly in the annual appraisal process: 1. evidence of satisfactory completion of courses and seminars completed related to sign language, oral communication, cultural aspects, sensitivity, history, or similar topics 2. description of progress in courses and seminars (prepared by instructors and/or individual) 3. evidence of ongoing participation in activities involving deaf people 4. other (as determined by individual faculty member)
	2. Development of skill in sign language and oral communication strategies and techniques	**One or more** of the following is expected to be included regularly in the annual appraisal process: 1. observations by individuals qualified to assess sign language and oral communication strategies and techniques 2. student evaluation/feedback 3. Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) rating (General or ASL) 4. certification from RID, NAD, or other certification related to sign language or oral communication strategies and techniques 5. other (as determined by individual faculty member)
By Tenure Review Time	3. Achievement of Intermediate Plus level or higher sign language skill	In addition to the above, it is required that the following also be included in tenure documentation: Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) rating (General or ASL)

STAGE	EXPECTATION	DOCUMENTATION:

STAGE

Post-Tenure
Ongoing Expectations
for All Tenured Faculty

EXPECTATION

1. Ongoing participation in learning activities/efforts to maintain and improve communication skills and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues

DOCUMENTATION:

One or more of the following is expected to be included regularly in the annual appraisal process:

1. evidence of satisfactory completion of courses and seminars completed related to sign language, oral communication, cultural aspects, sensitivity, history, or similar topics

2. description of progress in courses and seminars (prepared by instructors and/or individual)

3. evidence of ongoing participation in activities involving deaf people

4. other (as determined by individual faculty member)

EXPECTATION

2. Development of skill in sign language (to the advanced level or higher) and development of oral communication strategies and techniques

DOCUMENTATION:

One or more of the following is expected to be included regularly in the annual appraisal process:

1. observations by individuals qualified to assess sign language and oral communication strategies and techniques

2. student evaluation/feedback

3. Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) rating (General or ASL)

4. certification from RID, NAD, or other certification related to sign language or oral communication strategies and techniques

5. other (as determined by individual faculty member)

STAGE	EXPECTATION	DOCUMENTATION:

Promotion Review Time

Promotion to
Assistant Professor

1. Participation in learning activities/efforts to develop communication skills and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues

One or more of the following is expected to be included regularly in the annual appraisal process:

1. evidence of satisfactory completion of courses and seminars completed related to sign language, oral communication, cultural aspects, sensitivity, history, or similar topics

2. description of progress in courses and seminars (prepared by instructors and/or individual)

3. evidence of ongoing participation in activities involving deaf people

4. other (as determined by individual faculty member)

2. Development of skill in sign language and oral communication strategies and techniques

One or more of the following is expected to be included regularly in the annual appraisal process:

1. observations by individuals qualified to assess sign language and oral communication strategies and techniques

2. student evaluation/feedback

3. Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) rating (General or ASL)

4. certification from RID, NAD, or other certification related to sign language or oral communication strategies and techniques

5. other (as determined by individual faculty member)

3. Achievement of Intermediate Plus level or higher sign language skill

In addition to the above, it is required that the following also be included in promotion documentation:

Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) rating (General or ASL)

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STAGE	EXPECTATION	DOCUMENTATION:
Promotion Review Time Promotion to Associate Professor or Professor	1. Persistence in seeking appropriate learning activities for maintaining and improving communication skills and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues	**One or more** of the following is expected to be included regularly in the annual appraisal process to show efforts toward improvement since last promotion: 1. evidence of satisfactory completion of courses and seminars completed related to sign language, oral communication, cultural aspects, sensitivity, history, or similar topics 2. description of progress in courses and seminars (prepared by instructors and/or individual) 3. evidence of ongoing participation in activities involving deaf people 4. other (as determined by individual faculty member)
	2. Development of skill in sign language and oral communication strategies and techniques	**One or more** of the following is expected to be included regularly in the annual appraisal process: 1. observations by individuals qualified to assess sign language and oral communication strategies and techniques 2. student evaluation/feedback 3. Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) rating (General or ASL) 4. certification from RID, NAD, or other certification related to sign language or oral communication strategies and techniques 5. other (as determined by individual faculty member)
	3. Achievement of Advanced level or higher sign language skill	In addition to the above, it is required that the following also be included in promotion documentation: Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) rating (General or ASL)

SECTION IVB

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Expectations related to sign language

The learning of sign language by NTID faculty, as with any language development, can be expected to occur in a variety of communication settings and may involve many different types of interactions. Recognizing the potential value of such diversity, sign language expectations for faculty are designed to promote involvement in a broad range of learning efforts. No single activity or method of sign language learning is prescribed in the expectations, although options are listed in the descriptions of suggested documentation.

Expectations for participation in learning activities are accompanied by an accountability for development of skill/achievement in sign language. Faculty are encouraged to document their sign language development using whatever means they choose that will best represent their abilities in as many types of communication situations as desired. For documenting achievement of the expected levels of sign language skill in one-to-one conversations involving familiar work and social topics, the SCPI is required at two academic stages: during review for tenure and during review for promotion to Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor.

The following reasons provide the basis for recommending the advanced level as the Institute target for all tenure-track faculty to strive for, achieve, and maintain:

- A recurring theme which emerged from faculty and student interviews was the need to establish a high (yet attainable) standard for communication using sign language. Competence beyond a minimum level was deemed not only desirable, but necessary, if we wished to provide deaf students with the best learning environment possible. This notion was also strongly expressed by deaf faculty who reminded us of their need for full participation in this academic community.

- The CTF is aware of the many controversial and complex issues related to achieving and maintaining the target goal of an advanced level of sign language skill. Some of these issues related to having one expectation level across different job functions, the amount of contact faculty have with students or other faculty, and so on. However, it was the collective judgment of the CTF that the needs of deaf students and deaf faculty take precedence and that one set of consistent expectations with guidelines for all tenure-track faculty be established. The CTF does not want to send the message that communication is more important for one job than another. Because skill level is related, in part, to the frequency of opportunity to use those skills, some faculty may need to design creative ways to get practice and continue their skill development. The CTF is recommending that there must be sufficient resources and mechanisms available to aid those faculty whose jobs do not put them in daily contact with deaf students, faculty, or staff. Recognizing the possibility of "extreme" exceptions to the guidelines, it is our recommendation that exceptionality be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Given this target for achievement, the following rationale provides the basis for recommending the SCPI as part of the assessment procedure:

- The Dean's charge to the CTF was to recommend a plan and framework for implementing consistent assessment and documentation across the Institute. In addition, numerous interviews with faculty supported this need to establish and implement a systematic, fair, and consistent process. The implications of this charge and input are that:

an evaluation procedure be selected that could be consistently and fairly applied to all faculty on an Institute-wide basis;

a target level of skill attainment be identified on which the judgment of peers and administrators could be based pertinent to the tenure review and promotion processes of an individual.

- In the review of the literature on sign language evaluation instruments, the Communication Task Force was able to identify the SCPI as an appropriate instrument for assessing sign language skills in one-to-one conversations. The CTF also recognized that the SCPI is currently the only procedure used extensively in a variety of educational and work situations to assess the sign language skills of adults.

- Many concerns have been raised by faculty about the limitations of the SCPI or of any instrument that tries to assess the complex nature of communicative competency in sign. Questions of sign performance variability which results from differences in situation and context, topic, audience, status, power, and so on were raised and discussed. The CTF's decision to recommend the SCPI does not mean that these concerns and questions were not seriously considered. Rather, we realized that the selection of this assessment instrument had to be made in conjunction with a very clear research and evaluation component (see "Evaluation and Research Considerations") so that these issues could be investigated on a long-term basis. Nonetheless, the confidence of the designers of the instrument as well as the experience of using the SCPI to date at NTID led us to adopt this tool to achieve the expressed need of fair, consistent, and systematic assessment measures.

The specific SCPI ratings selected by the CTF (Intermediate Plus for tenure review and promotion to Assistant Professor, and Advanced for promotion to senior ranks and as an expectation for all tenured faculty) were determined because of concerns about timelines for achievement of communication goals. This is particularly important for new faculty as they prepare their professional development plans and equally important for already tenured faculty seeking promotion. The CTF recommends formally established timelines so that (a) faculty are aware of what exactly is expected of them at tenure and promotion, and (b) all deaf and hearing people at NTID can have access to effective interaction.

The following rationale provides the basis for the recommended levels on the SCPI:

- Although there are many factors that contribute to successful second language learning (including amount of contact with users of the language, attitudes toward learning another language as well as attitudes toward the other culture, time on task, etc.), the CTF carefully reviewed the reported experience of the Sign Communication Department indicating that five years of continuous and sustained learning activities and regular daily contact with NTID students will enable faculty members to reach the Intermediate Plus level of sign language competency. These data, collected from both within NTID and from other institutions using the SCPI, support one of the principles adopted by the CTF – the communication expectations will be realistic to achieve (Section III). Videotapes reviewed by the CTF supported our decisions. At the same time, we realize that there are some unanswered questions regarding the established ratings. We have outlined some of these in the research and evaluation plan.

- While the achievement of an Intermediate Plus rating on the SCPI within the timelines for tenure review is seen by the CTF to be a realistic expectation, it is not considered to be an ultimate goal. The CTF is also interested in seeing that all academic faculty, including those already tenured and promoted, have sign language as an area of ongoing study. Development of communication skills is an ongoing process. This idea underlies the recommendation of an advanced level target for all faculty. The expectation is that all faculty will participate in ongoing learning activities which promote the development of communication skills. In both

the Assumptions and Principles (Section III) and in the Recommendations for Institute Expectations (Section IVA), the CTF emphasized two needs: (1) sustained and continuous study and involvement in learning activities throughout all the stages of our professional lives, and (2) targeting specific levels of sign language skills at the different stages.

- The CTF recognizes that most NTID faculty are native users of English and that their signing will most likely follow English-like word order. The recommendations for sign language achievement are not meant to negate this reality. There are two types of SCPI assessment: General and ASL. Some faculty may elect to be assessed for their ASL abilities and will take the ASL version of the SCPI. Other faculty may choose to be assessed on their use of signing in an English-like word order with the incorporation of ASL features and will take the General version of the SCPI. Acceptance of this type of signing is based on the assumption that those NTID students who are fluent in ASL will generally be able to adapt to an English-like word order if accompanied by ASL features. The expected levels can be achieved on either version of the SCPI. A description of all the SCPI ratings appears on the following page.

SIGN COMMUNICATION PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SCPI) RATING SCALE

RATINGS	FUNCTIONAL DESCRIPTORS
Superior Plus	Able to use signing fluently and accurately to discuss in depth a variety of social and work topics. All aspects of signing are native-like, including breadth of vocabulary and idioms, grammar, colloquialisms, accent/production, and cultural references.
Superior	Able to use sign vocabulary and grammar with native-like fluency and accuracy for all formal and informal social and work needs. Comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar are excellent.
Advanced Plus	Exhibits some superior level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Advanced	Able to sign with sufficient grammatical accuracy* and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on social and work topics. Conversation is generally fluent and shared. Comprehension is good, vocabulary is broad, grammar is good, and spontaneously elaborates on familiar topics when appropriate. Able to respond appropriately to unfamiliar topics.
Intermediate Plus	Exhibits some advanced level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Intermediate	Able to satisfy with some confidence routine social demands and work requirements. Demonstrates use of some sign grammatical features in connected discourse. Able to narrate and describe topics related to background, family, interests/hobbies, and work. Although some hesitations, fair to good control of everyday sign vocabulary is evident.
Survival Plus	Exhibits some intermediate level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Survival	Able to satisfy basic survival needs in social and/or work situations. Can ask and answer basic questions and has some skills in creating sign utterances based on learned/memorized sign vocabulary. Can get into, through, and out of simple survival situations.
Novice Plus	Exhibits some survival level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Novice	Basically limited to single sign utterances with vocabulary primarily related to everyday social, question/topic areas such as names of family members, basic objects, colors, numbers, names or weekdays, and time.
0	No functional skills in signing.

* Grammatical accuracy as defined by the SCPI does not mean the word order of a specific language, ASL or English. "Grammatical" elements important to sign communication include: use of space for objects/persons present and not present, use of directionality and pronoun incorporation with verbs, inflection of sign movements to include "adjective and adverb" information, number incorporation, use of the "time-line", use of movement and space for singular versus plural, use of appropriate non-manual features such as facial expression and body shifts, and use of classifiers.

Expectations related to oral communication

In its deliberation of the types of communication that should be included in its "Institute Expectations and Guidelines", the Communication Task Force recognized that oral strategies and techniques are critical to effective communication for many of our faculty, staff, and students who are deaf. This in no way reduces the importance of problems in the area of sign language, but in soliciting input from NTID students and faculty, the CTF learned that many of the faculty, including deaf members, felt a need to respond to the communication needs of those who express and receive information best when there is an oral component to the communication. It is this need that became the impetus for including oral communication strategies and techniques as an expectation for faculty.

Additionally, we acknowledged that faculty, regardless of hearing status, do not all exhibit optimal oral communication skills or demonstrate application of understandings of how to enhance oral communication (e.g., appropriately managing environmental factors).

- Definition: The CTF has broadly defined "oral communication" as:

    - Speech, with or without voice, used expressively and/or receptively, alone or to complement a message communicated with signs.

    The term "oral communication strategies and techniques" refers to a broad array of knowledge and skills. Some of these are the following:

    - understanding the specific components of speech for expression and reception, including voicing and visible mouth movements;

    - optimizing abilities to use these components to enhance intelligibility of the message;

    - knowledge of how to enhance the environment for oral communication, including adapting room lighting, attending to unwanted noise sources, and positioning the participants;

    - understanding the relation between hearing characteristics (e.g., degrees of hearing loss and anticipated performance capabilities) and listening requirements (e.g., assistive listening devices);

    - knowledge of how to adapt language structure and word choice, and skills in using these techniques;

    - using nonverbal communication and interaction dynamics to enhance the intelligible exchange of spoken information;

    - using pronunciation symbol systems and other written information to enhance speech expression and speech reception.

- Application of the Expectations to all Faculty: It was a basis of our recommendations that faculty should not impose their personal philosophies and choices on others, especially students, whether these philosophies are oriented manually or orally. We are in agreement with previous communication committees (see Section IIB) that all faculty should accept the responsibility for acquiring a variety of skills; that deaf faculty should acquire a knowledge of appropriate communication behaviors to communicate effectively with hearing individuals, as well as the reverse; and that all should develop an awareness of their own communication capabilities. Attainment of these goals will demonstrate a respect for the variety of needs and communication perspectives represented within the Institute.

- Documentation: The expectations related to oral communication have been stated as activities because assessment schemes parallel to those developed for sign language assessment have yet to be developed. Though a level of achievement cannot be specified at this time, faculty can be expected to avail themselves of instructional programs, information seminars, and application exercises that are currently available. Questions related to issues of assessment of oral communication have been included in the research and evaluation plan.

SECTION IVC

INTERPRETING THE INTENT AND SPIRIT
OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The expectations described in Section IVA are intended to foster a positive environment that will encourage all members of the NTID community to participate in an ongoing, collective communication improvement process. The CTF believes that implementation of the communication recommendations will raise the sensitivities of all faculty within the Institute regarding the need to upgrade communication skills, whether or not the motivation is a specific attainment such as tenure and promotion. We believe all faculty can be caught up in the atmosphere of striving toward improved communication abilities. To this end, the CTF developed its recommendations with a positive attitude toward growth and attainment. The recommendations do not include any statements of consequences for faculty who do not meet expectations, because the CTF wished to avoid a system that is potentially punitive and therefore counterproductive.

To attain a healthy, productive approach to the communication skill development of all NTID faculty, it is necessary that each faculty member and his/her chairperson develop an understanding of personal needs for communication growth and design a plan of specific actions to meet those needs. This may include increasing opportunities for communication coursework or other activities by decreasing other involvements. It is not the intention of the CTF to mandate any specific workload adjustments, but it is clear that each department chairperson has a responsibility for supporting the communication skill development of all faculty in that department. Several mechanisms for providing this support are suggested in Section VA, "Administrative Responsibilities". Such an involvement of chairpersons must occur in the context of a larger Institute support process, assuring a consistency among departments in providing faculty support and assuring that both chairpersons and faculty are provided an institutional context in which they can experience successful communication skill development.

Expectations for communication skill development and documentation are presented with a certain spirit of intent and an appreciation of some of the complexities involved in addressing this important issue while promoting a rich, rewarding sense of language community at NTID. The following comments are provided to assist faculty in interpreting the intent of the CTF recommendations.

1. Sign language expectations

While the establishment and implementation of Institute-wide expectations for sign language skill development may appear straightforward, such a task is complicated by a variety of factors, of which some of the more critical are:

- the need for consistent application of expectations to an Institute faculty numbering approximately 275;

- the fact that individuals vary in skill development, yet they will be facing peer review and administrative review pertinent to their sign language skill development at defined times for tenure, as well as varied times for promotion;

- the fact that any given individual's sign language skill development is influenced, in part, by a variety of factors such as: (1) amount of sustained interaction one has with students, faculty, and staff who are deaf; (2) the initiative one takes to create ongoing interaction opportunities with students, faculty, and staff who are deaf when one's job responsibilities do not normally or consistently involve such occurrences; (3) whether one joined the NTID community with previous experience and skill in communicating with people who are deaf, or with no relevant

communication experiences, skills, and knowledge; (4) affective variables such as attitudes and motivation; (5) physical variables; (6) age; (7) learning styles; and (8) training philosophy, methodology, and opportunities.

Given the above factors and the importance of the tenure review and promotion processes to both individuals and the Institute, a fair approach is to implement clearly defined expectations and guidelines that are understood by everyone concerned (i.e., individuals undergoing review and the faculty peers and administrators conducting the review). It is the position of this Communication Task Force that faculty peers and administrators need only address two questions in developing their judgments regarding an individual's sign language skills:

1. Has an individual fully met the Institute expectations?

2. If not, has the individual made acceptable progress toward the goal? It may be deemed appropriate in light of other qualifications and given extenuating circumstances, to accept other than the stated level at the time of the evaluation with the expectation that the individual will achieve that level of sign language in the reasonably near future.

   It is to be judged whether an individual's professional development effort up to the time of the review documents a sustained and good faith effort, as well as whether an individual's SCPI rating suggests he or she will meet the Institute's expectations.

The issue of sufficient documentation will probably always remain primarily a judgment call (e.g., has there been sustained participation and effort within a defined professional development plan; or spotty participation over time; or "last-minute" rush to attempt to meet expectations; etc.). Nevertheless, these judgments should be guided by the intent and spirit of the recommendations:

   If an individual does not attain the expected rating on the SCPI by the time of review for tenure/promotion, and if it is determined by those conducting the review that it is appropriate to assess progress rather than current level of achievement, the question arises, "What rating is considered to be close enough to indicate that, with additional sustained effort, he or she would reasonably be able to successfully attain the expected rating in the near future?"

We make the following recommendations for interpreting achievement of SCPI ratings:

SCPI RATING SCALE — Tenure Review and Promotion to Assistant Professor

Superior Plus Superior Advanced Plus Advanced	Meets Institute expectations.
Intermediate Plus	Acceptable if candidate shows good progress toward Advanced rating; must be accompanied by strong evidence of a variety of ongoing efforts to improve performance.
Intermediate	Generally not acceptable. (See pp. 29-30.)
Survival Plus Survival Novice Plus Novice 0	Not acceptable regardless of job responsibilities.

SCPI RATING SCALE – Promotion to Associate Professor and Professor, and
Ongoing Expectations for All Tenured Faculty

Superior Plus	
Superior	
Advanced Plus	
Advanced	Meets Institute expectations.

....

Intermediate Plus	Generally not acceptable unless candidate shows good progress toward Advanced rating; must be accompanied by strong evidence of a variety of ongoing efforts to improve performance.
Intermediate	Not acceptable.
Survival Plus	
Survival	
Novice Plus	
Novice	
0	

2. Oral communication expectations

In writing its recommendations for oral communication, the CTF was confronted with a variety of complicating factors, including:

- Oral communication has previously not been clearly defined for the purposes of determining and addressing faculty development needs.

- Institute support for the development of oral communication skills has not been consistently defined or implemented.

- Deaf faculty may not be users of oral communication by choice or necessity.

- The need for hearing and deaf faculty to optimize their oral communication skills has previously not been broadly acknowledged.

Given the factors described above, the CTF emphasizes:

- It is not the intent of the CTF recommendations to violate the rights of deaf or hearing faculty to select the communication modes, techniques, or adaptations that will best serve the needs of any given communication situation. The purpose of the recommendations is to promote skill development (what one can do) rather than to prescribe communication style (what one must do). It is the intent that, by developing a variety of skills, faculty will be equipped to adapt to a variety of communication situations.

- Recommendations related to oral strategies and techniques are not intended to be discriminatory. To meet the expectations related to oral communication skill for tenure and promotion, a faculty member need not demonstrate a specified level of oral communication performance. Rather, there must be sufficient documentation to demonstrate sustained, good faith efforts to acquire knowledge, understandings, and attitudes; and to determine the extent to which one's visual and auditory intelligibility can be optimally enhanced. These are considered to be attainable goals for all.

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- Oral communication skill development is intended to build on existing abilities. Administrators and faculty must consider individuals' capabilities, based on their previous experience and current functioning. It is not the intent of the recommendations to force anyone to pursue an unreasonable expectation (e.g., extended speech instruction for deaf faculty members for whom speech has not been part of their communication background). Fairness and consistency in this regard across the Institute are to be mediated and monitored administratively as outlined in Section VA — "Administrative Responsibilities".

Section V

Recommendations for Implementation

A. Administrative Responsibilities

B. Phase-In Considerations

C. Resource Considerations

D. Evaluation and Research Considerations

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

The CTF realizes that learning to use sign language and oral strategies and techniques as well as developing a knowledge base and cultural sensitivities requires individual commitment to learning in both formal and informal settings. We also realize that individuals are ultimately responsible for their own communication skill development. However, as faculty so clearly stated during the interview and feedback process, the success of the CTF recommendations rests on administrative support. This theme is re-emphasized in the "Assumptions and Principles Underlying the Recommendations". Administrative responsibility for facilitating communication skill development for all faculty is crucial. Academic administrators need to accept this responsibility seriously and provide leadership (exemplary and administrative) on both a short-term and long-term basis.

A variety of well-designed strategies for implementing administrative support must come from all levels of administration, led by the Dean. This administrative support to assist faculty in communication skill development is seen by the CTF as an investment by the Institute which will result in student satisfaction and retention, an enhanced learning environment, and a dynamic language community. Therefore, the CTF strongly believes that support must be built into the mission and budget planning process across schools/divisions and departments.

In order to assure consistent application of NTID expectations for communication skill, the Dean, in concert with the Assistant/Associate Deans and chairpersons in each school/division, will have to implement an Institute-wide system of support to address pre-tenure, tenure, post-tenure, and promotion expectations for all faculty members regardless of job function. Below are the CTF's recommendations in this regard:

1. Responsibilities of the Dean

   a. Dean's Office will provide in writing the expectations for communication skill to all new faculty in a letter of hire and to all faculty on a regular basis.

   b. The Dean will aid all academic administrators in their support of communication skill development for faculty through all stages (pre-tenure, tenure, post-tenure, and promotion). In the case of faculty in administrative positions, support will be the responsibility of their immediate supervisor or other appropriate administrator. Mechanisms can include:

      - POW process
      - communication skill development plan
      - observations, SCPI ratings, etc.
      - annual appraisal process
      - merit increment process
      - workload considerations

   c. The Dean needs to work closely with the Assistant and Associate Deans to assure that there is consistency of expectations, consistency of support in communication skill development, and fairness in application of the expectations for all faculty across the Institute.

   d. The Dean will monitor the peer review judgment process related to the communication skill criterion for tenure and promotion to assure consistent and equitable application of the recommendations across schools/divisions and tenure/promotion committees.

e. The Dean will initiate implementation of the guidelines, including the necessary administrative cooperation, phase-in activities, readiness of resources, and evaluation and research plan.

2. Responsibilities of other administrators

   a. Assistant and Associate Deans, with chairpersons, will review through the probationary period the individual progress of faculty seeking tenure.

   b. Assistant and Associate Deans, with chairpersons, will support communication skill development through all stages (pre-tenure, tenure, post-tenure, and promotion).

In enhancing communication skill development of new and veteran faculty, the CTF further emphasizes that the Institute, at all levels, must be firmly committed to making the recommendations a reality by allocating appropriate resources (time and money) to this effort. The CTF recommends the following:

1. All faculty should be fully supported in their communication skill development until they reach the Advanced level SCPI rating. The CTF feels strongly that a variety of creative strategies designed by faculty, chairpersons, and Assistant and Associate Deans for implementing full support can accomplish this goal and that planning should stem from the central administration.

2. Maintaining or furthering the advanced level target goal should be the professional development responsibility of each faculty member. However, it is clear that administrative support is also needed for faculty who have achieved the Advanced level on the SCPI. The Institute needs to assure that professional development strategies are available to faculty wishing to continue sign language study and communication skill development. Sign language study must be viewed as a legitimate use of professional development time and be accorded the same status as other faculty efforts.

SECTION VB

PHASE-IN CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout its deliberations, the CTF has sought to develop expectations and guidelines that would be fair to the faculty. This point is especially important when addressing the issue of implementing the recommendations. The CTF feels strongly that we must consider the needs of current faculty who may not have had optimal learning opportunities or support in the area of communication skill development. Transitions must be provided by the Institute for both new faculty and veteran faculty so that the implementation of the recommendations can be achieved in a positive manner.

New faculty being hired after the recommendations have been accepted will thus be provided with clear expectations and timelines. Our recommendation for all other faculty seeking tenure and promotion is that there be a three-year phase-in period. The phase-in period will begin immediately upon official approval of the recommendations, with full implementation to occur three years after that approval.

The CTF does not wish to delay the implementation of these recommendations, yet at the same time realizes that there must be some equity in how people are judged when new and more specific guidelines are used. A three-year phase-in period is not meant to imply an "escape" mechanism or a watering down of expectations for the next three years. The CTF views it as a period of transition in which the spirit of these guidelines will become more established and individuals will be provided with support as they continue to achieve their communication skill development goals.

In this regard, the CTF recommends the following:

- All faculty, during the phase-in period, are requested to take the SCPI on a voluntary basis. This includes all faculty who have not yet obtained an SCPI rating and those who have not updated their rating in the 3 years prior to the phase-in period. The purposes of this rating are:

  a. to provide confidential information to faculty members on their current level of performance,
  b. to aid in their establishing a communication skill development plan,
  c. to provide group data (which will protect the identity of individuals) necessary for carrying out the Institute's research plan.

- Newly-hired faculty (this pertains to faculty who are hired during the phase-in period as well as faculty hired after full implementation of the guidelines) will:

  a. participate fully in intensive new-staff training activities during their first year of hire;
  b. continue annual involvement in learning activities, following a communication skill development plan with the advice of their chairperson and a sign communication specialist, sought at the initiative of the faculty member;
  c. at the discretion of the faculty member, take the SCPI after 2 years of employment and at least once thereafter prior to tenure review or consideration for promotion;
  d. by tenure/promotion review time, obtain an SCPI rating to satisfy the documentation requirement.

- Current faculty (hired prior to the phase-in) working towards **Tenure**:

    1. To be reviewed for tenure <u>during</u> the phase-in

        During the phase-in period, faculty:

        a. will follow pre-existing tenure guidelines which will be used to judge attainment of qualifications in the area of communication according to current practice. [(According to the "RIT Tenure Policies and NTID Administrative Guidelines and Criteria for Tenure of Full-Time Faculty" modified May, 1990: "Competency should be demonstrated by substantial evidence obtained through items such as student and colleague evaluations, on-site observations, written communication and formal assessments of sign language and other communication competencies" (p. 6).]
        b. cannot be denied tenure solely on the basis of the new recommendations until the recommendations are fully implemented.

    2. To be reviewed for tenure <u>after</u> the phase-in

        During the phase-in period, faculty will:

        a. at the faculty member's discretion, take the SCPI to determine current level of sign skill;
        b. prepare a communication skill development plan, with the advice of their chairperson and a sign communication specialist, sought at the initiative of the faculty member;
        c. include in the communication skill development plan a review of attainments in the areas of knowledge and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues and in oral communication strategies and techniques;
        d. adjust their plan of work to reflect whatever priority level is necessary to accomplish expectations in the area of communication, as negotiated with their chairperson;
        e. by tenure review time, obtain an SCPI rating to satisfy the documentation requirement.

- <u>Current faculty (hired prior to the phase-in) working towards</u> **Promotion**:

    1. To be reviewed for promotion <u>during</u> the phase-in

        During the phase-in period, faculty:

        a. will follow pre-existing promotion guidelines which will be used to judge attainment of qualifications in the area of communication according to current practice. [According to NTID and RIT "Proposed Guidelines, Procedures, and Qualifications for Promotion in Rank of Full-Time Faculty" modified May, 1990: "The candidate describes and presents evidence of ability to communicate effectively with the hearing and the deaf in those modalities appropriate to NTID/RIT and one's primary area of job responsibility" (p. 6).]
        b. cannot be denied promotion solely on the basis of the new recommendations until the recommendations are fully implemented.

    2. To be reviewed for promotion <u>after</u> the phase-in

        During the phase-in period, faculty will:

        a. at the faculty member's discretion, take the SCPI to determine current level of sign skill;

b. prepare a communication skill development plan, with the advice of their chairperson and a sign communication specialist, sought at the initiative of the faculty member;

c. include in the communication skill development plan a review of attainments in the areas of knowledge and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues and in oral communication strategies and techniques;

d. adjust their plan of work to reflect whatever priority level is necessary to accomplish expectations in the area of communication, as negotiated with their chairperson;

e. by promotion review time, obtain an SCPI rating to satisfy documentation requirement.

- **Current tenured faculty not seeking promotion**

During the phase-in period, faculty will:

a. at the faculty member's discretion, take the SCPI to determine current level of sign skill;

b. prepare a communication skill development plan, with the advice of their chairperson and a sign communication specialist sought at the initiative of the faculty member;

c. include in the communication skill development plan a review of attainments in the areas of knowledge and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues and in oral communication strategies and techniques;

d. adjust their plan of work to reflect whatever priority level is necessary to accomplish expectations in the area of communication, as negotiated with their chairperson.

SECTION VC

RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout the investigative process, as well as in formulating the recommendations, the CTF realized that the Institute expectations and guidelines had to be achievable within current and future resources. The CTF believes it is crucial that the Institute provide well-developed training opportunities that will facilitate faculty development in communication skill and will enable individuals to attain their highest goals. Two issues seem pertinent regarding resources. One is the adequacy of current training opportunities and the second is the management of the SCPI.

Training Opportunities

From its inception, NTID has provided sign language training to new and veteran faculty. Training opportunities have changed throughout this time to reflect changing needs of both students and faculty. Knowledge of sign language and knowledge about approaches used in teaching sign language to adults have also influenced these changes. Currently, formal programs in sign language training are offered through the Sign Communication Department. Learning experiences in sign language have also been developed through the Office of Faculty Development, the Department of Support Service Education, the College of Liberal Arts, and the College of Continuing Education.

In all of these programs, efforts have been made to offer different types of experiences to faculty (formal courses, workshops/seminars, individual tutoring, and so on). Thus, in implementing the recommendations, the Institute has programs to call upon for faculty desiring sign language training.

Questions have been raised throughout our investigation about the adequacy of the training resources and the appropriateness and effectiveness of current programs. We cannot know at this time if sign language training resources are enough or if all faculty who seek training will be given appropriate opportunities. We also cannot address the appropriateness or effectiveness of such programs. We do expect all those involved in any training effort to honor the diversity of needs of faculty-as-learners and to maintain an objective of meeting the diversity of communication modes represented among NTID students. This will require a balanced perspective by those involved in training efforts that supports the Institute philosophy of eclecticism. It may mean that communication skill instructors will have to make a special effort to identify their techniques (e.g., eliminating voice during receptive practice) as appropriate for communication skill building and not necessarily as a communication strategy with NTID students. These issues need to be investigated both within the research and evaluation plan (Section VD) recommended by the CTF and administratively through the Dean's Office. These issues and others raised by faculty must be openly discussed and appropriate changes made if the recommendations herein are to be achieved.

Other areas needing additional resource allocation include the development of learning opportunities for faculty in simultaneous communication and oral communication strategies and techniques which are not currently offered regularly or effectively incorporated into communication skill development plans for faculty. Although some work is being done in this regard, the CTF recommends that these areas be examined and courses/workshops/seminars in (a) simultaneous communication and (b) oral communication strategies and techniques be made available on a regular basis to faculty at various levels of sign language skill.

Because adequacy of training opportunities is crucial to the success of the guidelines, the CTF recommends establishing regular program review of this effort. This review should be conducted jointly by faculty and administrators to determine periodically the adequacy and efficacy of communication training resources and to identify ongoing needs.

Management of the SCPI

Because the SCPI will be a required assessment for all faculty seeking tenure and promotion, it is important that the administration of the SCPI be addressed.

The CTF believes that the management of this evaluation procedure be separated from any current department involved in the teaching of sign language. We recommend that an SCPI Office be created to coordinate, manage, and evaluate activities related to administering the SCPI. Furthermore, this SCPI Office should be housed in a unit within Career Development Programs (but not within the Sign Communication Department) that will facilitate appropriate cooperative efforts to further the research and evaluation plan regarding the SCPI.

The CTF stresses that this Office must represent in good faith the best interests of NTID as well as all of its faculty and students. It is expected that this Office, its personnel and operations, will aid in developing an environment conducive to establishing the positive academic process and support referred to in the principles. This Office must not be subject to any one perspective but will represent all interdivisional perspectives. Furthermore, this Office will operate to support the Institute research and evaluation plan. If deemed appropriate, this Office will incorporate research and evaluation findings into its activities.

One of the responsibilities of the Office will be to ensure that faculty are aware of their rights within the process (e.g. to request a re-interview with a different interviewer or to request a re-rating with a different rating team). It is recommended that the process be expanded to include a "warm-up" or familiarization period prior to the actual interview.

The number of raters for this assessment procedure and the time commitment required of them will be substantial. The CTF believes that a pool of raters should be recruited from within NTID. Criteria to become an SCPI rater (rating of at least Advanced Plus on the SCPI and satisfactory completion of training) have already been established. The Task Force is satisfied with the criteria and recommends that these criteria be accepted. Furthermore, the CTF recommends that at least one deaf person (out of three raters) be included in each and every rating process. Moreover, it must be stressed that all raters will be expected to maintain professionalism and confidentiality on all matters related to achievement of communication expectations.

Support to establish and train a pool of raters will be necessary because SCPI raters will be accepting responsibility that will be of importance to NTID. We recommend that the Dean in concert with the Assistant and Associate Deans recognize the raters as individuals providing valuable service to NTID and that their service be reflected as part of their plan of work. The Assistant and Associate Deans will work with the SCPI Office to develop and schedule this pool of trained raters.

The effectiveness of the SCPI Office and other issues that may arise from the CTF recommendations related to the SCPI will be researched and evaluated as indicated in Section VD.

SECTION VD

EVALUATION AND RESEARCH CONSIDERATIONS

While the data available to date on the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) have provided guidance in selecting the recommended expectations for tenure and promotion, important questions still need to be examined. Because taking the SCPI has been voluntary up to now, there may be some self-selection bias in the data currently available. Other limitations also exist with the current data since its intent was never to answer questions pertinent to implementing an Institute standard for sign language.

Therefore, it is recommended that a research and evaluation plan be simultaneously established with the implementation of the recommended "Institute Expectations and Guidelines for Communication...." It is suggested that this plan include mechanisms to:

- develop an Institute-wide data base for the SCPI inclusive of all ranked faculty in tenure line positions and examine SCPI ratings related to a variety of factors:

    - number of years at NTID
    - number and frequency of courses taken in relation to progress in improving SCPI ratings type and frequency of other learning activities/involvement
    - faculty rank
    - type of job position
    - student evaluation and feedback data
    - other factors as identified

- address questions and issues important to both faculty and administrators.

By maintaining an on-going data base on the "Institute Expectations and Guidelines for Communication...", it will be possible in the future to answer questions such as:

1. What is the overall profile of the entire NTID faculty pertinent to the "Institute Expectations and Guidelines for Communication..."?

2. How does a given individual compare to the entire faculty (or specific categories of faculty defined by rank, time at NTID, etc.) pertinent to the "Institute Expectations and Guidelines for Communication..."?

3. What is the test-retest, inter-rater, and intra-rater reliability of the SCPI?

4. What is the relation between expected ratings on the SCPI and functional communication performance as measured in other ways?

5. What is the effectiveness of the training and assessment efforts on development of sign language skill and oral communication strategies and techniques, including operation of the SCPI Office?

6. Is attainment beyond the Advanced level on the SCPI reasonable?

7. How can we assess attainment of oral communication strategies and techniques? Can level of attainment be addressed? Can a specific level be recommended?

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8. What other assessment tools can be developed to evaluate sign language skills in contexts such as the classroom, group meetings, etc.?

Furthermore, an ongoing data base and research and evaluation plan would be invaluable in reviewing the "Institute Expectations and Guidelines for Communication . . ." to determine if any refinements or adjustments need to be made. The entire set of guidelines will be subject to regular "program review" every five years.

Ensuring that this type of research and evaluation plan is conducted will be the responsibility of the Assistant Dean, Division of Communication Programs, in concert with the Dean of NTID.

SECTION VI

CONSIDERATIONS FOR NON-TENURE-TRACK FACULTY AND STAFF

SECTION VI

CONSIDERATIONS FOR
NON-TENURE-TRACK FACULTY
AND STAFF

Ideally, the Institute should have the same communication expectations for all faculty and staff so that no one at NTID would suffer because of inequities in communication standards. However, this is difficult to enforce because those who teach at NTID vary widely in their professional status and contractual arrangements.

NTID has many visiting and permanent part-time faculty who are not directly affected by the recommendations of the CTF regarding tenure and promotion. These faculty members are contributing in significant ways to the education of deaf students at NTID. The Institute, recognizing the importance of the work of these faculty, has been supporting development of sign language skills and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues. This support, however, must be dramatically expanded in order to enable non-tenure-track faculty to have similar levels of skill in sign language as their tenure-track colleagues and must also include opportunities to develop oral communication strategies and techniques. The CTF, therefore, has developed recommendations for visiting and permanent part-time faculty. Adjunct faculty are not included in this category. The CTF recommends special study of adjunct faculty to determine appropriate communication expectations and learning opportunities.

Although the CTFs charge was to focus solely on communication for faculty, it is our strong feeling that all professional and general staff, regardless of job responsibility, be given sufficient and appropriate opportunities to reach communication goals. There are many members of the NTID community with professional and general staff status involved in direct teaching and tutoring of deaf students either on a full-time or part-time basis. In its deliberations on classroom communication, the CTF learned of student complaints about the communication abilities of some of their instructors, but it was not always clear how many complaints applied to tenure-track faculty. Students do not always distinguish between tenure-track, visiting, adjunct, or part-time faculty, or even between faculty and staff. CTF recommendations for faculty have emphasized repeatedly the importance of communication competence in instructional roles. It is seen as vital that communication recommendations are also developed for all professional and general staff involved in teaching. Further investigation into student satisfaction levels with staff communication skills is recommended to help determine the needs of this group of instructors.

The CTF realizes that many professional and general staff are not directly involved in instruction, but have substantial student contact and/or interaction with deaf faculty and staff and feel strongly about developing their communication skill. This need has led the CTF to recommend that this group also be provided appropriate communication development opportunities.

The following recommendations have been developed by the CTF for the specified groups involved. Because of the varying contractual arrangements of these individuals, no specific level or timeline can be established by the CTF.

Recommendations for Visiting and Permanent Part-time Faculty

- Visiting faculty who receive renewable contracts, as well as permanent part-time faculty, are expected to show evidence of the following:

  - persistence in seeking appropriate learning activities for maintaining and improving communication skill, and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues
  - development of sign language skills and oral communication strategies and techniques

  The same kind of documentation is to be provided as outlined for tenure-track faculty in these areas of expectation.

In order to enable non-tenure-track faculty to achieve these goals, it is important to recommend specific administrative mechanisms. These are:

- The Dean's office will provide in writing expectations for communication skill development to all new and veteran visiting and permanent part-time faculty.

- Chairpersons will support the communication skill development of visiting and permanent part-time faculty through such mechanisms as:

  - compensated time
  - salary increments
  - workload considerations
  - communication skill development plan
  - periodic review of SCPI ratings

Recommendation for Adjunct Faculty

Because the issues surrounding the use of adjunct faculty are so complex, the CTF recognizes that they may need to be provided with unique mechanisms to enable them to reach the communication levels recommended for tenure-track faculty. The CTF recommends that the needs of adjunct faculty be investigated further by the Dean's Office. The CTF also recommends that consideration be given to the employment of interpreters for classes taught by adjunct faculty who work full-time in another organization and do not possess sufficient sign language skill to meet the classroom standards established for other faculty.

Recommendations for Professional and General Staff Involved in Teaching

- Professional and general staff involved in teaching are expected to show evidence of the following:

  - persistence in seeking appropriate learning activities for maintaining and improving communication skill and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues
  - development of sign language skills and oral communication strategies and techniques

  The same kind of documentation is to be provided as outlined for tenure-track faculty in these areas of expectation.

In order to enable professional and general staff involved in teaching to achieve these goals, it is important to recommend specific administrative mechanisms. These are:

- The Dean's Office will provide in writing expectations for communication skill development to all new and veteran professional and general staff involved in teaching.

- Chairpersons will support the communication skill development of professional and general staff involved in teaching through such mechanisms as:

  > compensated time
  > salary increments
  > workload considerations
  > communication skill development plan
  > periodic review of SCPI ratings

Because the roles of professional and general staff involved in teaching differ from those of faculty and are so variable, the CTF also recommends that the communication needs of this group be further investigated by the Dean's Office.

Recommendation for Professional and General Staff Not Involved in Teaching

Recognizing that current policies may vary from department to department, the CTF recommends that all staff not directly involved in teaching also be expected to participate in activities/efforts to develop communication skills and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues on an on-going basis. Because the circumstances of professional and general staff are so variable, the CTF recommends that their needs be investigated further by the Dean's Office.