Faculty Session 4: Communication 2025 and Beyond
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>> Jess La Sala: If I can have everyone's attention, please. Can I have everyone's attention?

Happy May. This is fantastic. The flowers are blooming. Things are popping. Finally, we're starting to see some color. It's great to see. Quite frankly, this is my favorite time of the season. I don't necessarily like all of the rain and the worms and all that nasty stuff.

To get us together today, this is our 4th and final meeting of this program. Can we see the agenda, please? You know, we're going to briefly, based on previous meetings, we're going to modify the agenda just a teeny bit, but this is what we're going to go with today.

We're going to talk about the ASL Assessment project. The expectations for the NTID faculty POW. We'll do a summation of the communication workshops that have already happened, and then we'll open it up for discussion. Specifically, communication from the task force and any feedback or input from the audience. So, that's the plan for this morning.

It'll be about 20 minutes of us talking and then we'll turn it up over to the audience. I do want to add one thing here, one of the points, Hopefully we'll get through the first three bullet points pretty quick. Just sum up all of the information that has been done thus far. Really, I want to be able to focus on the discussion point because that's really going to be an opportunity for you to share your perspectives and ideas for fall semester.

I do have some good news. What I already know, you know, some things I can't share of course. But I do want to announce two faculty who have been promoted are here. Jason! Jason. Yay. Fantastic. Welcome, welcome.

~~And, there are two new professors.~~ 'm not at liberty to announce the others who recieved promotion as I am not sure if they know yet. PJ. PJ. Excellent. Just found out. So we're both very excited for both of those individuals to be joining with this group here. This is fantastic. Gary, I'll turn it over to you.

>> Gary Behm: All right. Good morning, everyone. Happy Friday. Happy Friday. Hats off to both of you, PJ and Jason. This is fantastic to hear. So with regards to the ASL assessment project, really that has been something that we have been wanting to establish, specifically with — and then in a combination with ASL assessment tools, try to determine how we can use and leverage both of those.

But after much discussion, we realize at this budget level we have decided to put a pin in that just for now. It will be, you know, something that comes up again when the budget is a little bit more fixed and stabilized. Right now, we just want, we don't want to muddy the waters with everything else that we're trying to do. So, we're basically just putting a pin in that. And I just wanted to let you know and give you that update.

>> Matt Lynn: So, for the last workshop, I was supposed to discuss the faculty POW. The workload guidelines document emphasizes each faculty member's work responsibilities. You've seen this before, correct? Yes,, I saw a lot of yeses and affirmations. That's great because this is the guidelines for faculty.

I have one short and sweet point. Everyone has some percentage of communication responsibility, specifically as an NTID instructor, you know NTID. We are different. We have communication and diversity within our POW as compared to other RIT colleges. They do not have that. That is unique for us. And if you don't know where to find these guidelines, please do reach out to me, Jess or Gary, or your department chair. I'll be more than happy to find that for you or send it along.

So, the guidelines that apply everyone — but even if you have a high SLPI rating does that mean you're done? No, really, the goal is to continually improve and grow your skills in every aspect of this communication as our priority. You know, it could be that you make your online PowerPoints better or develop an opportunity or strategy for online presentations, it could be focused on your English skills.

You know, if you can speak, figuring out how to improve your spoken communication style, that could ultimately meet the needs of the students better. And it's really important, we know that we have students that have a variety of communication needs. Part of my responsibility is related to curriculum development. I review the undergraduate bulletin for NTID and that's a yearly publication.

So I've had to go through it again and it has several paragraphs that indicate students can request access services. That has not changed and it's not going to change. Nothing is going to change from that aspect, from these workshops. Just so you are aware.

Your POW can include a variety of activities and goals to focus your development on. These are two direct quotes that we have taken from the guidelines, I'll give you a moment to read them. As for communication components in the POWs, they are individualized for each faculty member. Really the goal is to focus on your communication development skills, to individualize it, and to really make your presentation mode, your approach, accessible for everyone.

You know, because your targets and your goals are not going to be the same as everyone else's. You know, obviously, I know I'm getting a little preachy right now, but every year at the end of our academic year, the opportunity to sit back and reflect on your communication styles, what did you accomplish? Where can you improve? To be able to identify and put down both your successes and your opportunities for improvement, and then you said you have that discussion with your supervisor and how to build that into your POW.

These are some of the conversation guidelines that you can have while you're sitting down with your supervisor, you know, trying to brainstorm what you can do to potentially work on improving your communication.

You know, if your goal is to be promoted or to achieve tenure, you're going to have a specific SLPI score that you need to achieve. So either you can satisfy that or continue to work towards it. Regarding student evaluations. Want to oversee it and we will receive some of their comments. It could be the kind of thing that if you receive feedback that your student says, well this is the kind of thing I'd like my teacher to work on, then focus on that. Or also your own personal self-reflection on what you can improve. Put that down and then check with your department chair.

And hopefully throughout the year, you know, you'll be able to invite your department chair to go into your classroom and do a live observation. That way they can see how it's going too, how you and the students interact and how the students interact with themselves, each other.

I honestly also recommend that you invite your peers and your colleagues, maybe from a different department too you know, to check things out and to make notes on their experiences and to share their perspectives to say, hey you know what, you're doing this really great. And these are the kind of things that you can do to improve. You know, for a POW, that's just a document to say I'm going to focus on some personal growth, and really be able to prepare you and hopefully you've already developed your own personal POW for this coming year.

If you have already developed your AY 25-26 POW, that's fantastic. But the policy allows everyone to modify the POW during the year. It's a living document. You know, it's not something that is created and fixed. You can change that. You know, if something changes or if something comes to mind, or if you have a new goal, great. Your department chair informs you have something that you have been tasked with. You know you want your POW to reflect the dynamics of your work process and your communication goals.

So, now, really this 4th workshop is, you know, completes this program. Really, the goal is, these are some of the summaries of what the workshops have been thus far. So, we'll give everyone an opportunity to, you know, really refine or to edit or seek expansion or clarification. We do not want any misunderstandings of this process.

You know, this is really obvious, but really the overall point is that everyone is responsible for communication and to become a better communicator through the tools of a POW. Through the tools of an appraisal and interacting with their peers and their department chairs.

Really, as much as possible in the NTID classroom, our goal is to provide direct instruction. Does that mean that no access services are provided? No, that's not the case. But our goal is to be able to meet the needs of the student one-on-one, and have that direct communication and that direct relationship.

You know, of course there's going to be situations where there's a need for access services in the classroom, and that's fine. You know, for example, DLS. You know, some of the instructors are teaching College of Liberal Arts courses. There's some deaf students, hearing students mixed in and they need to provide access services in that classroom because it's such a mixed environment.

Some students maybe have a DSA, Disability Services Agreement and that will require access services to be provided. It's always going to be the case, that's not going to change. But the really motivation and inspiration, why we want to be able to provide the instruction is to empower the students to help themselves to become better communicators, to grow their confidence because sometimes when the students arrive here, they are not confident in their communication skills, you know?

So really anything that we can do to model those behaviors for them is beneficial. You know it's not going to be perfect every time, but it's always going to be helpful. You know, because as you grow in those communication skills, your language is going to change, and that ultimately is the goal.

We are really unique and by unique I mean in capital letters unique. We have federal laws that affect our place. In general, the people of the United States trust us to empower, support, and help deaf and hard of hearing students thrive in the workplace. That is our goal, to prepare them for their careers and that is why we get an allotment a lot of funding from the federal government every year to help empower and educate deaf and hard of hearing students.

The federal government trusts us with the students and so we want to make sure that we're trying to meet this goal as much as we can. So regarding the last point, there have been a lot of changes at the federal level in recent years.

There are two big things that we know and two big things we don't know. So for our financial year, it's still possible for the President as well as Congress to decrease or make some cuts on our budget. That has not yet been decided. That's something that may still be coming. The President and Congress also have not yet determined the budget for the fiscal year 2026.

So we don't know how this is going to affect us and we need to take care of our funding and use our money wisely in every way possible. So communication obviously, but in other ways as well.

Regarding the first point. We're not going to be requiring simultaneous communication. I think some people thought that during the first panel. They were emphasizing the use of SimCom in the classroom. SimCom is a tool. Some people can use SimCom well. If SimCom benefits students in the classroom, that's fantastic. It's fine to use that tool with specific students.

Does it mean that you use it every day and it applies to all situations and students? No. But it is up to you. Use your discretion. Make sure you follow what you think students need and use those tools appropriately. And I've already mentioned this, but I want to — I think it is worth re-emphasizing.

Just because we're receiving budget cuts doesn't mean that we need to cut NTID access services in the classroom. We advertise access services for students who need access services in the classroom, and so budgetary cuts are not a reason for declining or not submitting those.

Second point and third point are somewhat similar. The second point is more about the mainstream environment over at RIT. The third point is more about in the NTID classroom. But, regardless, both include the words not.

Next, the fourth point. DAS knows that NTID faculty have communication responsibilities. So there are some expectations if students feel like they need to request Access services in the classroom here at NTID. Yes.

We want to make sure that they're also using their resources wisely so they may seek clarification. Why do we need an interpreter? Might be a question they ask. Why do we need a captionist? Have that discussion with them and clarify and make sure everyone is on the same page.

In terms of the specific student needs in the classroom. So if DAS has resources, you know they should be good. DAS will provide them.

So this is the last point from the summary today. Because we've already discussed the results from the task force and have set up a task force for this coming fall semester, we, the three of us plus the NFC. Want to make sure that we have everything set for next fall semester. What should our goals be? So we would invite all of you up to come and share your ideas. We'll document those and discuss that with NFC.

The shared governance will be discussed with Gary and so I'll let you guys think a little bit before you come up, but please raise your hand. We'll invite you to come up and share your feedback with us. Sorry, give me one moment. I was thinking about.

We have captions here, so we'll use that to make our list, to document all the feedback.

>> Jess La Sala: And so the interpreters have to make sure that they are speaking the question or the feedback out loud so that the captioners can notate this in their notes. So come on up. It's your turn to share.

>> Matt Lynn: That's all right. So what did you guys, what did you guys think about the task force? Maybe you can share things about that. Come on up.

>> Matthew Annis: An audience member saying hello. Happy Friday. Oh, just for clarification. I am a faculty member in DLS and I think this is my fifth year here. So anyway. We'd like to have someone from each department, represent their department on the task force. So, someone, admin, access services, counseling, academic services, but we'd also like students to be involved as well, to be a part of these discussions so that we can figure out what is actually best for communication in the classroom? What instruction should look like, what direct instruction looks like.

What resources we can help provide and how we can better design classroom instruction for the students so we need to partner and work as a community. I think that concept is really important that we work as a community and so that we support one another and really make sure the task force is as successful as possible.

>> Jess La Sala: We've seen a lot of applause in the audience. Why don't you stand over here and then if anyone is over here, I'll copy sign, on the side of the stage.

>> Matt Lynn: Yeah. So we were thinking, you know, people could come up, but also sometimes. We're not really sure how many folks in NTID fully understand the different classroom environments. So as an example, we have MSSE and from the beginning of the program they require students to use sign language in the classroom. That means they almost never request access services in their classes.

The reason being is because they're supposed to become teachers for deaf and hard of hearing students, so obviously they should be signing. Now, the interpreting program is also a little bit different. Yes, they are required to have some basic signing skills as freshmen, but, I don't think they're required to have full fluency. And I see Jason Listman saying, yes, that's true, and there's laughter from the audience.

You know, in the technology classrooms, we don't require deaf or hard of hearing students to know sign language. So in the other technical classrooms, language is going to be highly varied. Some students will be extremely fluent in sign language and then others will rely solely on spoken language.

So, being able to describe each of the different environments in NTID, and maybe help other folks understand what those environments might look like would be beneficial. I'm seeing lots of yeses from the audience. It looks like we've got a few people with their hands up. We're going to have one person come up next.

>> Marriner Merrill: Great, so, I have two thoughts. First of all, so there was something about not requesting access services, but that's something that we obviously do already. So when students are cross registered, they often will ask, Before they're cross registered, they may often ask if they are allowed to have an interpreter in the classroom.

And I'm not really sure how to answer that. So I think the task force, their work was really great for helping me better understand this, to understand reality. What the numbers look like, especially in terms of budgetary restrictions. But I think, you know, in an ideal situation, it would be wonderful to have interpreters in every classroom.

But we don't live in an ideal world. So, I think we're predicting that it's going to look little bit worse in the future, right? And Matt and Jess are shaking their heads. No. Shrugging. You know, that's not something that we're able to answer.

>> Matt Lynn: Yep. So sometimes when Republicans are in charge, they give us more money than we were expecting. But sometimes it does happen.

>> Marriner Merrill:
I worked in the Navy for like 13 years, and for those 13 years I was in the Navy, we really struggled to figure out who was responsible for what was considered a reasonable accommodation. So I talked with my commanding officer and, you know, as an intern, we had to figure out what looks like, and we modeled things from here. So with what? The instructors here, the faculty members here, they would just say, oh, well, that's DAS's responsibility. And so I would like for the task force to consider that in the future as well.

>> Matt Lynn: Sure. Oh, that's tough. Those are two tough questions. First and foremost, you're absolutely right. Is DAS able to cover 100% of the requests? No, it's not. We've had discussions with Brittany Taylor and it is not possible to cover in full every single request that is made, you know, and it's just impossible. So that means DAS sometimes has to make decisions regarding prioritization of the request.

You know, because of the deadlines and the guidelines, some of these may affect the prioritization of these class requests. I'm not saying no, you can't go and request, but it is all contingent on available resources too. There's a few other hands up. I think this person here is first and that person is second. Is it related to the most recent comments or new comments?

>> Erin Finton: Yes, it's related to the most recent comment.

>> Matt Lynn: Yeah, absolutely. Come on up. Yep, this person will be first.

>> Erin Finton: I teach the more core levels. You know, when we're talking about SimCom, I recognize that sometimes that meets needs. And sometimes it doesn't, but in practice. If I'm working with an oral student, you know, what is the curriculum deeming is necessary for them?

I mean, is it the kind of thing that I have to ask permission? I mean, it depends on the individual, of course, because, yes, I have the ability to speak. So does that mean a request will be turned down from DAS if they need that type of access, if that's the request service that they're requesting? And so we, I think we need to determine some more criteria and I think there's a communication concern about SimCom and if an interpreter is, you know, requested to been denied, you know, is it the kind of thing where ultimately I am then expected to SimCom in my classroom? Thank you for the feedback.

>> Matt Lynn: Yeah, I definitely think that's something that the task force can address that and include in some of their discussions. I think that would be very helpful.

>> Erin Finton: So what does that then mean for the fall? You know, we're in the process of setting up the task force for this fall. But if this happens in a semester. There could potentially be a student or many students who will request access services for the classrooms. You know, it's a matter of, you know, is this going to impact the decision making process because we're in the process of setting up the task force and working through this. At the same time as fall semester will be happening, those requests will be coming in.

>> Matt Lynn: Yeah. That's why we're having some of these discussions right now. We don't have a set plan, but the task force will hopefully be able to resolve and address some of those questions. That is that part of their charge. The criteria of how some of these decisions are made, how resources allocated or available. You know, for example, the classes Monday Wednesday or Tuesday Thursday that really does have a significant impact on availability of interpreting and captioning and note taking support.

Sometimes students ultimately will have to move to a different section just to meet the communication needs or provide that service that they are needing. You know, that's the kind of thing that you work with academic chair or their advisor to really partner and resolve some of those issues. But, yes, those all have to be included in the document addressed with Task Force. Gary wants to add to Matt's response.

>> Gary Behm: So I think that's a really great point. That is something that we want to address this fall. We want to make sure that we respect folks who are involved in that. But yes, we don't want to repeat the same issues that people have been struggling with.

I understand that this is something that a lot of people struggle with and it's come up in previous meetings. So it's not a thing that I look forward to happening, but in the long term, you know, that is something that we want to address, but at the same time, what can we do now, especially with fall coming up when the task force not being able to address that until then. Is Brittany Taylor here? I think hopefully she's here. So she is. So that is something that is on her radar now.

I think it is a big deal, but it's not something that's going to be solved instantaneously. So once again, the task force is going to be designing in the future, but this is something that we need to begin collaboration across the NTID community. With DAS, etc. There was another audience member who made a point previously and I think that is correct. The spirit of NTID is collaboration and we need to make sure that we are reaching across departments.

Let's see. I think Billy, he's the one with the cowboy hat on. He self-identified. We have to be proactive in keeping a discussion with them to make sure that, you know, I can't predict what's going to happen. I don't know how it's going to be solved, but this is something that is on the radar.

>> Erin Finton: I promise that this is my last comment, but you know but to be very direct at this moment. You know, I know it's not possible to change everything by the fall and I know it's going to involve some discussions and brainstorming, but for this fall we don't have an interpreter, for example, in my classroom. Yes, I have the ability to speak. Is that something that I am going to be do expected to do is to SIM COM and if I have no interpreter, what are the options available to me then? What are those options? Do we write everything? It's that kind of a thing like for SimCom. Is that the last resort.

>> Gary Behm: This is Gary. So I don't have an answer to that, but you know, one idea I have is we have the oral students work together as one group and the signing students work together

as another group. And then for fall scheduling. We know that is something that is going to be set in stone, right?

Like they can't always transfer to a different section of a class or whatever, but perhaps for some things like group work or something, you can speak directly to the students who rely on spoken English and then you can sign with the students who rely on signed communication.

>> Matt Lynn: So basically this is Matt saying no, you do not have to. SimCom, that is not an expectation.

>> Erin Finton: Yes, but what options are left is what I'm asking.

>> Matt Lynn: Well, Gary did mention that it's possible to. If the students are grouped according to their language access needs, you could potentially communicate with them directly, you know, the oral students or with the signing students. That's something that can be done over. We could potentially do that.

>> Erin Finton: So like I feel like that's not really appropriate. I mean, we could also have a microphone with a laptop. I'm really sorry to interrupt, but I feel like a lot of students are already struggling with reading and writing, and I'm sure many of the other faculty members here would agree. Yes, but what about writing everything on the board? Is that an option?

>> Matt Lynn: I mean, we're trusting you as a teacher. That our goal. Idea. We're just throwing out some options here. You know this is not an uncommon occurrence in NTID. That doesn't mean you can't have access services, but really the opportunity to be creative and to potentially resolve some of these issues is great.

>> Erin Finton: But of course, sit down and talk with the chair and share with your attempts that have not worked, you know, and come up with a Plan B or A or D. So like even with all these I still feel like I have to figure out the options. Like I'm asking for other options and I still feel like there are none left. The last resort, the last option is SimCom and so I'm asking is what other options do we have available? Because what? Some of the other things, like separating the students by language preferences or communication needs means I'm going to be double teaching, so I teach half the content that I would teach in a semester. I feel like that's not a great option. I also understand that you know some things will require SimCom, but I feel like that also, will cause me to give different information away depending on the language people.

>> Jess La Sala: This is Jess. I understand. You know this is. I understand some of your frustration. Sometimes teaching English is that is a second language, and I absolutely respect your efforts and the skill set required to do so. But I'm really hoping that the task force will be able to help us draft some, come up with some new options.

You know, maybe technology can be explored, maybe some sort of using movies using AI, different types of technology that is becoming accessible in the mainstream. Those types of technologies, that might be the kind of thing where the task forces, they get together and brainstorm some of those approaches. It could ultimately be a flipped classroom, too.

>> Matt Lynn: Right now, I don't think we have the answer to your question, but really the goal is, you know, for example, I used to teach chemistry in the LST program and for every chapter, for every lecture, I had also prepared a written guideline for students because, yeah, the English and chemistry are completely separate languages and I recognize that.

So, basically, I was teaching vocabulary. I was teaching chemical vocabulary, you know, and then that way the students would ultimately fill in the blanks with their documentation and their knowledge. Then we would provide that expansion of what things mean, whether it be in English or in chemistry realm.

>> Gary Behm: So it looks like there's a few hands in the audience. Someone saying. Great. So, for example, the new MSSE, its new program name is the Department of Deaf Education. My apologies for that. Let me clarify. So really, their goal is to teach any deaf students, whether it be in a mainstream environment or a deaf school.

So they are ultimately meeting the needs of oral students and students who sign proficiently. So that's some of the instructional approaches that yes, they're struggling with that too. That's the kind of thing. So I honestly would love to invite DDE to provide some of those strategies and those ideas to draft the ideas, the options, ABCD, any, you know, have all of these backup plans in place. So please, if you could help us or be involved in that, and this is just.

>> Jess La Sala: Yes I absolutely understand your frustration, you know, and I don't want to jump ahead.

>> Erin Finton: This is back to the audience member. I don't want to automatically default to SimCom as being an option or a Plan B or a plan C, and I do recognize the fact that task force will be working on addressing some of these issues. But this could happen very quickly in the fall.

>> Matt Lynn: Yeah, this is Matt. Personally, I don't think that SimCom is your only option.

>> Erin Finton: Yes, sometimes it is. It really is. You know, I'm not trying to be disrespectful.

>> Matt Lynn: But you know, back to Matt, Gary emphasized that we have an educational department. Here is their ultimate responsibility to become teachers, and in doing so they have strategies. They have approaches that would be able to be employed in the classroom here.

>> Erin Finton: Yeah, yeah.

>> Jess La Sala: This is Jess. I do want to say thank you for your participation because this is a very difficult situation, you know, and I really want all of us to recognize and honor that. So appreciate it very much. If anyone has anything they want to you know up here is a line. There is a queue forming.

>> Sarah Sarchet: Hello everyone. I teach in the math and science department. I do want to comment on the task force. I'm assuming that we are going to have a good representation of both deaf and hard of hearing on the task force and also of departments. But I think what's really important is that we need to not only include tenured faculty, but non tenured faculty both because we all have impacts on the students.

I also want to emphasize that we need to include individuals of color on that task force to really match with our audience of the students that we're working with in addition to international students. You know, we've have that audience members that know five to seven students from the international communities and their perspectives are absolutely valid and need to be taken into consideration. I'll give you a list of my nominations if you would like.

>> Jess La Sala: Yes please do give me that list! Thank you!

>> Katie Schmitz: Hello everyone. I think Gary mentioned, you know, for example, if you're in a classroom where there's a mix of students that use different communication styles, you know, that doesn't always work. You know, I think it's too late for fall at this point in time, but we could potentially label a class and identify a specific, like English and math all in the morning and then all the other technical classes in the afternoon. I think it would be worth a try and then maybe we can trial it in spring semester of next year.

>> Jess La Sala: So you're specific? You're specifically identifying that for NTID.

>> Katie Schmitz: Yes, that's correct. So we've never tried that before and like maybe we did it 30 years ago, but I mean in the most recent years, no.

>> Matt Lynn: Yeah, Maybe one of the biggest challenges are labs, because labs potentially go three hours and they go 3 hours in the morning, in the afternoon, that might be the kind of thing.

>> Katie Schmitz: Yes departments would have to figure that out, but I'm willing to do that. So like English and math, I feel like that affects all departments.

>> Jess La Sala: Any other questions, if you have further comments or questions, please queue up along the side there. Thank you for that.

>> Nathan Harrison: Hello everyone. Another audience member here and I teach in the educational department and, here's the deal. I'm not going to answer all of your questions or provide all those backup plans for a specific classroom environment, but there are three tasks and responsibilities for the task force, correct?

What is NTIDs culture and philosophy and approach and the value of language. Our philosophy really is the backbone of everything and if we don't define it then that means all of our policies and practices could vary greatly.

Then also, many of us want rules. Rules about interpreters, rules about access, rules about SimCom. And then what is the application? We were just talking about the application, but how do we go ahead and do that then? So if we're making something a little bit more tangible, I think that's a first step. And I think really the task force needs to have a standing committee going forward. You know focusing on communication and language and issues that get addressed. You know, quite frankly, we've been talking about a lot of this since 1980s.

I mean, quite we have, and it's the same thing over and over again. But the goal, yes, we're going to create something next year and that's great and that's the first step. But instead of running, we've created this. Now we're done, quite frankly, if we do that then the problem will rear its ugly head again.

So the goal is to really create something that's a long term they, you know, that way we can provide a perspective and share that information with new faculty. We can talk about all of this and how it meets the demographics that change over time. Because, if we can identify these three key points, then that will be specific jobs for the task force. And quite frankly, that's going to take a year or longer. The task force is going to have a lot of responsibilities then.

>> Jess La Sala: Yeah, this is Jess. I think I appreciate those comments. Thank you very much.

>> Matt Lynn: I think you just did all of our work for us. Thank you so much. That's a wonderful idea, yeah, so maybe an initial draft to have ready during the academic year of 25-26 and then

continue those discussions to expand upon all of the approaches and/or policies or solutions etcetera because this is going to be an effort changing ever evolving issues. So I think, a living document would really help us as we experience this change. Thank you. I have a comment from another audience member.

>> Marguerite Carillo: The audience members introducing themselves. I work in ASLIE, and sorry, I'm just thinking. I think another audience member had already mentioned this, but when people are in some sort of technical field, they have their own jargon, their own vocabulary. And it happens to be both in English and ASL, I think it's an issue in both languages. I think the problem is a lot of these students don't have a foundation in communication or any languages whatsoever.

So often our students come here and they don't have those foundational communication skills, which is probably one of the main issues that we face, I think it's important that we address that issue primarily. And also because I work for the NSP program, the New Signers Program, there are lots of students who are motivated to learn how to sign. But we're not going to be able to force all of our students to sign, because some students just don't want to learn it.

Now, also, Mary Ellen Graham, I think would be as I've worked with her, I think she's really incredible because she works with every single student to work and see what their communication style is. And I think if we could use some of that data that she collects from the students, via her interviews, that would be fantastic.

So that we can figure out what the students' needs are, their academic advisors could access that information and their teachers would be able to access that information as well. So that we can see what the communication needs or styles of students are. If we had something like this for this fall, you know, I know obviously it's going to take so much more time than we have until fall semester, but if we could have that documented somewhere, I think that would be extremely helpful to figure out where we can schedule students, where we can make sure we provide the support for those students to build their foundation in communication.

>> Jess La Sala: This is Jess, yeah, I absolutely agree with you that we really do need to learn more about our student population. Everyone is unfortunately siloed and our goal is to really blend the population of NTID. And then we have to figure that out during SVP.

But, we don't know exactly what that's going to look like yet. But the folks that are working SVP and developing that curriculum are working on that specific approach of how to get to know the students a little bit better.

And they're tracking those students throughout the years and their time here at NTID and RIT. I mean, we don't have, you know, we're only focused on the first year at SVP. I think that's great, but I think the observing of the communication journey is really important for these students.

>> Marguerite Carillo: Yes. And so for the new science program, I'm only responsible for deaf and hard of hearing students and learning sign language. But, most associates level students take one class and that is it, you know, I want them to continue, but their degrees don't require them to continue on in ASL classes.

And, so it has to be a self-starting type thing. You know, I think it would be great to have more opportunities, but also for the associates level students, they're not required to, so why take on more work? And as a teacher, you know, I'll say something to them, and students are like, I

don't understand. And so I have to figure out, you know, that's regardless, not really to my point at all, but I think CAN, with Communication Access Now, lots of teachers became signers.

But now it's, you know, falling to the wayside. Again, not many folks are signing in the classroom. And so I think that's something we need to work on and improve.

>> Jess La Sala: Yeah, this is Jess, again. You know, with the English system, we're reducing some of the English requirements for the AOS and the AAS programs. Is that correct? Yeah. You know, they're able to take more Gen. Ed, more ASL classes, more math classes if they choose to.

So our goal is to provide that flexibility for the students if they're choosing to take, so to give them the opportunity to take additional language classes.

>> Marguerite Carillo: The audience members saying that's good to know. Thanks so much.

>> Jess La Sala: We have another question. Let's see. Come on up.

>> Matt Dye: So I want to make sure that we're all respecting the shared governance process. And so I'd like to request that when we set up the task force that we do that through NFC. A charge through NFC. What about that?

>> Matt Lynn: Matt and Jess are both saying a resounding YES. Oh wait, hold on. Wait, is PJ here? Oh, PJ left. So PJ wanted to do that for NFC to chair the task where that was our plan. Thank you so much. This is Matt. You too, Brian. Who's going to? Who's going to be the next NFC chair? Do we know that yet? Oh, they're meeting next week. So they're going to be voting on the chair. So we don't know at this point in time. But yeah, it's not yet. PJ, sorry.

>> Kit Kenyon: The audience members introducing themselves also from DLS. So I think this is an open opportunity for us to listen to one another and really get everyone's point of views. This has been fantastic to see everyone's ideas and feedback. There was another audience member who mentioned some points, the three points of the goals of the task force. I think it's very important to have those three tasks to lead into the next steps because those decisions will inform everything that we do here on 4th.

So I think the challenges are going to continue to look different year after year. Once we have those foundational problems to address, just because we solve them, if we are able to solve them, doesn't mean that they're not going to rear their heads again in the next 2, 3, 4, 5 years, but also new challenges will present themselves as well.

So I think we need to also make sure we have a fourth point, maybe added to that list for the task force to make sure we have strategies for the long term because we want to make sure that we know who we need to go to when we need to address those problems that we can't anticipate yet.

>> Jess La Sala: This is Jess. I'd like to add RIT is developing their strategic plan. It might be the kind of thing we will have new presidents both at RIT and NTID. That could be something that is included with the NFC strategic plan.

>> Kit Kenyon: That would be fantastic. Thanks so much.

>> Jess La Sala: We have one. 2. I don't know how many people we have. So right now it's 11:53. We end in 7 minutes.

>> Bryan Lloyd: This is an audience member saying, or they're introducing themselves. I work in CAS and I am a Counselor and Academic Advisor.

There are two questions I have. So, the first is what is the scope of the task force? The reason I'm asking is because there have been issues, other degree programs and having interpreting or access services on the other side of campus. And so I'm wondering if we need to include those folks because this is a lot to include both RIT cross registered students as well as NTID classrooms. When it comes to direct instruction, direct communication, I think it's very difficult because we also have to maintain the social aspect of learning in the classroom.

The students need to be able to interact with one another. It's not necessarily always the teachers responsibility to facilitate that communication between their students. They have to make sure they have direct communication amongst one another as well. So I'd like you to address those two questions in the future.

>> Andrea Zuchegno: I work in Visual Communications. I'm the Chair of that department. So, just one little recommendation I'd like to throw out there. There was another faculty member who talked about student interaction, and I think one thing that we used to do is that maybe has yet to come back is the communication that's happening outside of the classroom, acquired a lot of communication skills outside of the classroom, especially like in the dorms, and it didn't necessarily happen in the classroom. So I think that's something that's really tough.

>> Jess La Sala: Yeah, this is Jess. Yeah, that is definitely something like the culture that existed in Tower A. We know our current Provost, Prabu David, and the VP of Student Success at RIT, Neeraj Buch. Both are encouraging communication that happened in the dorms. That was something that was a cultural expectation Tower A back in the 1990s and all of that was available for our students then.

The students would hang out together all the time. And really, the vision of the Provost is trying to provide an opportunity for students to move back into that direction. The Hub, SVP, SLT is also going to move over into the dorms. Into one of the dorms office spaces. So hopefully we'll be able to see some of that interaction and that cultural shift to become much more inclusive in the dorm environment.

>> Clifton Langdon: This is my second year here at NTID, so I'm still a bit new getting the lay of the land, but I think those three goals that we were talking about before for the task force, I'm hoping that they know that. If we're able to maybe invest some money into research so that they can identify what issues lie ahead of us, I want to know what the budgetary restrictions of that would be, if that is something that we could financially afford?

Is it possible to allocate a full faculty position to going through the research of each of these aspects of the potential vision for the task force so that we have the data to figure out what those issues would look like? I also think it would be great to have more transparency that could be a result of that research done so that people could realize it really is a cost thing that is prohibiting, you know, communication in the classroom, things like that.

So I think if the task force knows what sort of resources they have access to, or if they even have resources or money to use, that would be wonderful. Thank you.

>> Jess La Sala: This is Jess. I do want to expand on that a little bit. I used to teach in the sociology department and there was about 30 students in that classroom sitting like a U-shape and it's shaped in a U desk situation. And quite frankly, those students that sat along the sides were not able to see one another.

So there was a lot of copy signing that had to happen and quite frankly, I had to, you know, change hats in that role as an instructor all the time. So a lot of those, Jennifer was the chair of the time and unfortunately she passed. So we agreed to hire a student to sign copy in my class, who already took my class before, and that was tremendously helpful.

You know, as someone else has previously mentioned, there might be other support resources for the classroom that we haven't even thought of yet. It's definitely the kinds of things that yes, absolutely we have to consider the cost and the financial resources that need to be invested. We can also think outside the box.

>> Matt Lynn: So I think that's it. Thank you so much for everything. Oh, we have two minutes. I've been, I've been, I've been told that there are two minutes left.

So, again, we just want to say thank you so much for coming to our workshops, for coming today. We really appreciate listening to everyone here and we want to make sure that we are able to continue to serve our deaf and hard of hearing students as we support them in their personal and professional goals.

So I appreciate this work as a team to make sure that we are able to be part of every part of these students journeys. It's really difficult, it's really hard to talk about, too. But listening to your ideas, this is something that the three of us can begin to discuss. And then once the NFC chair is elected, you know, we can draft something that we can work towards using for fall semester.

>> Jess La Sala: So this is Jess. I really want to make sure that most of you agree, you're involved with NFC. Oh great. Anyone disagree? With NFC's involvement, yeah, there was one person who disagreed, feeling neutral. Oh, there are no disagreements. Excuse me? Great. Everyone agrees with the vision of hosting and establishing a task force for this project.

So I really just want to emphasize that I appreciate your involvement. The past few workshops have been great. I don't see everyone all the time and it's been great having everyone in one space. I think your ideas are great. You have really poured your heart out and been very vulnerable with us.

So good luck for finals and we're looking forward to next week. Please come to graduation next week if you're able to. Thank you so much.