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Communication Skills 2 (E2B)

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Deaf English Club of CSB

The De La Salle College of Saint Benilde (DLS-CSB)recently opened a technology center to better educate andenhance the skills of deaf students and help deaf graduates gainmeaningful employment. DLS-CSB, in partnership with the PostsecondaryEducation Network (PEN) International, officially launched lastMarch the PEN-LC (PEN-International Learning Center)—atechnology facility which employs the latest in multimediatechnologies aimed to address the remedial and developmental needsof deaf students in the areas of reading, writing, math,general education, and computer literacy. Located inside the DLS-CSB campus in Taft Avenue,Manila, PEN-LC serves as a resource center for both studentsand teachers ensuring that the use of technologies andreading materials are easily accessed for one-on-one or smallgroup consultations and tutoring. The center is administeredby the School of Deaf Education and Applied Studies (SDEAS)of DLS-CSB.According to Nicky Perez, coordinator of the SDEASstudent activities unit, the Nippon Foundation of Japan fundedthe creation of PEN-LC. She said the center is modeledafter the National Technical Institute for the Deaf of theRochester Institute of Technology (NTID-RIT) in the US.PEN-International, however, is an internationalcollaborative network of colleges and universities that provides postsecondary education to deaf students. It has beena partner of DLS-CSB since 2002. The organization believes inmaximizing different kinds of technology (instructional,telecommunications, information, Internet) and faculty training to improveteaching and learning for deaf students, thus expanding careeropportunitiesfor deaf and hard-of-hearing people around the world.Perez said PEN-LC is divided into two parts. The firstpart consists of twoclassrooms for teaching English, Math, DLPCcourses (Deaf Learners' Preparatory Course), and other generaleducation courses. It is equipped with deaf-friendly features like thelight switch used by teachers in calling the attention of students.The other part of PEN-LC is a multipurpose area forstudent-teacher consultationcalled one-on-one or group tutoring. Ithas a mini-library which hopes to encourage deaf students to read more.There is also the office of the DLPC coordinator, the control room(video room), and Filipino sign language room.Overall, the PEN-LC has 20 Dell computers, each withan 80 G-byte hard disk drive, a CD drive, and a 17-inch flat screenmonitor; all are Internet-

connected. The computers also containessential software like Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Aside fromthese, teachers in general education classes also have accessto laptops, which they can borrow and use for consultation andpreparation of school lessons. The notebook PCs are considered idealfor small group teaching and tutoring.The highlight of the program was an awarding ceremonythat gave recognition to visionary organizations and individualswho have championed deaf rights by creating opportunities fordeaf students and graduates in the areas of education, internship,and employment.Among the awardees are the Rotary Club UniversityDistrict of Manila, Sevilla Candle Factory, InCode Inc., 2Go,Philippine Business for Social Progress, and the League ofCorporate Foundations.DLS-CSB presently has 130 deaf college students underSDEAS. Its deaf program started in 1991 as a vocationalcourse in bookkeeping and accounting. In 1996, the programstarted to evolve, becoming the full-fledged School for DeafEducation and Applied Studies in 2000. It now offers a Bachelor'sdegree in Applied Deaf Studies aimed at producingleader-advocates in particular fields of specialization.SDEAS, which is the Filipino deaf community, usesFilipino Sign Language (FSL) as the primary means of communication.Perez explained that contrary to popular belief, signlanguage is not universal. Each country has its own sign language likethe American Sign Language (ASL) and Japanese Sign Language (JSL).