

Transcript of Conversation

This transcript has been checked for errors – however, there may be several errors that were overlooked.

JD – James DeCaro
GB – Gerard Buckley

DB – Dianne Brooks
ER – Ellie Rosenfield

JD: Let me introduce some people to you. I sent you an e-mail and I told you who would be meeting with us this evening. And, I am going to start over at my far right. Gerry Buckley is the Associate Dean for NTID for Student Affairs. And, I sent you some introductions of Gerry. Sitting next to Gerry here is Ellie Rosenfield. Ellie is Director of our First Year Experiences. So, Ellie has a lot to do with our students once they arrive in terms of the needs that they have for special kinds of services and compensatory work. And, then sitting over here to my left and we are going to have to move the camera, is Diane Brooks. Diane is the person who has responsibility for our Outreach Program. She is Associate Dean of NTID for Outreach. So, what I would like to do, if I could this evening, is start by just laying out a procedure that I would like follow tonight. Then once we have that done I will turn to my colleagues here who will speak with you about how we have students flow into the institution, how we assess them once they are here and then what it is that we do to try to help those students who need assistance, who are here. So, what I thought I would do Tetchy, is basically, we would talk about career development from the perspective of following a student before they are at NTID, then once we admit them to the institution and have them enter our programs and what we do with them during the summer. And, then once they finish that program, the kind of work that we do with them to help them make some career decisions. Does that sound like a good course of action for this evening?

T: Yes, Jim.

JD: All right, excellent. So, what I will do Tetchy, I will now turn it over to Diane Brooks, our Associate Dean for Outreach. And, I am going to ask Diane to speak with you just a little bit about some of the work that we do before students come to NTID

when they are still in their high school lives, when they are still thinking about college. So, Diane will talk with you a little about a program that we call Explore your Future and the Career Awareness Program. So, I am going to turn it over to Diane now, Tetchy.

DB: I am very happy to be here this morning. And, as been said, we have two huge programs that we do offer to students while they are still in middle and high school. The two programs are focused on career development and supporting students during transition from high school into postsecondary education setting. The first program is called CAP – Career Awareness Program. That program is focused on young, deaf and hard-of-hearing students starting at about the age of 14 and upward. The basic structure for that program is designed around a counseling model called the Holland of Career Development. That model emphasizes that career awareness and career development is a developmental process. So, in other words, it is very much tied to the students' personal growth and development. And, with that in mind, we can move into the school program and offer them two different, a two-pronged program. The first one is for the teachers and other school personnel. And, in that we share our curriculum and we talk about ways to include career awareness and career development within the school setting, within their already established curriculum. And, the second path that we offer is for students and parents. Because the Holland model emphasizes that parents are very important in the process of the students' career awareness. We provide workshops and we provide career fairs so that the student is able to get a sense of what kind of career opportunities exist and may be of interest to them. We also provide opportunities for young students to meet with older, deaf and hard-of-hearing people who are already in employment so that they have some type of role modeling experience and they will be able to understand what deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals are capable of doing within the world of work. I would be happy to answer any questions that you have more in-depth about the two programs.

T: One of our faculty is asking about how do you monitor these programs? You said before that you get involved with high school students. Is this a short-term type of program or activity or is it a long-term where there would be monitoring strategies

involved? Or, do you just go into the high schools and then conduct these activities and that's it?

DB: It depends on the school environment. Some of our programs, it is short-term where we go to the school and we offer them a one and one-half day training workshop. However, because the demand has grown over the last several years, we are now developing a train the trainer model. That model is where we hope to train teachers and counselors within that school to become the expert in implementing this training so that once we do leave the school, there is a trained person there in the school who is able to continue the career awareness training and it becomes more of a permanent program – an on-going activity.

JD: Maybe Diane could now tell you about the other program that we offer.

DB: The other program is called Explore Your Future and that is a one-week, career awareness program. It is very intense and we offer that here on the RIT campus. So, we have about 100 students who are high school

T: Who are accepted already in the program or are just applicants? Are RIT applicants or NTID applicants? Are they already accepted into the program?

DB: No. This program is a pre-college program. The students have not been accepted into NTID or RIT yet. They have just recently, as of that summer, they would have completed their junior year in high school. So, the goal for the program is to help them make the decision when they graduate from high school a year later. So, as I said before, it is a one-week program and it has a very large curriculum that we have developed here. It includes an assessment component so that the students come in and they learn more about their own interests, their skills and we try to match the two, so that by the time the student is ready to graduate, they have a better sense of where their skills and interests are and what opportunities might be available to them for postsecondary training. Not all of the students will go to college and that is O.K. because our emphasis is on preparing them

for a better match relevant to their skills and interests. So, some of our students go to a _____training afterwards.

T: Regarding assessment, you have formal tools that are being used to assess the skills and the aptitude of the students? Are these tools developed primarily for the deaf or are these tools developed for the hearing population and were adapted or modified for the deaf population?

DB: Yes, we have a specific measurement tool that have been modified from regular schools for hearing students and those tools have been modified for use with deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

JD: So, Tetchy the programs that we develop for students before they came here or before they come here were put into place because we were concerned that many of the students who came, did not have a good sense of careers and their families and their schools had given appropriate attention to their career development. So that what we decided to do would be to reach out to those schools to provide those teachers, those faculty, those parents and those students opportunities to develop a career awareness and to do some career exploration. And as Diane said, we use the Holland model of career development as the tool around which we develop those different kinds of interventions. So, the interventions that Diane talks about are outreach interventions from NTID into the junior high school and high school levels in an effort to get students better prepared to think about careers and to think about their future. Now, Tetchy, once some of them have been through that and not all of the students who come here are students who go through that program, they then enter the admission process to NTID and also, they enter into a process that we call our summer program for students. And, what I am going to do is I am going to ask Gerry Buckley to talk with you a little bit about some of the processes that we use in admission and some of the things that we do when students first arrive on our campus. So, Gerry Buckley, our Associate Dean for Student Services will chat with you a little bit now.

GB: Good morning. You recall that when students, we have about 500 students who apply to come to NTID and they contact with them as soon as they apply. The contact with them begins with our Admissions Office and we have trained people there who work with them to help them to process their application, make sure that all of the appropriate test requirements and so forth are satisfied. That is all sent in to Rochester. The counselors communicate regularly with the parents and students through the phone, through e-mail and help them to find their finances, their government support and communicate with them about their program of interest. We encourage the students to identify a major or program of interest that they want to apply for. Often students are uncertain of what major exactly, so they are encouraged to participate in what Jim already called our Summer Orientation Program. We call it SVP – Summer Vestibule Program. It is an orientation program for about ten days that we have before the academic year begins. We invite students, their parents to come in for what first happens is a weekend-long series of educational workshop and sessions where we discuss with them and their parents, adjustment to college issues, financial aid issues. We often find the parents need help, especially if it the first generation of children to go to college. Parents appreciate the advice regarding how they can support their sons or daughters. Then they leave after two days. The program continues. It involves career sampling. Students can try to up to four programs. They can sample. They can do hands-on experiences with those programs to decide which major they are interested in applying for. There is also a significant amount of personal/social programming, cultural programming. Our program is like yours. Many of the students arrive here and it is their first time being totally independent. They are adjusting to that independence. We have residence halls. They have to learn appropriate_____for the dorm. They decide how to select a roommate, decide their schedule and so forth. So, that week of orientation really focuses on helping them get ready for the academic year. Selecting a major, applying for their major. Getting set up with their counselors, their faculty so that when the academic year begins after about ten days, they are ready to go. And, that is what our SVP Program involves.

JD: So, Tetchy, Gerry has spoken with you now about what a student would do when they first come to NTID. What I would like to ask Gerry to do as.....

T: The students who are already accepted, do those go through the summer program or are accepted students of NTID? A while ago Diane was saying that the programs that were offered in the Outreach Services are for students who are not yet accepted into the program. So, what Gerry is saying, the program that he is saying is for students who are already in or accepted by admissions requirements, accepted into the NTID Program.

GB: Right. They have met all of the general admissions requirements for NTID and now they are coming in to our Orientation Program to make specific decisions on which majors and to apply for specific majors and to get set up in this program. There is also a testing and assessment component of our SVP – English, math, reading which is an important part of the program because that determines where they will be placed and which courses they can sign up for.

JD: So, Tetchy, the Summer Vestibule Program is established when students are here. There is two components of it. One component of it has to do with issues of personal/social development, adjustment to college life. Another part of it has to do with providing them opportunities to sample and to look at the different majors that we offer. But, there is another component of it which is equally as important which is assessment in certain basic competency areas like reading, writing, English, mathematics and sign language. And, those are instruments that are applied to the students that are then used by the faculty members in the English Department, in the Mathematics Department, etc., to help them to make appropriate decisions about the courses that the students should be in when then enter full in the fall quarter.

DB: Let me just add that we also do a vision assessment during the summer program to make sure that students who may have undiagnosed visual difficulties don't pick a major that won't really end up being appropriate for them later on.

JD: So, Tetchy, we have not talked a little bit about before the students come and some of the career work that we do before they come, the admissions process and what we do with them during the Summer Vestibule Program when we do orientation, career sampling and assessment. Now, after the program at the end of the summer, the students can take a variety of different avenues, depending upon their skills and background and experiences and I am going to ask Ellie, who has responsibility for our first-year experiences to talk with you about those different avenues but then to focus on the avenue where she has major responsibility.

ER: Good morning. One of the things that I wanted to add is that in addition to the students that come in to the Summer Vestibule Program, SVP, we also have about 30 students every year who come in directly to the other programs of RIT. And, that means that they have the academic skills and scores and high school background that are equally competitive to the hearing students that are coming to college here. And, they go directly to the majors that they have applied for. So, that is a small percentage of our students but I think an important one. And, we have a small, brief orientation program for those students about support services. All of our students, whether they are directly accepted to another college of RIT or within the College of NTID, are part of our First Year Experience. And, what we are really trying to do is to give them the best experience possible so that they can have a successful first year and persist to graduation. One of the ways that we do that is to provide and require, not just provide, but we require them to participate in a Freshman Seminar course. And, that was a very important curriculum revision process for us as a college. It was a college-wide effort and everybody approved a two-credit course for our students. And, in that ten-week course students meet twice a week with a top teacher on our faculty and deal with the adjustment to college life issues, making sure that they are focused on their time management skills, have made a kind of roommate and housing adjustments that are necessary to be successful here. And, it helps us to make sure that we are monitoring students in that class. One of the best predictors of college success is class attendance. And, I don't know if you have a problem with this but we tend to have a class attendance problem with students who are not going to be successful in our curriculum. And, by having them in Freshman Seminar, we are right on

top of that right away and we can intervene with counseling support. I am very happy to share with you the curriculum that was designed for Freshman Seminar. There is a national movement called First Year Experiences. That is coordinated by the University of South Carolina. And, they have a wonderful resource program and Web site that you should have access to as well. But, I think Freshman Seminar is a really nice opportunity for students to share with each other. In each of our Freshman Seminars, we use a peer teaching assistant. And, I think that is a wonderful model for really having it stay real for the students because sometimes faculty, unfortunately, we get a little out of touch and having an upper class student to help us to make sure that we are doing the right thing is really good. And, often they can say things that I might not be comfortable saying. They are very direct with our students about what it takes to be successful here. And, that has been very helpful. Each of our students has an assigned counselor, but like you said in your paper that you sent us, not every student takes advantage of the counseling resources that are here. And, that can be problematic. We do have a new system in terms of monitoring which is an early alert system for all classroom faculty at NTID. They can send electronic warning to the students which are copied to the counselor and the chairperson and that is another way for us to know when a student is having academic difficulties and where we can intervene a little earlier than waiting for his grades. By the time you get grades, it is really too late, often, to help a student be successful. Let me stop there and I'll be happy to answer questions as they come up.

JD: Tetchy, Ellie spoke about our First Year Experiences and as you probably know from looking at our Web site, we have a wide range of curriculum for students at NTID that range because of the wide variety of skills that the students have upon entry. So, Ellie was saying to you that no matter where our students go after they exit SVP, they all have a First Year Experience. But, some of the students who leave SVP or finish SVP, might go directly into one of the other colleges where they will be pursuing a bachelor's degree. That would be our students with the most skills and the most interest in that area. Some of the students might enter directly into an associate degree or three-year track because they have the skills and the interest to do that. And, some students when they finish the SVP might still be uncertain about where it is that they would like to go. They might go

into a career decision making opportunity and track. So, that the assessments that go on in SVP that are done with the math, the science, the English, the reading, the writing and also Gerry and Ellie spoke with you about each of the students can sample four of our majors. Well, the faculty in those majors (end of tape side 1) them to move to. So, that the First Year Experience that Ellie talked about is something that every student has but every student's First Year Experience may be different with one exception. And, that is that all of them will take our Freshman Seminar course irrespective of what track they go into.

T: This first-year freshman course, is it for one year? Or is set for ten weeks?

ER: The Freshman Seminar class itself is a ten-week class. The First Year Experience carries through the entire first year. But, they only have the required course for the first ten-weeks. We are on a quarter system and that is our first quarter. The other supports that are in place for First Year Experience, the counseling relationship, the extra programming that we do as a co-curricular program from our Student Life team, those are continuing through the first year.

JD: O.K. so the First Year Experience, the required component that everyone has is the Freshman Seminar course. But, every student also receives counseling services and co-curricular support for lack of a better word. Some students take advantage of those and some students do not. Those are not required. So, there is a counseling system that is in place and there is a co-curricular support system that is in place. But, not every student takes advantage of those necessarily. The Freshman Seminar course is a requirement though.

ER: And, we are talking about beefing up the way that we make sure that students are getting what they need by having each student develop an academic and personal plan. And, that the chairperson for each of the departments would make sure that they are monitoring that plan and that someone would sit down with the two and develop the plan. That is evolving. It is supposed to be in place now but it varies and I am not really

satisfied with the way that it is right now. But, we are working on that. Because I think that some students who need the services the most are not the students who seek them out. And, we need to find a better way to make sure that the services that we are providing get hooked up with the students who really need them.

JD: Gerry is going to make a comment.

GB: I want to just add, I think that our university like your college also wrestles with how to we promote integration into the greater university and at the same time support the student's desire for a community among the deaf students. We work hard at the university to structure opportunities for students to participate fully in the mainstream of the university including the greater university orientation week by providing interpreters and support services for those activities. We view those as important. We want students to feel a part of RIT. At the same time, we know from history and experience that our deaf and hard-of-hearing students have a strong sense of community here in the college of NTID. They come here because they want opportunities for leadership and socialization. So, we balance those. We encourage students to get those experiences at the broader university to use as experiences at NTID with leadership and involvement in fraternities, sororities and so forth to build on those a balance. We often spend a lot of time discussing with students about the need to take advantage of both opportunities. We also, one last thing. We have the same kind of diversity you spoke about between deaf and hard-of-hearing. We wrestle with that. Our community is increasingly diverse here. Diverse communications, ethnic and so forth. So, we encourage a lot of learning about varieties cultures and backgrounds and respect for that.

JD: Gerry and Ellie and Diane are talking about systems that we put in place for supporting about 300 students that we admit every year. So, we admit more students every year then there are at your college right now. So, a lot of the systems that we are talking about might have application at your college on an even more personal level because I think at times here because of the large numbers of students that we deal with, we may lose contact with some of those students sometimes. And, some of the systems

that we are talking about here like First Year Experience and the Freshman Seminar were attempts to make sure that what did not happen was that the students did not get lost in that first year in a big system and fall through the safety net. So, the First Year Experience and the Freshman Seminars are ways of making sure that we maintain that early contact with them in the most vulnerable time that they are college.

ER: I also wanted to emphasize the assessment and course placement and feedback that the students get. That is a very difficult thing for many of our students. Most of our students that come to RIT think that they will be getting bachelor's degrees. They are not really that familiar with the some baccalaureate degree options. And, when their test results are shared with them, often there is a pretty big sense of disappointment about their placement. It means that they don't have the English and mathematics skills to enter our curriculum at the level that they would like. And, so many of those students have to go into what we call a Career Exploration Studies option so that they can build up their skills and in that program we are not just dealing with building up their communication skills and writing and reading and math skills. We are also helping to handle the emotional issues that go along with not being where they want to be. It has implications for their career option and how long they will have to be in school. And, so those kinds of things are very difficult for some of our students. And, we see that group of students as a high risk group. And, we put a little bit more emphasis and a closer ratio of faculty and staff working with them.

JD: Tetchy, what I would like to do is ask Diane Brooks, as I told you Diane is the Associate Dean for Outreach but for years before moving into that position, Diane had responsibility for a variety of different positions at NTID. One of them was in dealing with issues in Psychological Services and providing support to some of our students whose needs went beyond those of just for lack of a better word, simple career counseling but who needed other kinds of support to deal with some of the challenges that Ellie was talking with you about. So, I would like to ask Diane if she would take a minute or two just to tell you about some of the things that we do in Psychological Services.

DB: The psychological services that we provide, we have noticed that many of our students come to NTID from an environment where for example, most of their families were “normal” or hearing and they had issues of how to communicate, and, how they have had opportunities to develop those social skills. So, we provide support services through the Psychological Services and it is not necessarily a mental health issue but more of an issue of development. So, we help our students within one to one counseling or group counseling activities and for students who need more intense, we have personal counselors on staff, psychologists who are able to help and provide support. We have also found that many of our students come from a mainstream full environment, many of the issues I see that you have listed here are very similar to our students’ issues and experiences. The feelings of isolation. The feelings of lack of self-confidence. Normal developmental type of personal growth issues, those that they did have the opportunity to fully experience or explore. So, through our Psychological Services, we provide a lot of group counseling and we found that is a very, very positive intervention because it provides for the deaf student a first-time experience of forum to share with each other their feelings, their experiences, how they have learned to cope. So, it is a wonderful opportunity for communication among the students, those experiences that they didn’t have previously to communicate with each other. We do have crisis counseling support services as well. But, the majority of our services that we provide focus in on the developmental related issues. We also have activities that are offered to parents when they come and visit the university. We have a Parents’ Weekend and during that time we provide preventative types of group counseling related to providing them with a mechanism for improving their communication between the parent and their son or daughter. We also work with the community to provide opportunities for our students who want counseling from a professional who is not affiliated to the institute. We work with our local Mental Health Association to develop outreach services for our students. So, a lot of things that we have done or did are not necessarily related to intense psychological problems, but they are more focused on facilitating and encouraging a young person in their personal and social development.

JD: Tetchy, we have been presenting to you now for about 45 minutes and what we would like to do is use some time now to see if there are any questions or issues or things that we might be able to discuss now from your need. Are there questions that have come up as a result of what it is that you have just seen and heard us talk about?

T: I have a lot. But, one thing that is common to all of the programs represented, this is the issue about assessment which is actually a major problem also on our end because most of our assessment tools were really developed for our hearing applicants for admissions, for assessment for all other things, particular skills in English, reading, writing and math, etc. My question is what, how on our end having no access to these kinds of tools as well as developing modified schools that I know involves a lot of research also, what would be our option? What strategies could we use to help us become more clear with the specific skills that we are trying to assess? Because in the long run, of course, the most important thing to really develop valuable and reliable tools. But these too take time and it could involve a lot of research as well. And most of our assessment happens to be observation and very subjective, based only on what the faculty or the team feels this is the difficulty of the student or this is the strength of the student and so most of our faculty just come in after the assessment. It is a hit and miss thing. Sometimes it is successful. Sometimes we miss out certain skills that are important that we did not see in the assessment that we did.

JD: We do have some tools that we have used here that I will try to collect and send to you before you come in April so that you will have a chance to see the tools that we use for math assessment, for English assessment, for reading assessment, for writing assessment and I can also tell you what tools we use in admissions to make the admissions decision. So, those kind of tools that we have used, you could take a look at and they may be equally as applicable to your students as well. But, the other thing that Ellie mentioned to me while you were asking your question is that there are other kinds of skills that are not necessarily those math and science types of skills that have to do with that Web site that I showed you that is at

T: The one that identified skills?

JD: Exactly. And, there are tools available in the United States that we could take a look at and they may be of some use to you Tetchy so you wouldn't have to go in and reinvent all of those tools again.

T: That would be great, Jim.

ER: The other thought that I have is that you might want to look at your curriculum. What is the end thing that students need to be able to do? What skills do they need to have and then go backwards from that point to what is possible to provide to them while they are in their coursework and what is left over? And, that must be your entry point. If you don't have those skills to come in with, you are not going to be able to take advantage of the curriculum.

JD: I think Tetchy what we can do is when you are here in April, we will show you the tools that we use in our assessment to make course placement decisions. We will show you the tools that we use at admissions to make admissions decisions and you will also have a chance in the next two teleconferences to talk with some of the faculty members who have responsibility for our technical curriculum and I think they will also talk with you about some of the things that they do that are very much along the line that Ellie spoke about just now.

ER: One other thing that I want to say is that my experience is that the basic skills are very important but it is an attitudinal issue about how hard the student is willing to work and often some of our students who have lower skills but who are more industrious and more goal-oriented and really ambitious do very well. So, they might not have the skills on entry but they make up for it with other personal qualities. So, I think it is very important as you design your screening mechanisms, not to overlook that component.

T: Most of our initial strategies or what we are really focusing on in the previous years, we need to develop, enhance the attitude of the students which is the only thing that we clear about on the faculty and what the faculty are the specific goals or specific attitudes that we want them to further develop. And sometimes even if, not for all of them but for a few that we are _____ with is that there is so much good attitude or positive attitudes for a particular student or group of students but there is the difficulty in the area of skills. No matter how much you try to push up the student and the optimism of the student is very high and the sense of direction of the student is also very clear, but the beginning skills becomes the problem.

ER: And, we have a similar situation here as well. And sometimes that is a very difficult thing. A student just doesn't have the skills to really achieve their goals and you can't sometimes make up for twelve years in one or two years here. So, that is very difficult.

JD: Tetchy, do you have another question?

T: Joy here is our senior counselor.

J: I am curious about the First Year Experience and the Freshman Seminar course because as a counselor I noticed that the first year for our students is really very _____. But, I would like to know what are the components of these Freshman Seminar courses and if I got it right it is for ten weeks? Because our students come with a lot of challenges and adjustment problems not only personal and social development but signing skills and reading and writing. So, I want to know the overview of the Freshman Seminar course and the First Year Experience so that we may know how many months can we a lot, for example, for personal/social development and how many months for sign language skills and for reading and writing.

ER: Our First Year Experience, Freshman Seminar is a ten-week course. It is a two credit class. And, within that class we have grouped most of the students by career area. So, students who have chosen a major take their Freshman Seminar class with other

students in that major. And, so each of the seminars are kind of tailored for the needs of that particular major. The students who are in the Career Exploration Studies major who have not yet decided about what program fits them, have a little different focus of their Freshman Seminar and that Freshman Seminar is often continued for a second ten-weeks with a Career Decision Making course also a two credit course. And, I can send you the curriculum for that as well just to give you an idea about what we do. But, most of our Freshman Seminars have some common expectations and shared experience. All of our Freshman Seminar students need to do some community service project. That is their number one thing. All of them need to focus in some way on the diversity issue. Some of the students in classes do that through the communication diversity issue. Some of them do that through an ethnic diversity approach. So, it depends on the make-up of the class and the teacher's preference. But, the issue of diversity is something that we focus on in Freshman Seminar. Then we have a whole emphasis on academic readiness skills. Things that you need to do to be successful in a college environment. The expectations for how much you have to study outside of class for each hour that you have a credit for. Some of the logistics. How do you become more independent? We know that the students come in are now as independent in our system and it is our goal to help them become more independent by the end of the course so they learn how to register for themselves. Those kinds of things are part of the curriculum of the course.

JD: Joy, what we will do is, we will put together a little package and send it to Tetchy that talks about our First Year Experience and what our philosophy goals, etc., are for First Year Experience. And, we will also send you the curriculum for our Freshman Seminar. So, we will send that along to you and then you can look at it in more depth and then if you have any question, we can work with you by E-mail to explain those.

T: Jim, Can you also send some documents regarding the outreach?

JD: What I will do, I just made some note to myself, Tetchy. I am going to ask Diane to pull together some materials on Explore Your Future and our Career Awareness Program. I'll ask Ellie to pull together the First Year Experience and Freshman Seminar and I'll

also ask Gerry if he can pull together some materials on the Summer Vestibule Program so we will send you within a week an entire package that contains the explanation of all of these programs that we discussed with you this evening. Would that be helpful?

T: Yes, Jim, that would be very, very helpful for us.

JD: O.K. I think Jerry has a comment to make.

JB: We will also add in that packet the information on our Student Life Program for freshman that we call Co-Curricular The Outside the Classroom Program. That supports the Freshman Seminar efforts because we find that we send a lot of time and attention on freshman. We realize that during their first six weeks if they connect with the university, decide on a major, establish relationships with peers, many positive things can happen. When that doesn't happen, then we find problems. So, we spend a lot of time trying to plan our programming in the evening and our programming on weekends in ways that support the educational goals of Freshman Seminar. We will send you that information and then when you come to visit, you are welcome to sit down with people who plan that.

T: Thank you.

JD: Tetchy, we are coming close to the end of the hour now and we said that we would talk for an hour, is there one last question or issue that you would like to chat about before we close this evening?

T: I have a question here from one of the junior counselors, _____. She is asking about the parents' program or the parents' weekends and the concern on our end that we also do try our best to reach out to the families who take part in our program. We have different kinds of activities with us and with the children however, parents tend to steer away from these programs and they always say that they are busy. That could not take part. They are far from the school set-up and all of these other reasons. And, most of the time, the parents who do come are those who are really very, very supportive and have

less problems in terms of relationships with their children. Those who are with whom we would like to reach out more could not reach out because they refuse to take part. So, do you encounter those problems and what do you do in order to reach out to those parents?

ER: I would say that we have a similar experience and some of the strategies that we are using right now are to have a newsletter that comes from our dean that is sent to parents. It is a parents' newsletter and it comes out I think three times per year so that he has an opportunity to update parents and to profile programs and resources that parents should be aware of so that they can feedback to their students that they can take advantage of that. We notice that with some of our students that we are not getting the same number of parents from, for example, our Hispanic students and we are talking right now about some new strategies to reach out to those parents. Maybe doing some group work in cities that have large number of our parents. So, but we do have a similar experience with students. We found that it is helpful for parents who have identified on campus one person that they can contact so that they don't have to get overwhelmed by how many people are on the campus. There is a Parents' Office on the RIT campus and that person serves as a kind of connection point for parents and they make sure that problems are solved.

JD: Tetchy, the newsletter from the dean of the college, I think has been very good in the sense that it brings directly to the parents in their own homes certain kinds of information that they may not receive through their student or that they might be able to look at, at their leisure. And, they are located in that newsletter is often events, activities, critical times and dates for registration so that the parents are kept aware. But, also, Tetchy, some of the programs that Diane has spoken about, we bring to the parents. So, rather than expect the parents come to us with the outreach effort, Diane is bringing some of these programs to the parents in an attempt to get them involved in the process of the career education of their youngster well before they come to college even.

T: One more question, Jim, from Joy.

J: It is about admission and do you ever reject a deaf applicant in your school?

JD: The question, Joy, as I understood you to ask is do we ever reject a deaf applicant to our (end of tape side 2) school? The answer is yes, we do. We have established criteria for admission. If the students do not meet those criteria for admission, then they are referred to another place that we feel may be able to serve that better than we can because we can't be everything for everyone. So, we do have admissions criteria. If students don't meet them, then they are rejected. However, the parents and the students are provided the opportunity to appeal through what NTID refers to as an Admissions Review Board. And, in that case, the student and the parent or a counselor has the chance to make the case for why that student should be here and we do listen to those appeals.

J: The reason why I ask is in our country one of the most difficult things is to set a criteria for admission because of the delay that the student suffered from their early educational experiences. When they enrolled of course, they miss a lot of skills. And, then the number of students enrolling in the _____are only a few. For example, maybe we have less than 13 students and only as our first-year students. And we screen them using a criteria that we _____
_____that we see as _____ and as appropriate, what if we only, so many students _____and the figure is not _____only because of the so many skills they have missed because of very poor early educational experience. What can we do about this?

JD: I think Diane would like to respond.

DB: In the past several years, NTID has studied that issue related to skills. We have had in the past, a general admissions criteria where we expected our students to have an average overall eighth grade level, academic achievement. We worked closely with a number of educational testing services to explore establishing criteria that are very closely connected to our level of training and preparation that we offer here at NTID. At this point in time we work with the American College Testing Services to develop some

criteria in the academic areas and we require the students to take the American College Testing services test, the ACT. Three years ago, we assessed a minimum requirement of the score on the ACT. That process has been under review since that time because NTID has undergone a massive curriculum change. We have upgraded many of our requirements so at this point in time, our specific requirement on the ACT, the level must match the academic area that the student says they are interested in. And, when you say what can you do about students who are not prepared, I think it is important to recognize that one institution cannot make up for the academic delays that many deaf and hard-of-hearing students experience. And, that is why Jim has said, students that we do reject or turn down, we do refer them to other programs where they may have more of an opportunity for basic skills development. And, it may be a match for their academic level. And, I do understand how difficult it may be to turn down a deaf or hard-of-hearing student but in the long run, if the student is accepted and their skills are really, really not the best match for the institution, then it could be more of a negative impact for the student in that they are, they are going to fail from the beginning. So, we feel like we have an obligation to establish these criteria that will match our academic level of preparation. For the students, we are an encouragement and a facilitator, we facilitate areas where they can academically achieve.

JD: But Tetchy and Joy, what we have done is we have looked at the profile of students who are deaf in the United States. And, we have established an overall level of expectation of their skill at eighth grade. Now, the reason we did that is because if we established it much higher than that, we would have very few students who would qualify. But, if we established it much lower than that, then we would become more of a high school than a college. So, we established a level that we felt was appropriate for the curriculum that we had to offer and the time that we have to offer that curriculum. So, the overall eighth grade achievement was established by NTID in an effort to say, these are students who would not normally qualify for college but we will provide the kinds of programs that you heard us explaining here to get them up to the level that they need to be so that eventually in time, they will be successful in graduating from a college like ours.

DB: The thing is if you accept students who are much lower, you are spending your staff resources and time on the few students who aren't really capable of being successful and you are neglecting students who with a little bit more support could be successful and so it is really a balancing issue.

JD: Did we answer that question, Joy or did we just confuse you?

T: There is another question here. Jennifer is asking about the minimum level of criteria, the eighth grade thing. So, students who meet the eighth grade requirement and of course, the other admission requirements of NTID. Now, her question is O.K., so students come in with this criteria and then a few of those end up not to be as successful as the others. The others who have met the criteria do move up to excel actually move up to their higher courses and there are a few who might not be as excellent and have the level of skills as those who did move up. So, what do you do now with those students who cannot eventually reach the other criteria of the college program or the specific program? Do they continue and complete the specific diploma course? Or, are they moved into another kind of training to enhance further the needed skills and then they go back to the mainstream to finish the diploma course? Or are they asked to leave the college?

JD: Tetchy, very early on in our history we offered a variety of different levels of certifications for students; certificate, diplomas, associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees. The reason we offered those different levels at that time, Tetchy, was because we were concerned that some of our students coming in would not be able to get to a full degree. So, we offered curriculum that always had as their end product the market place and the job. So, every different level of curriculum that we offered within the institution was constructed so that when a person left they would have employable skills even if they couldn't go all the way, for example, to the baccalaureate degree. Now, Tetchy, as the years have gone by, what has become clear to us is that some of those levels are no

longer viable because of the demands of the workplace. So, when we started out earlier with certificates, most of our certificates are gone now. I am not sure that we have any?

DB: All of them in the majors are gone.

JD: So, all of our certificates are gone. We still have some diplomas, but they are limited and we have associate degrees and baccalaureate. So, what has happened through the years is the demands of the workplace have been reflected in the curriculum that we offer. So, where we offered certificates at one time, we no longer do that. We now offer diplomas, associate and baccalaureate degrees. And, the students that we come in and admit to this institution, what we say is, if they have got the desire, if they have the skills that we assess when they come in, they should be able to complete one of our programs. Unfortunately, our time is up. It has been a wonderful conversation but we need to close. Thank you to everyone. We will chat again on March 12th.