THE SENATE OF THE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT BODY

S.R. 2020/2021 – 04

A Resolution Formally Requesting Bowling Green State University Reverse Their Decision to Terminate American Sign Language Course Offerings

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT BODY

January 25, 2021

Authored by:


Sponsored by:

Gil Lutz - Student Affairs Chair, Sana Ali - Diversity Affairs Senator, Eric Cox - Senator At-large, Gwendolyn Yockey - Off Campus Senator
January 25, 2021

Approved by the Senate of the Undergraduate Student Body, and prepared for the presentation to the president of the Undergraduate Student Government

January 25, 2021

Approved by the president of the Undergraduate Student Government, and so order into effect.

Michael Johnston
Speaker of the Senate

R. Harrison Carter
President of the Undergraduate Student Government
A Resolution Formally Requesting Bowling Green State University Reverse Their Decision to Terminate American Sign Language Course Offerings

In the Senate of the Undergraduate Student Body here assembled,

1. Whereas, the Undergraduate Student Government represents the undergraduate student voice at Bowling Green State University; and

3. Whereas, Bowling Green State University and the Undergraduate Student Government aim to ensure all student voices are represented within the Senate; and

5. Whereas, American Sign Language (ASL) is an irreplaceable communication tool that enables hundreds of thousands of Americans to express themselves freely and efficiently; and

7. Whereas, Bowling Green State University lists on their official Diversity and Inclusion Comprehensive Strategy Plan¹ 2020-2023 that, “Bowling Green State University values diversity as essential to improving the human condition. Diversity and inclusion immeasurably enriches all that we do to engage, understand, and respect individuals. Within our community, the diversity of identities and life experiences determines how we perceive and contribute to society. We acknowledge that diversity has not always been understood or embraced in our society, yet, at BGSU, we will strive to understand and embrace diversity by breaking down barriers to meaningful participation to ensure that individuals are treated with dignity;” and

16. Whereas, the decision to end the American Sign Language minor is directly opposed to these ideals and serves to sever off the educational development and assistance to one of the most important communities on campus; and

19. Whereas, this minor houses over 250 students and thus is a cornerstone of their BGSU educational development; and

21. Whereas, the ASL adjunct faculty are highly qualified to be hired on as full time faculty to continue this minor; and

23. Whereas, Bowling Green State University is hiring a multitude of new faculty and staff for their nursing program, and over 20 life design coaches, therefore there is no precedent set in

25. place that would stand in the way of hiring a full-time faculty member to teach upper level
26. ASL courses; and

27. Whereas, in the era of Covid-19 and the necessity for facial coverings it has become
28. impossible for deaf Americans to lip read which further elevates the importance of proper
29. ASL interpreters; and

30. Whereas, the Toledo Blade reports that, “According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics,
31. demand for deaf interpreters is growing; through 2028, the need for interpreters is
32. expected to increase by 19 percent;” ² and

33. Whereas, there has been a strong and prevalent student outcry against the decision to end the
34. ASL minor; and

35. Whereas, the Faculty Senate Senate Executive Committee (SEC) voted down a proposal to
36. suspend admissions to the ASL minor on October 27th, 2020 by a vote of 8 opposed to
37. suspending the minor and 2 abstentions, however the administration went against SEC’s
38. recommendation and now has decided to end offering courses in the minor starting Fall 2021;
39. and

40. Whereas, BGSU students have started a Change.org petition that has gained over 7,800
41. Signatures; and

42. Whereas, this displays an overwhelming amount of support to keep and continue to offer
43. ASL courses at Bowling Green State University; and

44. Therefore, let it be resolved that, The Undergraduate Student Government of Bowling
45. Green State University stands in solidarity with the student body to disapprove and condemn
46. the University for their decision to end admissions to the American Sign Language minor and
47. the offering of American Sign Language courses all together.

48. Therefore, let it be further resolved that, The Undergraduate Student Government and the
49. Bowling Green student body demands that BGSU reverse their decision regarding the ASL
50. minor and bring on a full time faculty member to teach the upper level ASL courses.

² https://www.toledoblade.com/opinion/editorials/2021/01/20/sign-language-skills-are-needed/stories/202101190003
THE SENATE OF THE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT BODY

Passed by the Senate and ordered presented to the president of the Undergraduate Student Body for Approval or Veto.

Michael Johnston
Speaker of the Senate

I do hereby approve and order this legislation into effect.

R. Harrison Carter
President of the Undergraduate Student Government

I do hereby disapprove and order this legislation to be returned to the Senate.

R. Harrison Carter
President of the Undergraduate Student Government