

NEWS RELEASE

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More students choosing American Sign Language

PINE CITY, Minn. – The Pine Technical College [American Sign Language \(ASL\) program](#), an 18-credit certificate, is a rapidly-growing program. While the program is not often one students choose to take alone, it is a popular ‘side-dish’ program.

“To take the ASL program in addition to another program is a smart choice,” explains Nancy Mach, PTC Dean of Student Affairs. “Especially students graduating from early childhood, nursing, accounting and business programs with the ASL certificate on top are more attractive to prospective employers in the job market. It’s an excellent side-dish program,” Mach adds.

PTC’s ASL courses are not only popular with students since they meet requirements within the [Minnesota Transfer Curriculum](#) and help students when transferring to state universities with world language requirements, but also since there is a growing demand for graduates with the skill.

“ASL is estimated to be the fourth most commonly used language in the country,” says Kathryn Krier, PTC ASL instructor. “ASL courses fit well with nearly any student’s major or program and always makes the student more appealing to hire since they graduate with an extra skill. For example, nursing students will not only have the ability carry out healthcare services, but also the ability to communicate with deaf or hard-of-hearing patients, and that makes those graduates more appealing than students graduating with just the nursing diploma,” Krier explains.

The number of students enrolled in the [Post-Secondary Enrollment Options](#) (PSEO) program taking ASL courses also is on the rise. In addition to Krier’s regularly-scheduled courses at the PTC campus, Krier teaches ASL via interactive television (ITV) to many rural area high schools including [Isle](#), [Holdingford](#), [Lac qui Parle Valley](#), [North Branch](#) and BOLD Senior High School in Olivia, Minn. To take ASL courses via the PSEO program gives high school students the opportunity to earn credit that satisfies high school and college requirements simultaneously while gaining a skill in ASL as well as getting an early start on college.

“American Sign Language is the language of the Deaf community in the United States, and the Deaf population in Minnesota’s East Central Area has grown in the past few years,” Krier says. “Our community needs more people fluent in ASL, and we’re proud to contribute to meeting the need in the community,” Krier adds.

The ASL program at PTC is a language and culture program, which approaches the study of signed languages from both a linguistic and scientific perspective.

“ASL is a full, natural language. It uses a gestural-visual modality in which manual signs, facial expressions and body movements all convey complex, linguistic information,” Krier explains. “Once a student completes the certificate, he or she will have gained a full understanding of the language and be able to apply it in nearly any professional or social setting,” Krier adds.

Courses start Aug. 23, and PTC is accepting applications now. For more information about the ASL program, call 320-629-5100, or visit www.pinetech.edu/academics/catalog-and-programs/math-science-and-liberal-arts/american-sign-language.

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