

Originally Presented on:	(03/15/2018)
Type of Action:	Recommendation
Status/Result:	New Business

1 S.A. Resolution #41
2 American Sign Language (ASL) Fulfilling a Foreign Language Requirement

3
4 ABSTRACT: This resolution seeks to have Cornell’s College of Arts and Sciences allow American
5 Sign Language (ASL) to fulfill the foreign language requirement as recommended in the Curriculum
6 Proposal¹.

7
8 **Sponsored by: Natalia Hernandez '21**

9
10 **Whereas**, Cornell University was founded on the fundamental notion of “any person, any study”
11 and;

12
13 **Whereas**, our peer institutions such as Yale University², Brown University³, Stanford University⁴,
14 allow American Sign Language (ASL) to fulfill a foreign language requirement and;

15
16 **Whereas**, the Student Assembly passed Referendum 35: “Should American Sign Language satisfy
17 the foreign language requirement at Cornell?” on March 9th, 2017 with 3164 yes votes and 674 no
18 votes⁵ and;

19
20 **Whereas**, culture is a set of learned behaviors of a group of people that share a language, values,
21 rules for behavior, and traditions and;

22
23 **Whereas**, Deaf culture⁶ is the set of social beliefs, behaviors, art, literary traditions, history, values,
24 and shared institutions of communities that are influenced by deafness and which use sign
25 languages as the main means of communication and;

26
27 **Whereas**, sign languages are not ust a set of gestures or a signed version of any particular spoken
28 language and;

29
30 **Whereas**, sign languages have the full range of rule-governed system of articulation, word
31 formation, sentence structure, and meaning comparable to any spoken language and;

32
33 **Whereas**, the Linguistics Society of America (LSA) affirms for signed languages such as American
34 Sign Language all the rights and privileges attendant to any spoken languages, including the right to
35 satisfy a student’s academic foreign language requirement and;

¹ The Curriculum Review Committee (CRC) is currently working on a new draft of the curriculum proposal based on feedback from the initial draft and further discussions with faculty throughout the fall 2017 semester. The next iteration of the draft proposal will be made available for faculty to review by the start of the spring 2018 semester. The CRC will then solicit feedback on this proposal during the spring semester.

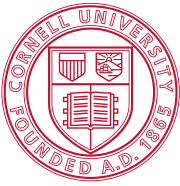
² <https://ling.yale.edu/news/sign-language-courses-yale>

³ <https://www.brown.edu/academics/language-studies/languages>

⁴ <https://language.stanford.edu/programs/slp>

⁵ <http://archive.assembly.cornell.edu/Elections/2017SpringSA-Results#toc2>

⁶ <http://www3.gallaudet.edu/clerc-center/info-to-go/deaf-culture/american-deaf-culture.html>



Cornell University Student Assembly

36
37 **Whereas,** American Sign Language does not currently fulfill the foreign language requirement and;
38
39 **Whereas,** Cornell University only offers LING 1111: American Sign Language I during the summer
40 Session and;
41
42 **Whereas,** students who already know the American Sign Language may struggle to take a placement
43 exam⁷ out of it and;
44
45 **Be it therefore resolved,** that Cornell University's College of Arts and Sciences offer American
46 Sign Language during the academic term and;
47
48 **Be it further resolved,** that the professor teaching the American Sign Language class identify as a
49 member of the Deaf community;
50
51 **Be it further resolved,** that if there is not sufficient funding to create the ASL Program, the College
52 of Arts and Sciences, a representative from Student Assembly, and a representative from CUDAP
53 will work with alumni affairs to secure sustainable funding for the program and;
54
55 **Be it further resolved,** that Cornell University's College of Arts and Sciences allow students who
56 are fluent in American Sign Language to take a placement exam out of American Sign Language and;
57
58 **Be it finally resolved,** that Cornell University's College of Arts and Sciences allows for American
59 Sign Language to fulfill a foreign language requirement.
60
61 **Respectfully Submitted,**
62
63 Natalia Hernandez '21
64 *Minority Students Liaison-At Large, Student Assembly*
65
66 Joseph Anderson '20
67 *Undergraduate Representative, University Assembly*
68
69 Mary Grace Hager '19
70 *President, Cornell University Deaf Awareness Project*
71
72 *(Reviewed by: Academic Policy Committee, 8-0-1, 03/09/2018)*

⁷ <http://as.cornell.edu/placement-exams>