

2016 Research Week Proposal Instructions and Template
Posters and Presentations

Title – Legal Interpreting

Program of Study – American Sign Language and Interpreting

Presentation Type – **Choose one of the following:** PowerPoint

Mentor(s) and Mentor Email – Nicole Thorn (ndthorn@liberty.edu)

Student name(s) and email(s) –Emily Bowman (ebowman9@liberty.edu)

Category – Textual

Abstract: American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting is a growing field in high demand of qualified interpreters. However, being a certified interpreter does not grant one to interpret in any setting that they choose. This paper examines interpreting in legal settings. Legal interpreting is a subset of ASL interpreting as a whole. It involves high-risk situations that can have serious consequences for the deaf clients involved. Legal interpreting is unlike any other field in American Sign Language interpreting; it only takes one mistake in legal interpreting to be costly for the deaf client. It requires years of training and practice beyond that of a general interpreter. This paper looks in depth into the necessary training and certification requirements for those seeking to become legal interpreters. Without training and certification, interpreters are not qualified to work legal situations. The use of an uncertified interpreter in any legal setting can cause serious problems for the deaf client. Through interviews with several certified legal interpreters, this paper examines those problems that can occur when an uncertified interpreter is hired. In one case in particular, an interpreter called in to interpret an interview at a police station, whom was not qualified, misinterpreted information and the deaf client spent four years in jail. By examining cases similar to this one, this paper explores the importance of the training and certifications involved in becoming a legal interpreter. By understanding legal interpreting

and the training involved, one can better understand the necessity for needing a qualified interpreter in the legal settings.