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Deaf or Hard of Hearing Communication Access Policy

Purpose

This policy establishes the procedures for providing communication access accommodations for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. The college is committed to providing reasonable accommodations that ensure equal access to academic programs, services, and testing in accordance with applicable federal accessibility laws.

Communication Access Procedure

When communication support is required, the college will attempt to provide services using the following process:

1. **Live Captioning**

The college will first provide live captioning services. Live captioning allows spoken communication to be transcribed in real time, providing immediate text access during testing sessions, meetings, or instructional activities.

2. **Virtual Remote Interpreting (VRI)**

If live captioning services are unavailable or ineffective for the situation, the college will provide a qualified sign language interpreter through Virtual Remote Interpreting (VRI) using a secure video platform.

3. **In-Person Interpreter**

If live captioning and virtual remote interpreting services are unavailable or do not adequately meet the communication needs of the student, the college will request an in-person sign language interpreter through an approved interpreting service provider.

Use of Assistive Hearing Devices

Students who utilize cochlear implants or hearing aid devices are expected to use these assistive devices during testing sessions, class meetings, or appointments when requesting communication access services, unless otherwise approved through documented accommodations. The use of personal assistive devices supports effective communication and the appropriate implementation of services.

Interpreter Request Timeline

Students who require sign language interpreting services must submit their request **at least 72 hours (three business days) prior** to the scheduled test, class session, meeting, or campus event. Interpreter requests must be submitted by emailing **ads@panola.edu**.

Advance notice is required to allow sufficient time to coordinate interpreting services. Requests submitted with less than a 72-hour notice will be reviewed; however, the college cannot guarantee interpreter availability for late requests.

Cancellation Policy

Students who no longer require scheduled interpreting services must notify the appropriate office **at least 24 hours prior** to the scheduled appointment, class session, or testing appointment. Failure to provide timely cancellation notice may impact the scheduling of future interpreting services. Cancellations can be submitted by emailing **ads@panola.edu**.

Compliance

Communication access services will be provided in accordance with institutional accessibility policies and applicable federal laws, including the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** and **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act**. Accommodations are determined based on the individual needs of the student through the established accommodations process.