

Offices of the Dean of Students
Madison Initiative for Undergraduates Proposal Form

MIU Goals:

- 1) Preserve affordability of a UW-Madison education, primarily through expansion of need-based aid.
- 2) Generate faculty and instructional support, including hiring, to offer the courses, majors and experience students need
- 3) Expand best practices and innovation in teaching and learning, curricular design, and student services in order to enhance student outcomes.

Contact Person: Cathy Trueba, Director, McBurney Center
Terri Oehrlein, Lead Interpreter & Coordinator, McBurney Center

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Proposal Title: *UW-Madison McBurney Disability Resource Center Scheduling Software*

Amount Requested: \$29,000

Abstract: *UW-Madison McBurney Disability Resource Center Scheduling Software*

This proposed project will develop web-based scheduling software that will allow deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) students at the University of Wisconsin - Madison to make online accommodation requests for interpreter or captioner services. It will improve the efficiency of the request process and increase the likelihood of securing an interpreter or captioner to fill the request. It will improve the institution's ability to meet its legal obligation to provide this mandated service for students with hearing loss.

In order to have full access to the programs, services, and activities of UW-Madison, DHH students face a burden unlike that of their hearing counterparts. They must enter into a time-consuming and detail driven request process in order to receive a specific communication accommodation before they can attend any campus event. Adding to this challenge, the accommodation they are requesting (interpreter or captioner services) is not readily available in the community. To have any chance to participate equally with other students, DHH students must work closely with the McBurney DHH services coordinators to secure appropriate, effective communication access. The proposed software is an innovation intended to mediate some of the burden by simplifying the request process, reducing the time between request and provider match, and increasing the likelihood that a match will be made, thereby enabling the student to attend any campus event.

1. *Within MIU goals 2 and 3, stated above, identify the problem that your proposal will address in terms of undergraduate education, instructional quality and innovation, and access, and how the proposed hires/innovation/activities/effort will significantly impact this problem.*

The McBurney Disability Resource Center provides federally-mandated direct support services to students with disabilities. These services include interpreting and captioning services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH). A significant challenge with this particular service is the shortage of qualified and experienced post-secondary interpreters and captioners in the region. The staffing configuration at the McBurney Center requires most of the interpreting and captioning requests on campus to be filled by hourly employees whose main employment is in the community. Because of the competition for these highly qualified professionals, it is essential to minimize any logistical barriers related to their accepting work assignments on campus.

The problem that this proposal will address is the current method of scheduling interpreters and captioners on campus. Our campus continues to utilize outdated, extremely inefficient paper and pencil methods to coordinate and track all requests for accommodations. Students have often mentioned that our request process is challenging, involving multiple steps. The current method of coordination is affecting student access on campus. The proposed project, to develop automated scheduling software, is an innovative method for students and employees to have 24/7 access to information regarding DHH accommodation requests. The UW is at a competitive disadvantage by relying on a cumbersome, paper-based scheduling system when other businesses use sophisticated software programs to immediately schedule, communicate with, and pay their employees. To make UW an attractive work venue and ensure that we are able to meet our mandated need, we must develop contemporary solutions that permit us to provide UW students with high quality and consistent interpreting and captioning services.

Eric Nooker, former UW Accessibility Advocates President represents the student perspective stating, *“The system in place works, but not as smoothly as it could. Oftentimes I do not even know who will be interpreting, or whether an interpreter has been arranged”*.

From a coordination perspective, Sarah Falsey, McBurney Captioning Coordinator states, *“As a staff member who lives an hour away from work, the new coordination software will significantly increase the chances of filling sub requests that McBurney receives early in the morning and before I am in the office. Since the requests will be sent to service providers automatically when a captioner calls in sick or otherwise unable to come to work, the request process will continue without my having to use my cell phone to text or call subs while still at home or during my commute.”*

Hourly interpreter Lisa Heglund explains the employee point of view, *“...completing paper timesheets, which requires following several guidelines in order to accurately record all necessary statistical data, is time consuming and cumbersome”*.

After researching scheduling software available in the market and consulting with professional post-secondary disability offices across the country, we learned that there is not a single application available in the private sector that incorporates all the unique features for the DHH population in our post-secondary setting.

The purpose of the proposed project is to develop software that will provide deaf and hard of hearing students the opportunity to make online accommodation requests for services, thereby increasing the likelihood of securing an interpreter or captioner. The software will allow McBurney DHH service coordinators to manage a variety of small but critical steps in the process of providing the service including the abilities to:

- Tag every hourly provider by their professional qualifications for various interpreting or captioning events and give the providers access to see available assignments appropriate to these qualifications
- Automatically send new requests for services to the service provider who is most qualified for each unique assignment. The coordinators have greater ability to make appropriate matches between the student and provider
- Use text messaging as a feature of the program to increase the speed and efficiency of the provider receiving and responding to the assignment notice
- View the schedule remotely and take advantage of round-the-clock access to see what assignments are filled and what is still open
- Generate billing automatically and track payment accurately over time

This software program will also allow students to log in and view their requests for service and the status of their accommodation request on-line whenever they want to. Students can also electronically submit any unanticipated changes to the assignment (e.g., location or time change) and be sure that the assigned interpreter or captioner knows of the change. By being efficient, accurate, and timely in coordinating sign language interpreter and captioner requests for access to curricular and co-curricular activities, DHH students benefit as well as their fellow classmates, faculty and staff who are also participating in a wide array of activities that create the Wisconsin Experience and enhance the student experience.

2. Describe how progress is to be measured, demonstrated, and reported; that is, provide metrics and timelines to evaluate project success.

If the funds for this project are received in July 2010, the software will be developed by September 2010. The training and the piloting of the project will include the Coordinators training students, departments, and employees and then collecting and incorporating their feedback. The anticipated roll out of the software is Spring 2011.

DoIt will begin work when funds are secured. The DoIt developer will be working very closely with the McBurney coordinators for the duration of the project to ensure satisfaction and set a specific timeline outlining their benchmarks and their steps to completion. Their progress will be reported to the coordinators weekly via email.

To demonstrate project success we will evaluate the software and the actual time savings similar to the estimate detailed in appendix A. As you can see in appendix A, a request is broken down into the tasks required and the time necessary to coordinate and fill a single request.

After the software has been fully utilized by students, departments, and employees for approximately three months, a survey will be developed assessing their satisfaction with the product.

3. For proposals that request new hires:

- *Describe how they will significantly impact student access and the ability of departments to allow their faculty to teach undergraduates.*
- *Describe the proactive steps that will be used to identify and recruit a diverse pool of candidates.*

This proposal is not requesting a new hire.

4. Identify cross-college partnerships and/or campus collaborators needed to ensure success (between schools and colleges, with other major units, such as libraries, Dean of Students offices, IT, Housing, Enrollment Management, Union, etc.)

McBurney will collaborate with DoIT to develop the new software.

Currently, McBurney coordinates interpreter services for Registered Student Organizations under the Center for Leadership and Involvements (CFLI). During the pilot stage of the software development, McBurney will collect feedback from students making RSO requests and also from staff who will be interacting with the software for billing purposes.

McBurney will also collaborate with individual schools and departments who make requests for interpreters and captioners in the course of the pilot project and thereafter to assess effectiveness and areas for improvement in the software design.

5. Include a detailed budget and budget narrative, identifying infrastructure need/cost, such as physical space and facilities, technology, other academic support services, etc.

Based on a quote from the UW-Division of Information Technology (DoIT), the total cost for the software development is estimated at 360 hours or \$29,160. This total amount equates to roughly three months of development time for a full-time web developer. The cost for the project was broken down by categories of users (e.g., students, department/requestor, employee, and coordinators). Specifically, cost was broken down into estimated hours required to complete the features requested for each category

Cost Breakdown

Student: 80 hours (\$6,480)

Student users will primarily be responsible for creating/managing their course schedules and creating event requests. Students will also be able to view a limited number of schedules/reports relevant to his/her schedule.

Department/Requestor: 40 hours (\$3,240)

The Department/Requestor role will primarily be used to make requests on behalf of students as well as viewing billing/invoice data from McBurney.

Employee: 80 hours (\$6,480)

Employees will be responsible for creating/managing their work schedules and contact information. Employees will also actively monitor new requests that come in from students and link to those requests (pending administrator approval).

Coordinator: 160 hours (\$12,960)

The Coordinators are responsible for managing the majority of the processes in this application. Coordinators will have full access to all of the scheduling and reporting features. In addition, they will have the ability to proxy as any other role in the system.

McBurney contributing costs

The McBurney Center's contribution to the project is the release of staff time to the design and development process for the software and any overhead costs associated with implementing the program (e.g., software or hardware upgrades needed to support the program). McBurney will also be responsible for the monthly web hosting fees and all maintenance costs after the software is installed.

Staff : It is estimated that an average of 7 hours/week or 23% percent of one coordinator's time would be used for 6 months, (three months to work with the developer and three months to pilot the project and provide training to students and employees). This equates to approximately \$6,371. The coordinator will work closely with the IT developer to provide information, answer questions, test applications, and meet with developer as needed.

Overhead costs include a portion of office expenses relating to the project.

Web Hosting costs currently are \$45.00 month.

Maintenance costs are estimated to be approximately \$1,500 per year.

6. What are the anticipated learning outcomes as a result of this proposed initiative?

The anticipated learning outcomes include:

The learning outcome for this proposal is not a typical outcome in terms of an increase in student knowledge. Rather, the outcome reaches broadly across the entire campus community. Classrooms have been the standard site of communication accommodation via interpreting and captioning. No

one would argue that a significant amount of learning happens outside of the classroom. With the completion of this project, deaf and hard of hearing students will have more access to events both inside and outside of the classroom thanks to improved efficiency of new scheduling software and an overall increase in understanding of providing accommodations by campus event planners. Even though the relative number of deaf and hard of hearing students on the UW campus is small, a diverse student population is invaluable. This software increases the opportunities for DHH students to attend events with the hearing student population and be included in campus life. Hearing students will have opportunities to learn from and benefit from their interactions with DHH students. Finally, having interpreters and captioners visible in campus life is a reminder to the university about the diversity this unique student community brings to the entire campus experience.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Dean's Comments:

The need for this software is a real issue on campus. I understand that there may be initial hesitation due to the limited number of students impacted by its use. However, these are one-time costs, as opposed to on-going funding needs, that will have an impact on students for many years ahead. There is also potential that this could be licensed out on the open market and generate some revenue. This is a high priority and are one-time costs which could prove to benefit our campus for a long time.

APPENDIX A: STEPS AND COORDINATION TIME REQUIRED OF A REQUEST

CURRENT REQUEST PROCESS			PREDICTED PROCESS WITH SOFTWARE		
Action	Time	Time elapsed	Action	Time	Time elapsed
Student makes interpreting request. Request is for Monday, 11/9/09 at 1:00 for a one hour meeting with a professor. Student also emails prep material to coordinator.	7:00 pm on Friday , 11/6/09	-	Student makes interpreting request. Request is for Monday, 11/9/09 at 1:00 for a one hour meeting with a professor. Student attaches prep material to request.	7:00 pm on Friday , 11/6/09	-
Interpreter Coordinator arrives to work.	8:00 am on Monday , 11/9/09	61 hours	Request is automatically sent to all qualified hourly interpreters and Coordinator	7:00-7:01 pm	1 minute
Coordinator receives the request and determines who on the hourly list is qualified to accept this assignment.	8:15 am	15 minutes	Hourly interpreter confirms availability and text is automatically sent to Coordinator	8:00 pm Friday , 11/6/09	59 minutes
Coordinator sends an email to ~15 hourly interpreters	8:15-8:20 am	5 minutes	Coordinator confirms hourly interpreter. Prep material is automatically sent to confirmed interpreter.	10:00 am Saturday 11/7/09	5 minutes
Coordinator simultaneously starts calling hourly interpreters and leaving messages about the assignment.	8:20-8:35 am	15 minutes	Text is automatically sent to student with interpreter information.	10:00am Saturday	0
Limited responses with none accepting assignment given five hour notice. Activate secondary request process to the one, Madison-based interpreter agency	8:35-10:30 am	1 hour & 45 minutes			
Coordinator calls an agency	10:30-10:40	10 minutes			
Agency sends out the request	10:40-10:50	10 minutes			
Agency waits for response	10:50-11:10	20 minutes			
Agency confirms interpreter & contacts McBurney Coordinator	11:10-11:15	5 minutes			
McBurney coordinator emails prep materials to agency interpreter	11:15-11:20	5 minutes			
Coordinator emails student to inform them that assignment has been filled.	11:20-11:25	5 minutes			
TOTAL TIME BETWEEN STUDEN REQUEST AND FILLED ASSIGNMENT		64 hours & 15 minutes	TOTAL TIME BETWEEN STUDENT REQUEST AND FILLED ASSIGNMENT		15 hours
TOTAL COORDINATOR TIME SPENT (highlighted)		1 hour	TOTAL COORDINATOR TIME SPENT (highlighted)		6 minutes
TOTAL COST FOR AGENCY INTERPRETER		\$360.00	TOTAL COST FOR HOURLY INTERPRETER		\$60.00

The above example represents a very typical request. It is a fairly straightforward request in terms of interpreting complexity. It is also short, only one hour, and so does not require a team interpreter. What makes this request challenging is the short notice to fill the request. Our current system gives the coordinators very little time to react. When this type of request shows up in the coordinator's mailbox on Monday morning, the first part of her day will be spent rushing to fill the request and notifying the student of the outcome of the search. This precluded the coordinator from attending to any other work place priorities including providing interpreter or captioning services for staff employees or other students until mid-morning.

A request made with less than 48 hours notice to an interpreting agency will often result in a fee of \$120.00 per hour with a two hour minimum plus travel time. An hourly interpreter, on average, costs \$30.00 per hour, also with a two hour minimum but no travel. Because of this extreme cost differential, it is our protocol to always contact hourly staff and determine that no one is available before we contact a for-profit agency. In a time of shrinking resources and a demand for offices to use fiscal resources as wisely as possible, the investment in the software program will easily repay itself within an academic year

The amount of time saved by sending the request out immediately also must be stressed. More than 49 hours lead-time are lost with the current process. The hours lost can be the difference between the student having an accommodation or not.

The example also outlines the time savings of the coordinator. The software will save a total of 54 minutes of the coordinator's time per request. On average, eight additional interpreting requests are made per week. Eight requests saving an average 54 minutes each result in a net gain of more than seven hours of the coordinator's time per week.

Reclaimed fiscal resources and administrative time could be utilized in the following ways to expand current services and allow for new initiatives.

Expand current services

- Coordinate an increased number of interpreting and captioning requests for all of campus. Currently, if there is a departmental request that is not for a student, each department must coordinate the request on their own. If McBurney assumed the coordination, there would be an increased expertise in the coordination process, which in turn would significantly reduce departmental frustration with coordinating a complex service for which they have little to no expertise. Coordinating events on campus would also increase the ability for DHH students to participate fully in the UW experience.
- Interpret or caption additional assignments or requests for students
- Continue and expand the pilot program to coordinate services for Registered Student Organizations (RSO)

New initiatives

- Provide departmental specific trainings and demonstrations for faculty and staff who are working with deaf or hard of hearing students
- Develop educational material for faculty and departments on working with interpreters and captioners
- Host brown bag luncheons for campus partners. For example: Introduction to ASL; How is ASL Different from English?; What is "Captioned Media"?; Technology for Students with Hearing Loss
- Develop social networking support for DHH students, hearing students studying ASL, Children of Deaf Adults, Interpreters and Captioners

- Provide self-advocacy training to DHH students
- Implement transition training for new students entering the university, and transition training for students heading into the real world

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Lisa Heglund, CI, CT
625 Anthony Lane
Madison, WI 53711

October 12, 2009

Dear Madison Initiative for Undergraduates Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support and enthusiasm for the proposal submitted by Ms. Terri Oehrlein, Interpreting Services Coordinator for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) program at the McBurney Disability Resource Center. Her proposal to develop specialized web-based scheduling software for coordinating sign language interpreting and speech-to-text (captioning) services for DHH students is critical, innovative and timely.

I am a nationally certified sign language interpreter with 19 years of professional interpreting experience. Though I have a private practice in interpreting, consulting, and mentoring, I maintain my status as a part-time interpreter for McBurney DHH services. I have the unique perspective of working for McBurney's DHH services for 19 years in many roles. I have coordinated DHH services which involved recruiting, hiring, training, supervising and scheduling interpreters. Consequently, I understand the challenges and the complex level of detail management required for coordinating and scheduling service providers effectively.

Ms. Oehrlein's proposal to develop innovative software for post-secondary service provider scheduling will benefit all stakeholders: DHH students, McBurney DHH staff, service providers, the Office of the Dean of Students, campus departments' instructional faculty and staff, and the campus as a whole. I will specifically address the benefits to part-time (hourly) interpreters and speech-to-text providers.

The software Ms. Oehrlein is proposing would create several efficiencies for part-time service providers. Before outlining those, it is first important to note that there is an extreme shortage of qualified and experienced post-secondary service providers. The UW-Madison has to compete with other post-secondary institutions and several other markets/businesses that hire sign language interpreters and speech-to-text providers. Historically, it has been challenging for McBurney to attract qualified professionals because post-secondary service provision is very demanding and requires specialized knowledge and skills. Because it is difficult to hire and retain qualified interpreters and captioners, it is important to decrease any logistical barriers created by the current paper and pen method of coordinating services. This method takes more time than necessary because it requires services providers and coordinators to correspond frequently by e-mail and phone calls. Some service providers find that these logistical and time barriers are disincentives to working at McBurney. The proposed software would significantly reduce these disincentives.

Here are several efficiencies that would be achieved by utilizing the proposed software:

1. Ability to view current unfilled service requests at any time. Some part-time service providers are on campus infrequently because they interpret or caption only one class. This software would permit all service providers access to view all unfilled requests at their convenience. Better access to service requests means service providers can respond more quickly and requests can be filled more promptly.
2. Ability to view work schedules and changes 24/7. The nature of service coordination is that changes in scheduling occur daily. For example, sometimes a student will cancel services due to illness or a professor will cancel one class and reschedule a make-up class on a different day. It is critical for service providers to have convenient access to the most up-to-date work schedule in order to best manage their work through McBurney.

3. Real-time access to job details and changes as soon as they are posted. Service providers must receive several assignment-related details to adequately prepare for, arrive at, and complete an assignment. Having logistical information and preparation materials recorded in one place, real-time, reduces the time required for the coordinator and all service providers to communicate about these essential details.
4. Service providers will have the ability to add and update their availability. As an interpreter in private practice, my private practice schedule and availability changes daily. As my private practice schedule changes, I can input updated availability for McBurney assignments in real-time. This would allow the McBurney service coordinator to know my current availability in order to fill last-minute requests or advance requests.
5. Auto-generated timesheets. Over the years, I have heard a consistent complaint from part-time service providers: completing paper timesheets, which require following several guidelines in order to accurately record all necessary statistical data, is too time consuming and cumbersome. This is another logistical barrier that could be eliminated by the proposed software. Additionally, it takes service coordinators an inordinate amount of time to manually review each provider's timesheet to verify that all the necessary data is accurately recorded. All part-time staff and the service coordinators would greatly benefit from an auto-generated timesheet.
6. Ability to instantly receive and review feedback to improve services. DHH services has always valued and sought feedback from consumers: DHH students and faculty/staff who are receiving services in their classes. The level of detail, speed, and frequency with which a service provider could receive constructive feedback about services would be greatly improved by the proposed software.

Ms. Oehrlein, in her role as Interpreting Services Coordinator, is uniquely and highly qualified to make this project succeed. I have known her for 19 years – when we met as McBurney interpreters in 1991. Ms. Oehrlein has consistently proven to be an extremely dedicated professional, with a strong ability to innovate. She is a thorough and skilled project planner. Her strong attention to detail and commitment will ensure that the final software product will meet McBurney's goal of providing the highest quality of interpreting and speech-to-text services with the greatest level of efficiency.

Thank you.

Sincerely Yours,

Lisa Heglund, CI, CT

November 4, 2009

Dear Committee,

I am a Deaf undergraduate student attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I founded and served as president of a student organization on campus called Accessibility Advocates. I have worked throughout my undergraduate career to strive towards greater accessibility on campus. I am writing to in support of the scheduling software application.

As a Deaf student, I often make sign language interpreter requests for both academic and non-academic activities on campus. Non-academic accommodation requests are often frustrating to make. Ideally there would be a centralized way to make accommodation requests, but in reality there are different processes in place for different events based on the sponsors of the event. The question of who is responsible for funding the accommodations further complicates this. The different procedures in place to arrange and fund interpreting services can be a headache if you are not familiar with how to go about doing so. In fact, I have been using the existing system for a few years now, and I am still learning about it.

I make requests online for the activities I am involved with, and the events I want to attend. The system in place works, but not as smoothly as it could. Often times I do not even know who will be interpreting, or whether an interpreter has been arranged. It takes an effort on my part to explain how to find and pay for an interpreter, and I often have to follow up to ensure that an interpreter has been lined up. I feel that this hassle may deter students from making accommodation requests. With the proposed software, all of these things would be much simpler to handle and Deaf students will feel that UW-Madison is a more accessible and welcoming environment.

The staff at the McBurney Disability Resource Center do the best they can with a mediocre system currently in place. Personally, I would not want to be the one who has to explain the red tape of how to make an accommodation request to an incoming student. If the staff at the McBurney Disability Resource Center had the proper tools, making accommodation requests would be a lot smoother. There would be a lesser burden on students, and communication regarding the accommodations would be more efficient. All events, no matter who the sponsoring entity, should have access to a simple, centralized software. Everyone involved in the process of an accommodation request should have instant access to information regarding the status of the request. As I stated earlier, I support moving towards an accessible environment for all students on campus. These funds will enable the McBurney Disability Resource Center to provide greater support and accessibility to UW-Madison students. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at nooker@wisc.edu.

Sincerely,

Eric Nooker



November 9, 2009

Madison Initiative for Undergraduates Committee
133 Bascom Hall
Madison, WI 53715

Dear Members of the Madison Initiative for Undergraduates,

I am writing to support the McBurney Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) program request for Madison Initiative funding to develop a scheduling software program to support DHH services. As you will read in the proposal, our current, paper-based system of assigning sign language interpreters and captioners to DHH students is outdated and inefficient. It requires an exorbitant amount of time to manage a myriad of administrative details to successfully assign an appropriate service provider to an event. By improving our administrative processes with a technologically based system, students and staff will save time, delays in communication will decrease, and the most appropriate match between service provider and student will be made. Additionally, DHH staff will be able to redirect their efforts to developing better programs and services for students with hearing loss.

The McBurney program pays for the direct costs of delivering mandated academic services and accommodations to students with disabilities. Our budget has not grown, however, to cover costs associated with the administrative infrastructure needed to support the delivery of those services. Infrastructure costs, including database development and web applications, have historically been funded by private donations. It is appropriate that we turn to the Madison Initiative as a source of funding for this improvement in our service delivery process.

Students who are Deaf or hard of hearing are enrolled in majors across the campus ranging from horticulture to veterinary medicine. Their co-curricular involvement is as diverse as their academic interests. By being efficient, accurate, and timely in meeting sign language interpreter and captioner requests for access to curricular and co-curricular activities, students with hearing loss are more likely to participate in campus activities when the barrier of a cumbersome request process is removed. Their fellow classmates, faculty and staff also benefit from the inclusion of students who are Deaf or hard of hearing in a wide array of activities that create the Wisconsin Experience.

Thank you for considering our proposal. If there are additional questions regarding this project, please feel free to contact me or Terri Oehrlein, the project director.

Sincerely,

Cathy Trueba
Director, McBurney Disability Resource Center

Cc: Lori Berquam, Dean of Students

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