



PHOTO, 4B
"What Were They Wearing" Exhibit

A-State students want an American Sign Language Degree program

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STAFF WRITER

A petition was placed on a bulletin board in the Reng Student Union outside of the campus store, filled with signed pledges for the prospects of adding American Sign Language (ASL) as a degree program at Arkansas State University.

Although there are no conclusive answers to the origins of the petition, the number of names signed show that the interest for ASL interpretation is high.

Riley West, a junior business major from Paragould, Arkansas previously wrote her signature on the petition.

"It would be great for the local education community and as an addition to other majors, either a double major or a minor," West said. "As a business student, having the option to take language classes to better my personal communication skills is an amazing opportunity."

In her free time West tried to learn ASL but wasn't able to retain much due to the complexity of it. West said having a program for the subject would make it easy to understand and learn, continuing her efforts to become better at ASL.

Sarah Scott, an assistant professor of communication studies and director for the oral communication general education program, has her research interest in rhetorics of disability and deafness.

Her research area of deaf studies and sign language plays a huge role in her fourth upcoming book which centers

on media representation of deaf individuals in contemporary films.

Her interest began when the Jonesboro community offered classes to learn basic level ASL, the instructor at the time was a woman that was highly active in the deaf community. Whilst attending the classes, Scott also would attend a deaf club once a month and would go to a church that was accompanied by a deaf traveling minister to have deaf service. These small presences to these events began the journey for learning more about deaf culture.

"Deaf culture really became the forefront of my research," Scott said.

ASL is the third most common spoken language in the United States, a visual and conceptual language. Even when there is about one percent of Americans that use ASL (deaf or are hard of hearing) representation matters, not with just learning the language but its people and its culture.

"I will say that I think there is a fear of American Sign Language being considered a trendy thing," Scott said. "There's skepticism when we prioritize the voice and actions of hearing people versus those who are actually a part of the community."

A-State's efforts to accommodate students on campus who may be hard of hearing or deaf are based on what the student needs.

"American Sign Language is a language in its own right," said Dominique White, a senior associate director for access and accommodation services.



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF VECTEEZY

The American Sign Language Alphabet .

The use of interpreters, an outsourced service, is what's being used currently for the accommodation of a student present on campus. Alternatives consist of captioning services (live or audio), permitting to have note takers with the student in class, obtaining lectures ahead of time for the student or receiving guided notes from professors.

Although there is no international student on campus who is either deaf or

hard of hearing, White said Access and Accommodation Services would work with the international program.

They would discuss how the student wishes to be accommodated and find the best means to serve them, whether it's with the alternative options or obtaining an interpreter who is both competent in the native language needed and ASL.

"Of course, when we're talking about accommodating

students, we want to make sure that our sign language interpreters are certified at a certain level," White said.

Arkansas State University Online associates with an online seminar series in which offers enrollment options for a course bundle "Discover American Sign Language Series," a 48-hour course that can be taken now in April, May, June and or July.

The Women's Leadership Center hosts Pack Gives Back: Food Drive

CAROLINE AVERITT

PHOTO EDITOR

The Women's Leadership Center is collecting canned food and monetary donations to benefit the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas. The food drive began April 3 and will continue through April 14.

The Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas raises awareness of food insecurity and works with a network of nonprofit programs to provide hunger relief to those in need throughout Northeast Arkansas.

Megan Gray, a junior business administration and economics major from Maumelle, Arkansas, interns at the Women's Leadership Center and is co-leading this project.

"Food insecurity is a major problem, so we're just trying to face that. Additionally, with the tornado in Wynne, there's also opportunity for people to donate for that specific cause," Gray said.

Feeding America estimated one in seven people and one in five children

face hunger in Arkansas.

Christie Jordan, CEO of the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas, said, "The Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas serves 12 counties in the northeast corner of the state and there are more than 65,000 people in Northeast Arkansas who live in food insecure households. So, that's 17.6% of the people in Northeast Arkansas that do not have a consistent source of nutritious food for a productive life."

Jordan said every dollar donated to the food bank can provide three and a half meals to people facing hunger in Northeast Arkansas.

Gray said, while monetary donations go further, they still want to receive canned foods as well.

"One dollar is 3 1/2 meals. But if you have extra Flex or just have food you want to get rid of before you move out, then that is also a great opportunity," Gray said.

Additionally, Jordan said since they do not have a regular donor for canned goods, they often rely on food

drives to receive those items.

The Women's Leadership Center hosts many events to benefit the community throughout the year as a part of the Step Up, Reach Back program.

Madelyn Carson, the program coordinator and assistant director of the Women's Leadership Center said, "It's called Step Up, Reach Back because our interns step up to getting mentored and then they reach back to the community. So, our Pack Gives Back: Food Drive is just one of those reach back programs."

Canned goods can be donated in boxes around campus. The main boxes can be found in the Neil Griffin College of Business, the Red Wolf Center, the International Center and the third floor of the Dean B. Ellis Library.

Monetary donations can be given through links on the Women's Leadership Center's social media pages or can be donated directly at foodbankofnea.org. They will accept Venmo



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Attendees at Arkansas State Women's Leadership Conference.

donations to [@Megan-Gray-204](https://www.instagram.com/Megan-Gray-204) and CashApp donations to [@Rachelwasham](https://www.instagram.com/Rachelwasham). "Anything helps," Gray said.

"If we have a lot of people doing small donations, it really adds up."

United Voices Gospel Choir Awards Banquet set; tickets on sale now

The United Voices Gospel Choir is selling tickets for its awards banquet, scheduled for April 29 at Cooper Alumni Center. Ticket prices are still \$25 per person. This event will include a meal, special award presentations, highlights from the 2022-23 season, and a musical selection from the choir.

Spring Fest scheduled for Thursday

The Student Activities Board will host Spring Fest on April 13, at 6 p.m., on the Heritage Plaza Lawn. Students are encouraged to enjoy food, music and rides on the lawn provided by the SAB.

NSSLHA Scholarship 5K Run planned

The A-State chapter of the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association is hosting a 5k beginning at 8 a.m., April 29, to raise funds for a communication disorders student scholarship through the Dr. McDaniel Scholarship fund. The race will begin and end at the Pavilion.

Disability Awareness Week events continue this week

Access and Accommodation Services will host events for Disability Awareness Week, April 10-14. Events will be held online and in-person.

BRIEFS COURTESY OF A-STATE DAILY DIGEST

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- Pink is the best color

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- Campus Crime

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- How climate change and the rise of severe weather affects A-State

SPORTS, 1B

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