Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services at WKU

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Fewer than one in twenty Americans are currently deaf or hard of hearing, including around 20 thousand students on college campuses.

For years WKU has offered resources to help hearing impaired students on their academic journey, as Amy Bingham explains in this week’s View from the Hill.

Lots of coordination, care and support goes into scheduling for deaf and hard of hearing services, to make sure students get the academic accommodations they need to succeed.

Freshman Abby Turner had several ear surgeries as a child but it wasn’t until last year that she was diagnosed as hard of hearing.

“Whenever I went to the ENT, the ear, nose and throat doctor, it was just for normal checkup and they did a hearing test on me and it was like not good.”

Prior to starting at WKU, a quick search of accommodations for hearing loss led Abby to the Student Accessibility Resource Center where captioning is part of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services.

“I usually sit up front with my student so I can hear better and she can hear better also.”

Peggy Bonner has been captioning for hearing impaired students at WKU for the past ten years.

“We call it speech to text so as the professor or the students are speaking I’m typing and it also shows up on my student’s laptop or iPad at the same time.”

With 23 students using captioning, either in person or from a remote service, it’s a huge puzzle to cover all the classes.

“The big challenge in coordinating those services at the beginning of the semester is the communication piece, communicating with the instructors, making sure students have what they need.”

Abby says no longer missing information is paying off.

“I made good grades last semester. It was all A’s and B’s. It’s just made a huge difference.”

It’s a pay off for those providing the service as well.

“It’s very challenging for them and I like to give them help so they’ll do better and have the same access as other students in the classroom.”

To qualify for assistance you must register with the Student Accessibility Resource Center or SARC located in DSU and provide medical documentation from a licensed care provider.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

The phone number for SARC is 270-745-5004.

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