

Christopher D. Johnson, Doctoral Student
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Professional Summary

Transformational and adaptable professor and academic leader with over a decade of experience serving mainstreamed, Deaf, hard-of-hearing, and Deafblind communities. Specializing in deaf residential K-12 institutions, higher education leadership, and [cooperative education \(Co-op\)](#), I cultivate equitable, accessible, and inclusive learning environments. My expertise spans program development, team leadership, budget management, and the promotion of social justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (JDEIA). Nationally, only 2% of the population identifies as deaf or hard of hearing, with a mere 0.4% of Black Deaf individuals aged 25 to 64 holding doctoral, medical, or juris doctor degrees. While this statistic is improving, the Deaf community still faces barriers, with an employment rate of just approximately 53%. My work centers on breaking these barriers by designing innovative educational programs and outreach initiatives that meet the unique needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing, and L2 learners. Furthermore, I excel in fostering entrepreneurial collaborations with state and educational agencies. Fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) and grounded in the ethos of servant leadership, I bring a deep commitment to advancing the culture and empowerment of the Deaf, signing, and mainstream community.

Areas of Expertise

ASL Education & Deaf Studies Curriculum Development | Strategic Planning & Program Governance | Budget Management & Resource Allocation | Cooperative Education Leadership & Intercultural Competency Training | Educational Policy & Compliance (IDEA) | Staff Supervision & Professional Development | Community Outreach & Advocacy | Disability Justice & Inclusive Excellence

Education

National University

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership, Expected Graduation 2026

- Alpha Delta Epsilon chapter of Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society
- Phi Chapter of Omega Nu Lambda Honor Society

Gallaudet University

Master of Arts, Sign Language Education, 2019

University of West Georgia

Bachelor of Science, Sport Management

- Sport Management Honor Society Club

Certifications

- Inner Alignment Leadership, LLC | Leadership Certification, 2024
- Deafhood Foundation, Inc. | Deafhood 101, 2023
- Public Relations Society of America, Inc. | DE&I Communication Strategy Certificate, 2021

Professional Experience

University of Cincinnati | May 2024 – Present

Assistant Dean of Inclusive Excellence

- Spearheaded cultural belonging and Inclusive Excellence initiatives, including implementing culturally relevant teaching practices and internship programs for Co-op and non-Co-op majors.
- Partnered with faculty, staff, and an external consultant to design a comprehensive certificate pilot program that promotes inclusionary practices, especially increasing the likelihood for students to spark critical thinking skills in and outside of the classroom.
- Developed three-year budgetary plans and ensured proper resource allocation for Inclusive Excellence initiatives shifting toward people-oriented and intercultural and growth mindset.
- Expanded the Office of Inclusive Excellence by advertising both designated interpreter (DI) and ASL student worker positions. The Associate Director position that reports to me is the queue which demonstrates my ability to create a foundation and expand productivity within 120 days in the Office.

Creative Minds LLC | 2021 – Present

Chief Executive Officer and Founder

- Directed organizational strategy for accessibility in education and professional development programs for Deaf communities.

- Established partnerships, including with the California School for the Deaf, to advocate for curricular diversification impacting Deaf and hard-of-hearing students.
- Developed entrepreneurial projects delivering services such as ASL interpretation, translation, and advocacy for employment opportunities within the Deaf community.

Gallaudet University | 2021 – 2024

Project Manager, Division of Equity, Diversity & Inclusive Excellence (DEDI)

- Managed the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence Deaf-Centric Institute with a \$50,000 budget, focusing on supporting the unique educational and vocational needs of Deaf and hard-of-hearing students.
- Designed workshops and training sessions on anti-oppression and DEI principles specifically for Deaf communities.
- Collaborated on institutional programs that addressed systemic barriers faced by Deaf students in K-12 and higher education environments.

Community Relations Manager, University Communications (UC) | 2021 – 2022

- Built and nurtured relationships with internal and external minority stakeholders including the National Association of the Deaf, National Black Deaf Advocates, Greater Washington Asian Deaf Association, and Council de Manos as a liaison to the office of the University Communications
- Amplified the mission and vision of the institution to global audiences as the program ambassador by sharing Black Deaf Excellence stories and addressing any multicultural experience gaps identified through technical assistance consultations with divisions and units on campus
- Assisted with the implementation of strategic communication methodologies that support the Anti-oppression plan and Equity and Belonging Initiatives to increase awareness of respect for multiculturalism, diverse backgrounds, physical ability, intersectionality, and gender differences
- Established ongoing recruitment and outreach to create a pipeline of diverse American Sign Language (ASL) talents and recruited signers for bi-weekly *Hi5* bilingual e-newsletters

Howard Community College | 2021 – 2024

Adjunct Instructor

- Designed and developed a diversified American Sign Language (ASL) curriculum that supports both course objectives and learning outcomes
- Formulated strategic plan(s) with other adjunct instructors on developing a list of collaborative deaf-related events for ASL students to attend and build connections with the deaf and signing community

North Hennepin Community College | 2022

Adjunct Instructor

- Designed and developed a Black Culture and History curriculum that supports both course objectives and learning outcomes where it demonstrates an awareness of the individual and institutional dynamics of unequal power relations between groups in contemporary society
- Identified and classified readings and discussions among students to reframe their critical thinking process to analyze their own attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs regarding diversity, oppression, and racism in the deaf community

University of Minnesota-Duluth | 2020 – 2021

Professor

- Designed and developed a diversified American Sign Language (ASL) curriculum that supports both course objectives and learning outcomes
- Articulated and coordinated a campus-wide event titled “2021 Black History Month Celebration” for the campus community in collaboration with external stakeholders.
- Served on the Strategic Planning Committee under the College of Education and Human Service Professions

Missouri Commission for The Deaf and Hard of Hearing | 2019 – 2020

Deaf Community Advocate

- Led sponsorship requests and maintained stewardship with potential donors for all deaf and hard of hearing events
- Liaised between Missouri constituents and state and community leaders to effectively communicate critical updates impacting the deaf/hard-of-hearing community
- Executed the coordination of presentations, public awareness activities, workshops, and law enforcement training sessions on hearing loss, deafness, American Sign Language, legal rights, and services available for persons with hearing loss
- Oversaw and conduct trend analyses of data regarding targeted outreach efforts and diversified advocacy resources for deaf and hard of hearing Missourians
- Arranged Deaf Empowerment Symposiums and Deaf Awareness programs to disseminate handbooks concerning the legal rights of people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and various other materials relating to hearing loss
- Managed MCDHH social media accounts and performs market research for minority-owned vendors

Tennessee School for the Deaf | 2016 – 2018

Youth Service Worker

- Launched the Cup of Wisdom Club for residential high school students, securing funding to support the program's development.
- Participated in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings to advocate for the after-school needs of Deaf students in residential settings.
- Organized community engagement opportunities and fundraising events to support residential education services.

Presentations & Workshops

[Click here](#) to review a complete list of keynote or workshop presentation

Affiliations & Leadership

- Vice Chair, National Conference on Race and Ethnicity National Advisory Council's Accessibility in Academy Committee, 2024
- DEIA Ad Hoc Chairperson, The Drake Group (TDG), 2024—present
- Inaugural Advisory Board Member, Center for Black Deaf Studies (CBDS), Gallaudet University, 2020 – 2024
- Vice Chair, Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf - Deaf Caucus, 2022 – 2023
- President, District of Columbia Area Black Deaf Advocates, Inc., 2021 – 2023

Awards & Recognition

- Equity & Social Justice Scholar Award, National Conference on Race & Ethnicity, 2024
- Marlon Monroyo Excellence in Volunteerism Award (on behalf of District of Columbia Area Black Deaf Advocates) - District of Columbia Mayor's Office of Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing, 2023
- Deaf Community Leader Award, Hamilton Relay, 2022
- Lillian Williams Champion of Diversity Award, University of West Georgia, 2022
- Susan M. Daniels Disability Mentoring Hall of Fame – National Disability Mentoring Coalition, 2020