

## **DeafTEC: Technological Education Center for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students**

### **Background**

On a broad, national level, DeafTEC: Technological Education Center for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students, a National Science Foundation Advanced Technological Education (NSF ATE) National Center of Excellence, serves as a resource for high schools and community colleges that educate deaf and hard-of-hearing (deaf/hh) students in STEM-related programs and for employers hiring deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. DeafTEC is also establishing a model within targeted regions of the country to create partnerships among high schools, community colleges, and industry to improve access to technological education and employment for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.

DeafTEC is housed at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), one of the nine colleges of the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York. NTID was established in 1968 to reverse the long history of underemployment and unemployment among our nation's deaf/hh citizens. Today, more than 1,300 deaf/hh students study, share residence halls, and enjoy social life together with 16,000 hearing students on the RIT campus.

The goal of DeafTEC is to successfully integrate more deaf/hh individuals into the workplace in highly skilled technician jobs, in which these individuals are currently underrepresented and underutilized. To achieve this goal, DeafTEC is establishing:

- (1) a comprehensive website ([www.deaftec.org](http://www.deaftec.org)) that will serve as a clearinghouse for information related to technical education and technician careers for deaf/hh students, including career awareness materials, strategies for improving student access to learning, instructional strategies and materials for teachers to use to develop the English and math skills of deaf/hh students, as well as information for employers to help them provide a more accessible workplace; and
- (2) a model within three targeted regions of the country—California, Florida, and Texas—that will create partnerships among high schools, community colleges, and industry to improve access to technological education and employment for deaf/hh students.

### **Documented Results**

DeafTEC is impacting the knowledge and attitudes of high school teachers, community college faculty, employers, and the deaf/hh students themselves in terms of the educational and employment opportunities and options available to these students. It also provides professional development experiences to improve the instructional expertise of high school and community college teachers in STEM subjects and in pedagogy that will provide greater access to learning for deaf/hh students, as well as all students in the classroom, particularly other students with language difficulties. Finally, DeafTEC is establishing and expanding pathways for deaf/hh students to transition from high school to college in several STEM areas through a national dual-credit program.

### **Potential Applications**

DeafTEC's professional development and assistive technologies can benefit students with different learning styles. In particular, its use of universal design for learning would be beneficial to students with language or other learning difficulties.

### **For More Information**

Visit [www.deaftec.org](http://www.deaftec.org)