

**Monitoring Report to the  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education**

**GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY  
Washington, DC 20002**

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**Prepared by  
Gallaudet University Faculty and Staff**

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**Chair of Small Visiting Team:  
Dr. Jonathan Gibraltar**

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## Introduction

### Institutional Context

This is a third report to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education concerning issues first presented to Gallaudet University in November 2006. These issues arose following submission of Gallaudet's [Periodic Review Report](#) in June 2006 and surrounding the appointment of a new president in May 2006. In October 2006 the Gallaudet board terminated the contract of Jane K. Fernandes, Gallaudet provost and president-designate, and appointed Robert R. Davila as president after a new search. On January 2, 2007, President Davila initiated a planning process to respond to the commission's concerns.

The university submitted a [Supplemental Information Report](#) on April 3, 2007, which included details about the president's action plans for responding to the commission's concerns. This was followed by a small team visit on April 30 and May 1, 2007. Thereafter, the commission informed Gallaudet that:

- (a.) it had placed the university on probation, effective June 28, 2007;
- (b.) a monitoring report would be required by September 15, 2007;
- (c.) a follow-up small team visit would be scheduled for October 9 and 10, 2007.

Since then, significant progress has occurred in each area of concern expressed by the commission. Dr. Davila's first steps included reorganizing the university's academic administration, under the leadership of a new provost, Dr. Stephen Weiner, and appointing work groups to address the commission's concerns. More than 150 faculty, staff and students volunteered to work through the summer on these and other critical issues, and the board met in three extra sessions during this period. Dr. Weiner immediately appointed directors of Institutional Research and Assessment and a new Academic Affairs Management Team. These initiatives produced the results reported in the [university's monitoring report](#) and [exhibits](#) submitted on September 14, 2007. The result of the small team visit in October was the commission's improving Gallaudet's probationary status to warning. The commission also required the university to submit a second monitoring report on April 1, 2008, addressing eight of the commission's fourteen standards for accreditation, with a subsequent small team visit in April.

This report, then, documents compliance with the eight standards on which the commission has asked Gallaudet to report, as well as other commission recommendations. Information herein presents evidence of progress beyond what the university has already reported and, with very few exceptions, does not repeat previously submitted material. In addition, this report provides detailed and specific evidence of Gallaudet's response to other recommendations from the commission. Further responses to recommendations from the 2001 MSCHE self-study—notably diversifying the university's funding base and library resources—are addressed in standards 2 and 11.

## Standard 1: Mission Statement and Goals

### Overview

Gallaudet University began a mission review process in the spring 2007 semester that culminated in the approval of the new [mission and vision statements](#) by the Board of Trustees in November 2007. The university has also developed goals and objectives that are consistent with the mission. These were presented to the Board of Trustees in February 2008 as part of the [Gallaudet University Strategic Plan 2007–2011](#). Gallaudet’s mission statement defines the university’s purpose and guides its actions from day-to-day instruction to long-range planning. The vision statement elaborates on key aspects of the institution’s unique mission. The strategic goals, together with outcome-oriented objectives and key indicators, enable the university to put its mission and vision statements into practice.

### Development of the Mission and Vision Statements

The university’s mission statement, goals and objectives were developed through collaborative participation by those who facilitate institutional improvements and development. During spring 2007, the president convened a diverse 20-member [Mission Work Group](#), which included faculty, staff, governance officers and students, to lead the development of the new mission statement. The work group considered internal and external contexts and constituencies, including the current university mission statement; the Education of the Deaf Act; the MSCHE *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*; research on the future demographics of potential Gallaudet students; mission statements of other colleges and universities, especially those with cultural and bilingual characteristics; and suggestions collected from faculty throughout the spring semester. (See “[Contexts for Mission and Strategic Planning](#).”) Once it completed a [draft](#), the Mission Work Group engaged alumni, students, staff, faculty, administrators, the president and the Board of Trustees in a dialogue which led to the current mission and vision statements. (See “[Process for Developing the Gallaudet University Mission and Vision Statements](#).”)

### Implementing the Mission and Vision: Community Support and Understanding

Gallaudet’s new mission statement is widely known by its constituents, as it has significantly influenced the university’s everyday functions. The new mission statement has guided curricular reform, the development of undergraduate learning outcomes, strategic planning, resource allocation and the alignment of revised and new unit, program, departmental and school statements. (See mission statements of the [Graduate School](#) and the [Undergraduate School](#).) The mission and vision statements and the strategic plan are accessible through links on the university’s [home page](#).

Gallaudet’s revised mission statement makes explicit inclusive ASL/English bilingualism as central to the institution’s purpose. The university recognizes that it must engage in sustained information sharing and inquiry into the nature and practices of what it calls “inclusive bilingualism.” (See “[Questions and Answers about ASL/English Bilingualism at Gallaudet](#)” and “[Bilingualism Resources](#).”) To begin a campus-wide dialogue on the new mission statement and its implications, the Provost’s Office hosted a series of open meetings and events during the fall 2007 semester. Surveys from these meetings indicate campus constituencies increasingly understand the mission statement. Community feedback also indicated that issues of bilingualism were discussed in an environment of respect for diversity of opinions. (See “[Inclusive Bilingualism: Understanding the Gallaudet Mission](#)” for a description of events and survey responses.)

Faculty discussion groups with the provost and president have led to the university's commitment to establish an ASL/English Bilingual Resource Center. A two-day planning event will be held April 4–5, 2008 to lay the foundation for this initiative, which will consolidate research, faculty development and instructional material that supports the bilingual mission. This resource center will continue to sponsor events to promote campus-wide understanding of what bilingualism means at Gallaudet University. Intergroup dialogues, as guided by the [Gallaudet Diversity Action Plan](#), will provide additional opportunities for community members to discuss language—as well as other—diversity issues. (See Standard 6 for more details on the Diversity Action Plan.)

While the mission statement has effectively guided planning and teaching at Gallaudet, the viability of a bilingual mission in a time of shifting demographics remains. People ask, “How can a mission with a core focus on ASL/English inclusive bilingualism be viable in an era of the Americans with Disabilities Act and cochlear implants?” Gallaudet has always attracted students with varying degrees of ASL proficiency from oral, mainstreamed and residential school backgrounds. These students have chosen Gallaudet largely because of its unique bilingual environment, which affords students full participation in academic discourse, cocurricular activities and social life. This trend seems to be consistent with the views of freshmen who have cochlear implants and/or who are new signers. When asked why they chose to come to Gallaudet, a [focus group](#) of new signers explained, “they wanted an environment where sign language is used, where they would have direct communication in the classroom, and where they would meet other deaf and hard of hearing students.” These responses confirm that, historically, Gallaudet's *raison d'être* has been its bilingual environment, and now, the mission statement makes explicit what has been implicit since the university's inception in 1864.

Further, Gallaudet's bilingual mission comes at a time when American higher education is experiencing a rapid increase in the study and research of American Sign Language. According to a [Modern Language Association report](#), ASL is currently the fourth most frequently taught language other than English in four-year colleges and universities and the second most taught language in two-year colleges. ASL enrollment between 1998 and 2002 increased 432%; from 2002–2006, there was an additional 29% increase. (Furman, Goldberg & Lusin, 2007) The growing list of colleges and universities accepting ASL as foreign language credit attests to the cultural and intellectual capital of ASL. The bilingual mission strategically asserts Gallaudet's leadership in the study and use of ASL in higher education.

In addition to its focus on the particular situation of ASL/English bilingual education, Gallaudet looked to other higher education institutions with missions that are explicitly bilingual, such as the University of Ottawa. Experience at these institutions has shown that a sizeable number of students enroll using only one language (like mainstream deaf students who have previously used English as their first language). Those students who enter as monolinguals and graduate as bilinguals to varying degrees experience positive psychological growth and a wider social outlook. (Purser, 2000; Clement, 2007; Clement, Noels & MacIntyre, 2007)

Gallaudet University's ASL/English Bilingual Resource Center will continue to work to increase the presence and rationale for the academic, cultural and social benefits of Gallaudet's historic mission.

If a bilingual mission was a concern to prospective students, then the university would expect a decline in the number of applications this year over last. However, the number of applicants is comparable to last year's at the same time. Further, the first cohort of students (fall 2007), for whom

ASL courses are required, reports the highest “sense of belonging” to the university in the five years of collecting data on the Educational Benchmarking, Inc. First-Year Initiative Assessment. New students learning ASL for the first time also report they appreciate the educational and social benefits of acquiring ASL skills.

### Implementing the Mission, Goals and Objectives: The Strategic Plan

The [university goals](#) are consistent with the university’s mission and vision statements:

Mission Statement	Goal
Embrace ASL/English bilingualism	Goal 1 articulates the outcomes of being a bilingual university.
Ensure the intellectual and professional advancement of students	Goal 2 commits the university to providing rigorous programs.
Recognize the multicultural and diverse nature of the university	Goal 3 requires the university to create a climate of respect “for the full range of human diversity.”
Call attention to Gallaudet’s “proud tradition of research and scholarly activity”	Goal 4 asserts that faculty and students “conduct exemplary research, scholarship, outreach and creative activities.”

Just as the mission and vision statements were developed through [collaborative participation](#), so too were the goals and objectives. The process involved stakeholders in feedback and preliminary discussions of how the strategic plan might influence the university. (See “[The Gallaudet Strategic Planning Process](#).”) This process will continue in fall 2008, as departments and programs develop their own strategic plans that align with the institution’s. (See [Strategic Planning Timeline: 2008-2009](#).)

### Implementing the Mission and Goals: Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

The evolving mission statement and goals guide the concurrent development of new [institutional undergraduate learning outcomes](#) and a new [general studies curriculum](#). For example, Undergraduate Learning Outcome 1, “Students will use American Sign Language (ASL) and written English to communicate effectively with diverse audiences, for a variety of purposes, and in a variety of settings,” reflects the inclusion of bilingualism in the mission statement. All undergraduate courses must address this outcome through specific learning opportunities, which are assessed for their effectiveness. The Council on Undergraduate Education monitors progress through newly revised [curriculum action forms](#), which require evidence that this objective is adequately addressed. In addition, the new general studies curriculum supports this outcome by requiring a foundational sequence of courses that each focus on English and ASL proficiency. The bilingual mission is also guiding pedagogical and technological initiatives by increasing the number of English texts introduced in the classroom, as evidenced by the [Gallaudet Classroom English Text Project](#). The [English Think Tank 2007](#) conference further demonstrates Gallaudet’s commitment to developing pedagogy for teaching academic discourse in both English and ASL. The alignment of unit and program mission statements with the institution’s also reflects how the mission statement and goals are shaping program and curriculum development, student learning outcomes and assessment. For examples, see the Web sites of the departments of [English](#), [Philosophy and Religion](#), and [Hearing, Speech and Language Sciences](#).

While the mission statement and goals set the purposes and direction for the institution, the [strategic plan objectives and indicators](#) provide focus for action planning. For example, while “inclusive bilingual environment” is the goal, “ASL and English literacy” and “develop consensus on implementation of bilingual education” define what the university must accomplish. Indicators such as “ASL and English learning outcomes assessments” and “documentation of access strategies used” further guide the institution in implementing the mission statement, goals and objectives. For AY 2007–2008 the university has emphasized action planning for strategic goals 1, 2 and 3; for AY 2008–2009 the focus will be on action plans for goals 4 and 5.

Mission statement, goals and objectives are guiding faculty in curriculum development and assessment; they are also guiding the administration in resource allocation. Resources have been committed for goals 1 and 2 (“inclusive bilingual environment” and “academically challenging programs”) through the [ASL/English Bilingual Resource Center](#) and the commitment of additional faculty to the general studies curriculum and ASL courses. Five full-time temporary positions (with candidate interviews scheduled for five new tenure track positions) have been added in the Department of ASL and Deaf Studies. In addition, the university has committed major resources (Ombuds Office, diversity consultants, and the Diversity Action Plan) to support Goal 3. For additional evidence of strategic goals that focus on “student learning, other outcomes and institutional improvement,” see standards 2 and 11.

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## Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal

### Overview

Planning, resource allocation and renewal are supported by several key institutional processes and represented in major planning documents, including: (a) the [Gallaudet Mission and Vision statements](#); (b) the [U.S. Department of Education Performance and Accountability Program Performance Plan](#); (c) the [Facilities Master Plan \(FMP\)](#); (d) the [Gallaudet University Strategic Plan 2007–2011](#) and (e) the [university budget](#).

### A Unique Heritage

Gallaudet's overall approach to planning and resource allocation—based on its mission statement and goals, and responding to assessment results—is best understood in the context of its almost unique relationship with the federal government. Gallaudet and Howard universities are the only two private higher education institutions that receive federal appropriations for the bulk of their operating funds. Accordingly, both universities were established by Congress; Gallaudet's authorizing legislation is the [Education of the Deaf Act \(EDA; Pub. L. No. 99-371\)](#). Under the EDA, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services oversees Gallaudet's appropriation and includes it in the annual federal budget process as a line item in the Administration budget submission to Congress for the Department of Education.

Since passage of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) in 1993, Gallaudet has been obliged to maintain a GPRA strategic plan and associated indicators of performance that are updated annually through the Department and are reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget and the Congressional appropriations committees. (Gallaudet GPRA information is posted on the [U.S. Department of Education Web site](#).) GPRA objectives and indicators have long been part of the indicators of institutional effectiveness reviewed by the Board of Trustees and are now integrated into the [Gallaudet University Strategic Plan 2007–2011](#).

### A Record of Renewal

Gallaudet has a record of successful planning, resource acquisition and allocation, and institutional renewal. Following intensive planning in the 1980s, the university developed new programs, hired additional faculty, and acquired an auxiliary campus to serve a short-term increase in the college age deaf population caused by the rubella epidemic of the 1960s. During the 1990s, after that cohort had been served, the university conducted a comprehensive program review, resulting in the closure of the auxiliary campus and several programs, including its traditional developmental program. The university simultaneously reduced the number of faculty and staff as the student body shrank. The number of total employees has declined from a peak of about 1,450 in the mid-1980s to less than 1,100 currently, and new staffing plans are in place to bring about further reductions. (See Appendix D.)

In the 1980s, Gallaudet also began strategically seeking ways to become less dependent upon federal funding. Two approaches have been to increase its endowment from \$10 million in 1987 to about \$200 million today and to increase tuition rates from the mean for land grant institutions to the top of the range. As a result, federal support declined from 85% of total revenues in 1981 to 66% in 2007. During the same period, the university renovated the primary academic and administrative buildings, added a conference center, expanded the field house and student union building, and developed academic and institutional technology resources few other universities can match.

Gallaudet has developed and expanded its facilities planning to encompass the redevelopment zone in the 6th Street market area across from campus. (See “[Capital City Market Development](#).”) The offices of the Provost and Vice President for Administration and Finance together engaged students in the planning and design process. [Deaf Space](#) design concepts, focusing on the visual needs and aesthetics of the deaf community, are increasingly informing all facilities planning in the [Facilities Master Plan](#).

### **Budget Process and Resource Allocation**

Between fiscal years 1998 and 2007, the university operated an annual budget process tied to institutional priorities identified in its strategic plan with explicit strategies for funding top priorities identified by the president. The [University Budget Committee](#) (UBC)—consisting of faculty, staff, students and representatives of the university’s major operating divisions—guided the process, which included mechanisms for identifying needs and acquiring funds to support renewal of both annual operations and physical facilities, including technology.

General financial performance is analyzed annually using [indicators](#) calculated from the university’s audited financial report and reported to the board at the February meeting. Long-term analysis of the Gallaudet budget, most recently updated in the [FY 2007 budget document](#), shows a substantial redistribution of funding from administrative to programmatic areas. Highlights include an operating surplus of almost 2% and distribution of expenses by function comparable to a peer group of similar high-cost small colleges and universities. It is especially noteworthy that Gallaudet devotes a higher proportion of its funding to instruction, research and public service than does the peer group.

The budget process was simplified for FY 2008 for several reasons: (a) reconsideration of funding priorities that resulted from the events related to the 2006 presidential search, (b) development and implementation of the university’s 2007–2011 strategic plan following the adoption of new mission and vision statements and (c) prospects for appropriated funding in FY 2008 that were unclear, given the ongoing political tensions between the White House and Congress. Consequently, the board agreed to a step-wise process that ended in the adoption of a final operating budget at the February 2008 meeting, following passage and signing of a federal appropriation bill in December 2007 that contained a substantial increase for Gallaudet.

For FY 2009 and beyond, the UBC has adopted a new budget process that requires more detailed justification of expenses at the dean and director level, decreases reliance on incremental funding of priorities and increases focus on redistribution and reallocation that responds to and supports [strategic objectives](#) and institutional renewal. An aspect of the justification process, as recommended in a study of the budget process conducted for the UBC, is more extensive use of comparative benchmarks. For example, the president has announced that a focus for his administration is diversity (Goal 3), and resources have been committed to the [President’s Seven-Point Diversity Agenda](#). As implementation of the [2007–2011 strategic plan](#) progresses, [key budget priorities](#) are identified through [action plans](#). Finally, the FY 2009 budget process calls for improved measures of the profitability of auxiliary enterprises.

As for effective allocation of future resources, Gallaudet acknowledges its high cost structure per student. Given the difficult prospects for revenue generation during a time when enrollment has declined and may decline further due to changes in admissions criteria, the university recognizes the long-term need to control and possibly reduce costs, which are driven by the size of its workforce. Because the employee (faculty and staff) to student ratio is approximately 1.7 to 1, the university has

developed [new position justification and review procedures](#) related to vacancies and position needs and has capped both employment and personnel costs. As a result, there is increased emphasis on reassigning personnel internally rather than hiring externally. Four deans have begun to review functions in Academic Affairs to identify and eliminate duplication and to ensure more efficient use of resources. The provost will receive a report recommending specific changes in organizational structure during summer 2008.

### **Planning Processes**

The university has clearly communicated and provided for constituent participation in its institutional planning processes. The [Gallaudet University Strategic Plan 2007–2011](#) was developed over the summer, fall and winter of 2007–2008. After the board's approval of the revised Gallaudet Mission Statement, Gallaudet's [internal and external contexts](#) were reviewed. The president then presented [five strategic goals](#) to the university at a [town hall](#) meeting in November 2007. The university also collected data to assess the viability of the mission statement and goals, as well as the climate for implementation. Survey responses (n = 68) collected at the town hall meeting indicated that respondents:

- Believe the plan will guide the university in the right direction (70% agreed or strongly agreed).
- Felt free to ask questions (70% agreed or strongly agreed).
- Felt the meeting was constructive and collegial (80% agreed or strongly agreed).

The board discussed and approved the five institutional strategic goals at a special meeting held November 27, 2007.

Academic Affairs, in conjunction with the President's Office, has assumed leadership in the planning process, with broad involvement by the campus community. The provost established the [Academic Quality and Accreditation Committee](#) (AQAC), a subcommittee of the Academic Affairs Management Team (AAMT) that includes AAMT members, representatives from undergraduate and graduate faculty and a liaison to the President's Office. The AQAC drafted action-oriented [objectives and indicators](#) for the strategic goals to support assessment of institutional effectiveness. Many of these indicators were derived from assessment sources that had previously been used by Gallaudet. For example:

- U.S. Department of Education (GPRA) indicators on enrollment, retention, graduation and postgraduation endeavors indicate the need for these areas to be a top priority in strategic actions for Gallaudet. (See objectives 2.1, 2.3 and 5.3.)
- Benchmarked surveys of student engagement and academic rigor (National Survey of Student Engagement and the Educational Benchmarking, Inc. First-Year Initiative Assessment) indicate a need to focus on engagement and rigor. (See objectives 2.2 and 3.1 as well as Standard 8 in this report.)
- Board of Trustees [indicators on Gallaudet workforce diversity](#) (see objective 3.2), as well as existing Gallaudet surveys (e.g., the Annual Campus Climate Survey for objectives 1.2, 3.1 and 3.3) inform the improvement in campus diversity and climate.

For some objectives, classic indicators of institutional effectiveness, such as faculty research and scholarship productivity, will be used (e.g., objectives 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3).

For some goals (e.g., inclusive ASL/English bilingual environment), appropriate assessments do not yet exist, so developing assessments and indicators is part of their action plans. The Gallaudet community was invited to submit feedback on possible assessments and indicators through deans, directors, department heads and the Faculty Senate. The Board of Trustees then reviewed and commented on the strategic plan in January 2008, followed by a discussion with AQAC and other campus stakeholders during its February meeting. The board's feedback on the plan and its implementation included:

- Consider adding specific goals/objectives related to technology: the creation and dissemination of technology related to accessibility (e.g., Technology Access Program), the use of technology to achieve a bilingual learning environment and student use of workplace technology.
- Consider explicitly adding undergraduate and graduate student involvement in research to Goal 4.
- Define the peer groups/data used for benchmarking.
- Provide the board with information on action plans, dashboard-type information and historical data showing trends.

The AQAC used [strategic plan feedback results](#) to revise objectives and indicators to form the current [Gallaudet University Strategic Plan 2007–2011](#). The May 2008 report to the board will describe benchmarking peers and historical data on indicators, as well as proposed targets.

### **Assessment of Strategic Goals and Objectives**

The strategic plan's action plans specify accountability for their implementation at all levels, whether it be with the provost, director, dean or department chair. Decision-making processes and authority, and also the means for assessing the effectiveness of planning, have been defined through interrelated planning cycles outlined in "[Planning, Resource Allocation, Institutional Renewal Cycles](#)." This document describes timelines for the review and assessment of the institutional mission statement and strategic plan, as well as student learning outcomes and academic program quality. While Academic Affairs, via AQAC, initiates institutional mission statement and strategic plan review, the review itself occurs through yearly progress reports on institutional effectiveness indicators to faculty and administrators.

The university will use benchmarks and targets for strategic plan indicators to assess progress on strategic plan objectives. Appropriate measures and data sources have been determined for about 75% of the indicators in the strategic plan. The remaining 25% are being operationalized through discussions of the best data sources for them. For example, for strategic objective 1.1 (ASL and English), would grades in the foundational General Studies Requirements (GSR) courses or outcomes assessment rubric scores be better measures? The university will finalize decisions based on these discussions before fall 2008.

The Office of Institutional Research has proposed preliminary benchmarks through the [Gallaudet Benchmark Project](#), and the AQAC is reviewing them. Benchmarks were developed using three different types of reference points: (a) comparison to institutions who are considered peers based on functional variables (e.g., size, Carnegie classification); (b) comparison to institutions who are considered peers based on student body characteristics (e.g., admissions policy, percentage of

minority group enrollment) or (c) ten-year Gallaudet historical baseline. The university has collected 2006 and/or 2007 baseline data for indicators that have measures and has tentatively set targets for AY 2008–2009. The Faculty Senate and the board will review targets and benchmarks at their May 2008 meetings. Summer will provide time to continue disseminating targets and progress indicators through user-friendly, Web-based dashboard indicators.

Beginning in fall 2008, departments and other units will develop their own strategic plans, with accompanying indicators that are aligned with the institutional strategic plan. (See [Strategic Planning Timeline: 2008–2009](#).) In May 2009, departments will report baselines and targets for their strategic plan objectives to the provost. As progress on indicators is assessed, strategies and actions can be modified to support greater effectiveness. Although the university anticipates a typical cycle for full review of the mission statement and institutional goals will take five years, it is currently scheduled to perform this review sooner, in 2010–2011.

## Standard 4: Leadership and Governance

### Overview

Gallaudet University is a private institution that receives substantial funding support from Congress under the authority of its enabling legislation, the [Education of the Deaf Act](#) (EDA). The EDA establishes the university's governing Board of Trustees and sets its membership at 21, including three public members—two members of the House of Representatives, who are appointed by the Speaker of the House, and one member of the Senate. The balance of the members are private citizens appointed by the seated trustees. The enabling legislation further stipulates that at least one trustee must be nominated by the Gallaudet University Alumni Association. Private trustees are limited to four 3-year terms or a total of twelve years of service. When vacancies occur, the university's broad-based constituencies, including employees, students and alumni, nominate candidates for appointment.

The board has complete legal authority to operate the university and to control its finances, to appoint a president, hire the Vice President for Administration and Finance, set guidelines for the appointment of other officers and faculty and confer degrees. To perform these responsibilities, the board has approved a set of guidelines that defines its operating principles and delegation of authority.

### Governance Documents and Structures

Gallaudet has written governing documents that delineate the [governance structure](#) and provide for [collegial governance](#). The board's [bylaws](#) also describe and define its operations and schedule of its regular meetings. These bylaws specify the board's involvement in the development and evaluation of degree programs, the conferring of tenure on faculty and its delegation of authority to the chief executive officer. The [Administration and Operations Manual](#) contains board-approved and administration-approved operating policies for Gallaudet University. For example, the manual states, "Policies that are submitted to and approved by the Board of Trustees are usually those that relate to and have a significant impact on institutional direction, values, priorities and principles, and/or on the human, fiscal or physical resources of the institution. The president is authorized by the board to implement administrative policies that relate to and have an impact on major functional operations, service delivery and university practices."

The board also reviews and approves [faculty guidelines](#). These guidelines generally relate to faculty qualifications for appointment, promotion, tenure and compensation. The faculty also maintains its own set of [bylaws](#) that are not subject to board approval. They define how [governance responsibilities are shared](#) between the board, administration and faculty, particularly with respect to curriculum, academic standards, faculty welfare and development, tenure and promotion, faculty-student affairs and other aspects of the university's programs. The faculty has a guiding role in the governance of the university and has a measure of responsibility for how the university operates. Recently the board has taken steps to be more actively informed of progress in areas such as curriculum reform and assessment of institutional effectiveness so that it can raise questions and ask for data earlier in the process. This is evidenced by a board decision to include reports on assessment of general studies requirements as well as a lively discussion of the strategic plan at the most recent board meeting in February. As a result, both the executive committee and the full board now regularly include these items on their agendas.

In response to MSCHE recommendations, a Shared Governance Work Group was among the six work groups established by the president in summer 2007. The group reviewed the [2003 governance consultants' report](#) and the 2002 Campus Climate Study, as well as models of governance from other institutions of higher education. Shared Governance Work Group recommendations that have been addressed include:

- The Faculty Senate
  - Eliminated the alphabetic committee names through a bylaws revision.
  - Changed the description of shared governance in the bylaws to include faculty, staff, students and administration and approved a nonvoting staff representative to the Senate.
  - Reduced the number of senators from 21 to 17.
- The Board of Trustees
  - Developed a plan to increase their meaningful interactions with the campus community.
  - Approved the concept of a nonvoting faculty representative to the Academic Affairs Committee, with plans to draft language for formal incorporation to board bylaws by the May meeting.
- The President established a committee to design an effective communication system for the university that links all constituents. (See [Communication Plan](#).)

In fall 2007, the faculty reviewed its bylaws to improve its effectiveness in governance. Results included clarified descriptions of [standing committees](#) and reduced redundancy in areas such as academic quality review. Another revision, the creation of the Senate Standing Committee on Tenure and Promotion (T & P), streamlines faculty governance by replacing two previous, separate T & P committees, one each in the College of Liberal Arts, Sciences, and Technologies (CLAST) and Graduate School and Professional Programs (GSPP). The new committee should strengthen academic integrity and support morale by increasing consistency in T & P decisions across colleges within the institution. The Faculty Senate legislative councils have also developed guidelines for departments and revised course and syllabus proposal templates to clarify their role in curriculum changes. (See [Council on Undergraduate Education](#), CUE and [Council on Graduate Education](#), CGE Web sites.)

During spring 2008, the faculty has continued its governance structure review to reduce the number of committees and redundancy of their charges. A special meeting of the university faculty has been called for March 31 to vote on a proposal to reduce the number of standing committees and to clearly assign responsibility for monitoring quality in education to the legislative councils (CUE and CGE).

### **Gallaudet's Board of Trustees**

Gallaudet has a governing body that reflects campus and public interests and that is an appropriate size to fulfill all its duties, including members with sufficient expertise to meet its fiduciary responsibilities. The size of the board is determined by federal law and includes one U.S. Senator and two members of the House of Representatives who can provide assistance to the board in interpreting its responsibilities under the Education of the Deaf Act. The university also receives oversight in this respect from the U.S. Department of Education and works cooperatively with department staff to develop an annual appropriation request to Congress. In recognition of Gallaudet's special mission, the board bylaws specify that a majority of its members shall be deaf or hard of hearing. The board seeks to maintain a mix of members with expertise in higher education

and in the business and financial worlds. Through their backgrounds, [board members](#) bring expertise to Gallaudet in the areas of advocacy, deaf cultural studies, disability studies, communication access, specialized communication technology, organizational change for diversity, employment, asset management and educational programs. The voting members of the board serve without compensation. The university's chief executive officer, its president, is an ex-officio, nonvoting member of the board and does not serve as the chair.

The legal and policy restrictions concerning the board's composition result in an economically diverse board, with some members able to contribute to the institution's financial resources more than others. Nevertheless, the board has a 100% donation rate, and all members are active in fund raising and representing the university's interests to the federal government. In addition, the university maintains a [Board of Associates](#) that takes a more direct role in fund raising and assisting in networking with businesses, corporations, foundations and organizations in the community. The Board of Trustees annually reviews the [university's financial documents](#) and analyses of its financial condition, oversees the audit and hiring of the university's chief financial officer, and reviews and approves annual operating and capital budgets. The board also actively reviews the annual university budget requests to Congress and approves the long-range financial plans that support these requests. The internal institutional budget process is conducted by a representative University Budget Committee comprised of administrators, faculty, staff and students. The committee reports through the president to the board's Committee on Financial and Institutional Affairs.

Gallaudet has a [conflict of interest policy](#) for the governing body, which ensures that any potential conflicts are disclosed and that they do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution. In addition, the Audit Committee of the board is developing a Campus Code of Conduct (i.e., whistleblower policy) and was instrumental in establishing the Ombuds Office.

As a result of the commission's accreditation review of Gallaudet during 2007, the board has increased its involvement in the university's relationship with MSCHE, especially with respect to formulating responses to issues raised by the commission and with respect to the university's compliance issues. The board has become more knowledgeable about commission requirements for accredited institutions and examined processes to ensure the university's effective oversight of its compliance with those requirements. The board recognizes the importance of accreditation in [section 1.5 of its bylaws](#) and asserts that it is institutional policy to seek and maintain such accreditation.

Gallaudet has a regular and intensive process for orienting new trustees, including a mentor program. Gallaudet has also established systematic processes and schedules for providing updates to current trustees on the institution's mission, organization, assessment of institutional effectiveness through strategic plan benchmarks, and academic programs and initiatives.

Gallaudet has an established procedure for the periodic, objective assessment of the governing body in meeting stated governing body objectives. With the assistance of Barbara Taylor, a recognized authority on university governing board management, and Donald Langenberg, former president and chancellor of the University of Maryland System, the board spent much of 2007 reviewing its own performance and developing and establishing a formal, ongoing performance review process. Examples of changes the board has instituted as a result of its assessment include:

- Enhanced effectiveness and responsiveness through Executive Committee meetings and communications between board meetings
- Updated areas of expertise sought for nominations (e.g., more higher education experience)
- Increased participation in purposeful engagements with constituents
- Increased involvement in accreditation process
- Improved the trustee nomination and selection process
- Established an annual self-assessment process

Gallaudet has a chief executive officer, appointed by the governing board, with primary responsibility to the institution. President Robert R. Davila was appointed by the board in December 2006, and began his service on January 2, 2007, following the revocation of the contract of President-designate Jane K. Fernandes. At the recommendation of MSCHE, the board has reviewed the selection process and will use the lessons learned from the review to modify the search process for the president who will succeed Dr. Davila in 2010. The selection process is expected to begin in 2009.

In keeping with [board guidelines and bylaws](#), Gallaudet conducts periodic assessment of the effectiveness of institutional leadership and governance. The board assesses the president's performance annually with the Committee on Compensation recommending the president's salary to the full board. The faculty also assesses the effectiveness of the president and other top administrative officers. The president, in turn, conducts annual evaluations of the effectiveness of his cabinet. Guidelines for evaluation of all university employees are contained in the [Administration and Operations Manual](#) and the [faculty guidelines](#). Faculty and staff are bound by a [conflict of interest policy](#) and annual filing of compliance forms.

To increase its meaningful interactions with the community, the board

- Has made changes to its meeting format, allowing for greater levels of interaction between the board and the campus community.
- Has directed that a set of communications guidelines be established that explain protocols for direct access to the board.
- Held a working meeting with faculty representatives to discuss the plan to appoint a nonvoting faculty representative to the Committee on Academic Affairs. The plan was approved at the October 2007 board meeting.

The board chair has already changed the meeting format, incorporating features such as classroom visits by trustees, and will be working with the President's Office this summer on a comprehensive review of the board schedule for the upcoming academic year. The board expects to approve the plans for the communications guidelines and the nonvoting faculty representative at the May 2008 meeting. The nonvoting faculty representative would then begin service at the October 2008 meeting.

During the past year, the Board of Trustees has been working on two fronts. First, the board has been working with all university stakeholders to meet accreditation standards and restore the institution to health. Second, the board has been engaged in an intensive study of what went wrong

with the 2006 presidential search that led to the closing of the campus and what must be done to undertake a search in the near future.

For the latter effort, the board has engaged in both critical self-reflection and dialogue with the campus community. It has hired a professional consultant to lead the board in both individual trustee self-evaluations and trustee evaluations of the board as a whole. Also, the full board has had several discussion sessions facilitated by the consultant. The board also established a task force representing all constituencies to study the 2006 presidential search. The task force produced an extensive written report with recommendations for planning the upcoming search process.

The board is scheduled to have a retreat in July or August 2008, to begin planning for the next presidential search process. At the retreat, the board plans to review the task force recommendations and design the search process, which will commence shortly thereafter.

Moreover, the board recognizes the need to balance shared governance, especially in the selection of the next president, with its own responsibility and authority to conduct the process and make the final decision. The board expects, in conjunction with the next presidential search process, to conduct an educational effort with all campus constituencies. Among the planned activities are town hall meetings to explain shared governance, the process to be used for the selection of the next president, and the roles of governing boards and university presidents.

The board is confident that through the next presidential search process, as with the Interim President Search Advisory Committee (IPSAC), it will secure the support of the university's many stakeholders and generate a sense of shared mission and respect for the board and the president who is selected.

### **Student Input Into Governance**

Gallaudet students interact with and provide input to the board and administration concerning decisions that affect them. Students interact directly with board members at the three regularly scheduled board meetings during the academic year. Leaders of student government bodies—Undergraduate Student Body Government (SBG) and Graduate Student Association (GSA)—report their goals, activities and concerns to the Board of Trustees. Students often discuss specific student-related topics in meetings with the board. Examples include a Committee on Student Affairs meeting with representatives of campus organizations to learn what challenges they face and a breakfast with GSA representatives in which issues, such as financial aid and new student orientation, were discussed.

Students operate their own governance system through the SBG and GSA. These two groups have constitutions and bylaws for operational purposes. They have budgets funded by unit fees collected from each full-time student and have authority to spend that money. The student legislative branch reviews and approves budget requests for student activities. The student newspaper (*The Buff and Blue*), the yearbook (*Tower Clock*), and the new Bison TV student organization also receive unit fees and are managed by students under the supervision of faculty or staff advisors.

Students participate in governance through various standing committees and advisory groups, for example:

- SBG and GSA have the right to appoint members to the University Budget Committee, which makes recommendations on resource allocations and tuition and fees to the president.
- SBG and GSA presidents participate in Faculty Senate meetings.
- Students were represented on the Interim Presidential Search Committee, the Task Force to Review the 2006 Presidential Search Process and the Provost Search Committee.
- Students serve on the University Parking Committee and Student Services Committee.

### Communication

Governance was raised as an issue in Gallaudet's last [MSCHE Self-Study Report](#) in 2001, leading Gallaudet to hire two governance consultants to assess and advise the university. Three of the four recommendations in the [consultants' follow-up report to MSCHE \(March 2003\)](#) addressed issues of communication and/or climate (e.g., trust and shifting focus from the past). In fall 2007 these reports, as well as the spring 2002 Campus Climate Study, formed the basis for generating the first version of an online [Annual Campus Climate Survey](#). Analyzing the original reports, a series of themes emerged including: respect, trust and fairness; institutional communication and information sharing; management style; language, specifically access to both ASL and English; and academic culture. The pilot administration of the Annual Campus Climate Survey in August 2007 provided the university with a first step in the development of a permanent and reliable index of major institutional concerns related to shared governance, academic culture, and institutional communication and information sharing. With the experience gained in that survey, a new survey will be conducted in spring 2008, and it will be available in English, Spanish and ASL to encourage a higher response rate.

In the meantime, Gallaudet has prioritized communication through various formats including: [On the Green](#), [Daily Digest](#), [Presidential Vlogs](#) ("Bob's Vlogs"), Town Hall Meetings, the campus intranet through [My.Gallaudet Blackboard Learning System](#), e-mail announcements, and Web publication. Some examples of online information sharing include:

- [Institutional Research](#): Performance comparisons, enrollment statistics and occasional reports
- [Office of Assessment](#): Resources, events and reports related to student learning assessment
- [University Strategic Plan](#): Introduction; planning process; goals, objectives and indicators
- [University Budget Committee](#): FY 2008 budget and FY 2009 budget process

The President's Office has also established a Communication Committee to assess the effectiveness and develop consistency of institutional communications for various purposes. (See [Communication Plan](#).) Perhaps equally important has been recognizing the need and value of proactively communicating important decisions that affect the work and well-being of the campus community. Thus, the President's Communication Committee, while codifying current approaches to communication, is also assessing which approaches are most effective for different kinds of information and issues.

In addition, campus units are increasingly incorporating communication into improvement processes. One example is the recent changeover in the Gallaudet e-mail system from Outblaze to Google Apps for Education. Communication for this change involved planning meetings with leadership in the President's and Provost's offices, face-to-face tutorials provided on a "just in time"

basis for all members of the community, [extensive documentation](#), [screencasts](#) and announcements in various locations. As a result, community response to the change, finalized in March 2008, was much more positive than previous changes in e-mail systems. Requests to the Technology Help Desk decreased significantly after the first week. During the pilot of the e-mail change, the number of users grew quickly—536 users chose to join Google Apps at least one month before the official start, and 1,098 users joined in the two weeks before the official start. The change to Google Apps helps make internal processes more effective with the ability to share calendars and collaborate simultaneously on documents.

## Standard 6: Integrity

### Overview

Gallaudet University adheres to ethical standards and its own stated policies in its dealings with the public and its constituencies. Gallaudet deals fairly and impartially with all faculty, students and staff. The [Administration and Operations Manual](#), the [Guidelines of the University Faculty](#), the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and the [Residence Hall Policies](#) specify processes that support fairness and equity. All four documents are available online and in hard copy.

### Campus Climate

The university has strengthened its climate for academic freedom and fostering respect among students, faculty, staff and administration since the 2006 presidential search. During summer 2007, the Diversity and Healing (D & H) Work Group was one of six work groups established by the president. The group reviewed prior assessments of climate and diversity, including consultant and work group reports, as well as documents from other higher education institutions that responded to climate and diversity concerns. The work group's three key recommendations were:

1. Hire consultants experienced in (a) designing a diversity implementation framework based on multicultural organization development and (b) working in a campus environment.
2. Develop and implement a formal campus intergroup dialogue program to promote increased intra-and cross-group awareness, knowledge and understanding to stimulate shared responsibility for social justice and strengthening the community.
3. Re-establish a [university-wide diversity council](#) (9–12 members representing community constituency groups).

In January 2008, the university hired CBG Consultants,<sup>1</sup> a group that focuses on multicultural organization development. The consultants are addressing the first two recommendations through intergroup dialogue as a strategy for organizational change. (See [Community Process](#); for more detail, see the [Gallaudet Diversity Action Plan](#).) Also in January 2008, the president appointed the [Gallaudet Diversity Team](#). At 21 members, this group is larger than the recommended 9–12 member diversity council, because its members were carefully selected to represent a wide range of constituencies.

That same month, the university also created the [Office of the Ombuds](#) to provide an effective conflict management resource to the campus community. The office can address issues, such as academic concerns, harassment and mistreatment, administrative nonacademic concerns and any other university-related concerns that interfere with studies. Although the office's current scope focuses only on students, it plans to expand its services to the entire campus community in fall 2009. The ombuds may also provide informal workshops, training, customized advice and consultation, mediation services, information-sharing about available resources and referrals, and policy analyses and recommendations. To provide the university with constructive feedback, the ombuds also will produce public annual reports to identify systemic trends and patterns.

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1. Two of the three members of CBG Consultants had already been leading multicultural curriculum transformation workshops for Gallaudet faculty for the past two years, thereby showing their ability to work in Gallaudet's environment.

During May 2007, the university used documents related to the 2002 Campus Climate Study as the basis for the first version of an online [Annual Campus Climate Survey](#). Analysis of the original reports showed that most issues fell under five major themes: respect, trust and fairness; institutional communication and information sharing; management style; language, specifically access to both ASL and English and academic culture. The pilot administration of the Annual Campus Climate Survey in August 2007 initiated the university's development of a permanent and reliable index of major institutional concerns. It has also occasioned some changes, such as:

- Increased and varied internal communication strategies along with a [communication plan](#).
- Inclusion of ASL and English literacy in Goal 1 (objective 1.1) of the [strategic plan](#).
- Resource allocation supporting both ASL and English learning opportunities and assessment through the Department of Applied Literacy and increased faculty in the Department of ASL and Deaf Studies. (See Standard 2.)
- Developing faculty strategies to strengthen academic culture and faculty-student interactions through professional development.
- Dissemination of ASL and Spanish versions of the Annual Campus Climate Survey—in addition to English—in spring 2008 to be more inclusive.

Other actions taken by Gallaudet to improve its climate for academic freedom and respect among students, faculty, staff and administration include:

- The [Faculty Guidelines](#), the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and the [Administration and Operations Manual](#) contain policies forbidding behavior that denies academic freedom, shows disrespect for diversity of opinion and/or discriminates against individuals based on race, creed, gender or disability (including hearing status).
- The Student Body Government has begun developing policies to encourage the expression of diverse opinions. Practices under consideration include (a) creating a “Speaker’s Corner” where anyone at any time may express their opinion and (b) holding regular all-campus convocations where faculty, staff, students and invited guests can discuss controversial issues.

Because the coexistence of ASL and English are central to the university's mission and values, the Provost's Office's initiative on [inclusive bilingual education](#) at Gallaudet has also been important in strengthening the campus climate. Support for bilingual education seems widespread, and audiences have found the events informative. One of the key objectives of the initiative was to “openly discuss how we can talk about contentious issues with collegiality and respect.” Evaluations of four panel discussions on bilingualism asked attendees to rate their agreement with the statement, “I felt free to ask questions and make comments, regardless of how ‘controversial’ a topic.” The responses are as follows:

Panel 1 (n = 87)		Panel 2 (n = 121)		Panel 3 (n = 42)		Panel 4 (n = 19)	
Strongly agree	26%	Strongly agree	48%	Strongly agree	31%	Strongly agree	37%
Agree	43%	Agree	31%	Agree	38%	Agree	21%
Mixed	22%	Mixed	15%	Mixed	17%	Mixed	37%
Disagree	7%	Disagree	2%	Disagree	12%	Disagree	5%
Strongly disagree	2%	Strongly disagree	4%	Strongly disagree	2%	Strongly disagree	0%

These responses indicate the majority of individuals felt they could express opinions on bilingualism in an atmosphere of collegiality and respect. Clearly, ongoing discussion is vital to Gallaudet and will continue via the [ASL/English Bilingual Resource Center](#) that is being established. (See Standard 1.)

### **Students**

The university is committed to treating students equitably and consistently and has made changes to increase students' sense of consistency with regard to disciplinary procedures. The Office of Student Conduct and the Campus Life Office are responsible for student discipline outside the classroom. During summer 2007, they reviewed and revised procedures for addressing student violations of the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and [Residence Hall Policies](#). Most notably, the review resulted in a new section in the Residence Hall Policies that makes explicit how violations would be handled, and a structured adjudication process (disciplinary conference) was added to the [Office of Student Conduct](#) to address the perception that the Campus Life disciplinary process was unfair.

Campus Life also participated in the Educational Benchmarking Inc. First-Year Initiative Assessment and the Association of College and University Housing Officers–International survey last spring and learned, for example, that the top predictors of effectiveness in the overall residence program were whether or not fellow residents were respectful and whether residents felt a sense of community. Improving dorm life based on this data and other surveys is now an action item in the strategic plan.

Student discipline is addressed through both informal and formal processes. Following the belief that disciplinary actions should maximize student learning, the Office of Student Conduct uses discussion, counseling and mediation. Formal proceedings, such as disciplinary conferences and disciplinary hearings, are initiated if informal methods are unsuccessful. For formal cases brought to the Office of Student Conduct, students serve on hearing boards, which determine whether or not the student(s) are responsible for violation(s) of the Student Code of Conduct and recommend sanctions ranging from verbal warnings to suspension.

The Office of Student Conduct handled and resolved 65 cases during fall 2007 with a majority being resolved through unstructured adjudications (i.e., students accepted responsibility for the violation(s) as charged and accepted sanctions issued). Data indicate that students prefer disciplinary conferences over disciplinary hearings for adjudicating their cases where formal procedures were necessary.

The Council on Undergraduate Education (CUE) and Council on Graduate Education (CGE) each have academic integrity policies to govern academic appeals from [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) students. The Faculty-Student Affairs Committee of the faculty governance system hears undergraduate appeals of academic dismissal and academic probation. The committee keeps files on individual cases, but it does not track summative results. Over the past two years, the CGE has convened three student appeals committees to review student appeals for three graduate department recommendations for academic dismissal or suspension. Two committees upheld the student's request to continue in the program while the third upheld the department's recommendation for dismissal. During fall 2007, as a result of ongoing campus discussions regarding diversity, the graduate dean initiated a review of the CGE appeals committee members, which resulted in membership changes that more closely reflect the diverse characteristics of the graduate student body. The academic integrity and academic appeals policies are currently under review by the CGE Policy Committee.

After being sanctioned by the Capital Athletic Conference in 2006 for allowing ineligible students to play, the university hired new personnel and implemented plans to prevent any more violations, including training for coaches based on NCAA recommendations, a system to spot athletes in academic trouble, an NCAA compliance committee and a process for identifying and addressing violations.

### **Faculty and Staff**

The Board of Trustees receives annual reports on faculty and staff demographics every year. Data from 1997 to 2008 indicated:

- Of all faculty hires, 61% were female and 44% were deaf or hard of hearing.
- The racial/ethnic composition of these faculty hires was 8% African-American, 10% Asian, 8% Hispanic, 2% Native American and 72% Caucasian.
- The increase in percentages of traditionally underrepresented groups among administrators was 11 points; faculty, 7 points and professional staff, 3 points. Meanwhile, the percentage of support staff from traditionally underrepresented groups decreased by 6 points.
- The percentage of deaf or hard of hearing individuals in the Gallaudet workforce increased from 27% in 1988 to 43% in 2007.

These changes have occurred despite the total number of full-time regular status employees decreasing from 1,192 in 1988 to 999 in 2007.

The university has mechanisms in place to support and monitor equitable practices in the hiring, evaluating and dismissing of employees. (See the [Administration and Operations Manual](#) and [faculty guidelines](#).) The Faculty Committee on Grievances hears faculty grievances related to denial of tenure; dismissal of a tenured or nontenured faculty member; nonpromotion or non-reappointment; alleged violations of the faculty guidelines; or university policies or laws governing employment. A faculty member may appeal to the faculty grievance committee after following the administrative appeals process as described in the faculty guidelines. Over the past four years, the Faculty Committee on Grievances has received a total of four grievances and determined, upon reviewing the faculty guidelines and relevant documentation, that none of them merited a formal hearing.

Employees who believe there has been a violation of laws or regulations governing their employment (i.e., discrimination) may submit a request for an investigation to the director of equal employment opportunity programs (EEO officer). Since 2000, nine people have sued Gallaudet, alleging some form of discrimination. Of these claims, two are open, pending litigation; two were dismissed or withdrawn by the claimant and five were settled with some monetary award. For the 2006–2007 academic year, there were three EEO complaints filed with an external agency/attorney, two of which are still pending. The third reached a settlement agreement. The university has been notified of a fourth complaint being filed with a different agency but has not yet received any additional correspondence.

### **Policies and Practices**

The university supports ethical practices in research, service and administrative activities. The [faculty guidelines](#) include a statement on professional integrity in the scope of faculty competencies and responsibilities. Annually all faculty and staff sign conflict of interest disclosures. Any faculty or student research that involves human subjects must receive approval by the [Institutional Review](#)

[Board](#) in accordance with law and sound practice. In the past five years, the Gallaudet Institutional Review Board has received over 600 different research proposals with no reports of investigator misconduct.

The [Administration and Operations Manual](#) Section 1.09 articulates university policy on intellectual property rights. Except as restricted by the contractual language of any grant-supported activity, patents and copyright belong to faculty who file for them.

Required and elective courses are sufficiently available to allow students to graduate within published program lengths. For example, in the spring 2008 semester, 534 separate course sections were offered for approximately 1,350 full-time students. The average number of sections per course for all courses was 1.5. There were 2.3 sections per course offered for freshman foundations (general studies) courses and 1.4 sections per course for upper division undergraduate courses. Average course enrollment for undergraduate courses was 9.73 students per section for a university with a 6.9 to 1 student to faculty ratio.

The [university catalogs](#) are published annually in August in both print and electronic formats. The online catalogs are updated as needed throughout the year.

In 2006, the university failed to inform MSCHE of results of Gallaudet's [Program Assessment Rating Tool](#) (PART) evaluation by the federal government. The president appointed a new MSCHE liaison, who has informed MSCHE of any significant developments in program or operations since January 2007. In addition, regular monitoring reports sent to MSCHE have described changes in mission statement and goals, programs and operations.

Gallaudet has recently begun developing the mechanisms to make student learning outcomes assessment available to the public. Assessment data and descriptions of how they are being used to improve programs are available for four undergraduate and four graduate programs for fall 2007 in the report, "[Exemplary Assessment Practices at Gallaudet University](#)" by the Office of Assessment. Various tools were used to assess student learning, as well as program implementation, in the fall 2007 General Studies Requirements (GSR) foundation courses. Analyses of these assessments, along with recommendations based on these analyses, are being developed for the GSR Evaluation Report. This report is available through the Office of Institutional Research's intranet site (Blackboard; also see Appendix A). The [Office of Institutional Research](#) also makes data on graduation, retention and budget available through its Web and Blackboard sites.

All [reports to and from MSCHE](#) are regularly disseminated both electronically and on paper and are available online as a link from the [Academic Affairs Web site](#).

The university regularly makes information available through various formats including [On the Green](#), [Daily Digest](#), [President's Vlogs](#) ("Bob's Vlogs"), town hall meetings and the [Office of Public Relations'](#) activities. Nevertheless, the August 2007 Campus Climate Survey revealed widespread dissatisfaction with communications on campus. As a result, the President's Office established a Communication Committee to codify institutional communication policies and strategies, as well as develop new approaches for systematic communication. (See [Communication Plan](#).)

The university is in compliance with 7 of 14 standards and has been meeting all deadlines for monitoring reports, moving from probation to warning in November 2007.

## Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

### Overview

Since May 2007 at Gallaudet University, institutional effectiveness has been enhanced through a three-part approach. The first part comes from the [Office of Assessment's](#) efforts to establish a “culture of assessment” throughout the university by which faculty establish student learning outcomes, provide learning opportunities, assess progress and outcomes data, and then revise learning opportunities according to assessment results. (See Standard 14 for more information.) The second part of the approach comes from the [Office of Institutional Research's](#) (OIR) development of formal tools and institutional mechanisms to collect, analyze and report institutionally significant information. The final part of improving institutional effectiveness has been addressed through planning, resource allocation and renewal processes that use institutional and student learning assessment analyses.

This first year of OIR's regeneration has focused on (a) developing key assessment instruments for institutional effectiveness and (b) providing research analysis to support institutional decision making.

### Developing Assessment Instruments

OIR has focused on the creation of assessment instruments needed to make decisions. Chief among them has been the Annual Campus Climate Survey. (See Standard 6 for related information.) A pilot climate survey was developed and tested in fall 2007. Analyses were reported to the campus community, and among the notable results was the need to increase access to the survey by providing it in written Spanish and video ASL. Subsequently, Spanish and ASL versions of the climate survey are being developed for administration in April 2008.

Because one of the GPRA indicators is employment rates after graduation, OIR developed and administered the Annual Graduate Employment Survey, which was sent to students graduating between September 2005 and August 2006. Results showed that 70% of undergraduates and 89% of graduate students were employed during the year following graduation.

### Institutional Research and Decision Making

OIR has supported decision making on key institutional priorities through analytic studies, such as analyses of: (a) recruitment and enrollment patterns to guide enrollment management; (b) predictive value of pre-admissions and entry assessments for retention and (c) relationships among general studies requirements (GSR) assessments to guide faculty development. Through the “Projecting Enrollments” study, OIR described the potential impact of increasing admissions standards to an ACT score of 14. That same study found that while current enrollment from residential schools is at 90% to 95% of the potential pool (i.e., saturated), the average enrollment from public school (or “mainstreamed”) programs is around 15% of admitted students. This analysis has led Gallaudet to shift its recruiting strategies, increasing its focus on mainstreamed programs for deaf students.

OIR also performed a prediction simulation for the new admissions policy, which found: (a) ACT math scores do not predict passing in any subjects but are the best predictor of second semester retention; (b) ACT reading scores do not predict passing in any subjects but are a predictor of retention; (c) Using a combination of ACT scores and high school GPA, it is easier to predict retention—especially second semester retention—than to predict passing critical courses and (d)

Based on available data and proposed rules, the admissions rubric will not predict course passage but will predict retention. These analyses supported the decision to use a multimeasure rubric to assess applicant qualifications and make acceptance decisions that will lead to stronger retention.

Several OIR studies have examined the value of different assessment tools in both admissions and retention. The office continues to explore, test and refine admissions criteria and entrance assessments for courses that use the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) and COMPASS tests. (See Appendix C, and also the Math Entrance Exam Validity Project.) Regarding instructional programs, OIR has informed decision making and change by analyzing “trigger courses,” or courses with high failure rates. This analysis has resulted in new guidelines for deans and faculty that enables students in so-called trigger courses to achieve course outcomes at a level sufficient to remain at Gallaudet. (See [Trigger Course Report](#).) Finally, OIR has conducted studies on faculty course load and the alignment of faculty and staff positions with the university mission statement to help departments and Academic Affairs make resource allocation decisions. (See Appendix D.) OIR distributes monthly performance indicator reports to the campus via e-mail and the university’s intranet, Blackboard, to highlight strategic issues, like first and second semester retention and faculty course load. (See [February](#) and [March](#) 2008 reports.) Through varied and responsive dissemination of data and analyses, as well as through ready access to data (i.e., the data warehouse), OIR supports and collaborates with faculty and the administration in developing a data-driven decision making culture.

### **Indicators of Effectiveness: Establishing Benchmarks and Targets**

A major focus this year has been identifying measures that will be used as indicators for the [Gallaudet University Strategic Plan 2007–2011](#). OIR has assisted this process by: (a) identifying indicators that Gallaudet already uses (e.g., those required by GPRA or the board); (b) identifying new measures that can be sustained as long-term indicators; (c) determining benchmarking information and baseline data for the indicators and (d) suggesting targets based on the benchmark and baseline data. To support institutional understanding of benchmarking, OIR produced the [Gallaudet Benchmark Project](#) report that defines four different sets of benchmarks based on the function under consideration: a 10-year university average, 11 small colleges with similar student bodies and admissions standards to Gallaudet’s, 19 similarly sized and Carnegie-classified universities and 12 private East Coast colleges with similar financial complexity. These benchmarks and accompanying targets will be presented to the Board of Trustees and Faculty Senate in May 2008 as part of the plan for assessing institutional effectiveness through the strategic plan.

### **Assessment Processes at Gallaudet**

Assessment processes at Gallaudet are systematic and sustained. OIR follows a master plan based on external reporting requirements, such as data reports for the U.S. Department of Education (IPEDS), the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), and the *Annual Report of Achievements*. At the same time, OIR’s schedule also allows for the inclusion of periodic reports that both inform the university’s planning and resource allocation cycle and also answer the needs of the institution’s developing sophistication in making data-driven decisions. Some reports focus on key strategic initiatives, such as [enrollment statistics](#), [recruitment pool projections](#), the evaluation of the new General Studies curriculum (see Appendix A) and admissions standards simulations (see Appendix B). Others are OIR presentations intended to develop the capacity of the Gallaudet community to make use of important data, such as monthly performance indicator reports and results from the National Survey of Student Engagement.

The current emphasis is on multiple quantitative approaches because of the accessibility of the data and relatively low cost of maintaining the information system. To maximize the utility of the information, quantitative indicators, such as average class size and faculty workload, are “crossed” to give a more complex picture of operations. This approach highlights units that fall outside of expected parameters while allowing for narrative explanations of why differences occur, such as fundamentally different missions. An example of this can be seen in the GSR (General Studies Requirements) Evaluation Report. (See Appendix A.)

OIR employs various data collection techniques including: a [data warehouse](#) to compile existing demographic and achievement data; classic surveys, such as the Annual Campus Climate Survey and the online Graduate Employment Survey (see [Graduate Employment Survey](#) results), to respond to assessment needs; holistic scoring systems to evaluate outcomes in GSR and the continuing development of coding systems to document promotion and tenure decisions.

Assessment processes have been designed to maximize the use of existing information by (a) focusing on using institutional data that is available through PeopleSoft, (b) utilizing data generated for external reporting agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Education and (c) designing data collections that are compatible with existing institutional systems, such as the online Campus Climate and Graduate Employment surveys.

OIR uses the data warehouse concept to provide current institutional data to the campus community. The data warehouse pulls key data already in the university’s PeopleSoft system into a centralized location with standardized reporting definitions, which are tied to easy-to-use reporting and analysis tools. The data warehouse eliminates the need for separate written reports on institutional functioning that require periodic updates or revisions. Instead, revisions occur with each “data dump” into the system. These data can be used for comparisons or trend analysis in a system that has an intuitive information retrieval structure. Because unit heads can get information about their specific units as trend data, they can serve students better. Current reports cover enrollment patterns, student performance, number of students in each major, grading based on class size and class type and other important indicators.

OIR ensures that data and reports are of sufficient quality that results can be used with confidence to inform decisions. OIR provides official data and information about the university to the federal government, other external agencies and the university’s Board of Trustees, administration, faculty and staff. Crosschecking of results among OIR, the Provost’s Office, enrollment management, academic departments or other units as appropriate occurs before posting to the Web. In addition, standard procedures, such as data editing and verifying validity and reliability on specific surveys, are regularly performed. Recently OIR developed a specific list of reports within the data warehouse that can be accessed by specific units as a way to crosscheck data accuracy. In other words, a unit can go in with a report they have independently generated and confirm the data in the data warehouse is identical.

OIR has also developed clear, realistic guidelines and a timetable supported by appropriate investment of institutional resources to provide the necessary information for assessing institutional effectiveness, as shown in Table 7.1. The mission of OIR is to be accountable to the university administration and community through the provision of information that is theoretically sound, methodologically rigorous and accurate. In addition, institutional research provides useful

information in a usable format that is cost-effective, accurate, truthful and unbiased as exemplified by the monthly performance indicator reports.

Because of the recent re-establishment of OIR at Gallaudet, all plans and timetables are under constant development and review. For example, during summer 2008, graduate students will be employed with specific data mining tasks to crosscheck the quality of institutional information. Currently, OIR is supporting the academic department chairpersons in the development of a consistent definition of faculty workload as a trial process for developing other operational definitions of faculty performance indicators.

### **Assessment Results**

OIR can provide evidence that assessment results are shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and used in institutional planning, resource allocation and renewal to improve and gain efficiencies in programs, services and processes, including activities specific to the institution's mission. The final version of all reports is posted through OIR's Web site. The site also provides enrollment statistics (1999–2007) and performance comparisons (benchmarked to peer institutions) on such characteristics as admissions, tuition, student-to-faculty ratio, first-year retention, graduation rates and postgraduation employment. Sensitive material or material still under discussion and review is available to members of the university community through Blackboard. (See Appendices for those reports.) The monthly performance indicators are e-mailed directly to all faculty and staff.

OIR has several constituencies: external agencies, the board, the President's Management Team, the provost, specific university units or departments, and the general university community. Information is provided to external agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Education, through reports that conform to formats specified by the agencies. These reports affect the university in two general ways. First, the data is used by congressional staff members to analyze the university's annual federal allocation. Second, the data form the basis for the [Program Assessment Rating Tool](#) (PART) evaluation system of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which is responsible for the efficient operation of all federal agencies. For example, the Department of Education has developed a cost-per-graduate measure for Gallaudet, in addition to the traditional cost-per-student data the university has reported for many years, to answer OMB's request to raise Gallaudet's level of response to issues concerning its efficiency and effectiveness. The idea is to combine an outcome measure, in the form of numbers of degrees awarded, with a cost measure. OIR has begun to calculate and report two versions of this measure, one with respect to total educational cost and the second with respect to the share of that cost provided by Gallaudet's federal appropriation. The university's goal is to limit increases in these measures to the rise in the Consumer Price Index or less. This can be accomplished primarily through increases in the annual number of graduates, resulting from efforts to increase retention and graduation rates.

Information to the President's Management Team is provided upon request, with reports created depending on the nature of the requests and the uses of the information. Planning for more systematic reporting is in progress, as part of the re-emergence of the office into the university administration after losing its director three years ago.

Currently, OIR reports directly to the provost both through regular meetings and reports and through the Academic Quality and Accreditation Committee (AQAC) of the Academic Affairs Management Team (AAMT). During this first year of OIR's re-establishment, much of the office's work has responded to strategic initiatives (e.g., enrollment and recruitment, position realignment);

institutional assessment infrastructure (e.g., Annual Campus Climate Survey, Graduate Employment Survey) and planning needs (benchmarks and indicators), as well as external data reporting requirements (e.g., IPEDS, PART and GPRA). OIR support for strategic planning needs has typically come through a request for data collection, analysis and reporting that is then provided to the provost and the AAMT and/or AQAC. Once the information gathering and reporting stages are completed, action plans with specific indicators are negotiated. Information to specific departments, such as the validity study of placement measures for English (see Appendix C), goes through short reports or e-mails to the departments.

**Table 7.1: Institutional Research Activities, AY 2007–2008**

<b>Institutional Assessment Purpose</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Fall 2007</b>	<b>Spring 2008 (Target)</b>
Enrollment & retention	12-year graduation rate analysis	Done	
Enrollment & retention	Admission standards impact on enrollment	Done	
Instructional program effectiveness	National Survey of Student Engagement analysis	Done	
Instructional program effectiveness	GPRA/PART indicators	Done	
Management effectiveness	Annual Campus Climate Survey	Preliminary	March 08
Instructional program effectiveness	<i>Annual Report of Achievements</i> indicators	Done	
Instructional program effectiveness	Annual Graduate Employment Survey	Done	
Enrollment & retention	DRP/COMPASS validity project	Done	
Management effectiveness	Position realignment process: Unit & staff mission centrality	Started	Ongoing
Instructional program effectiveness	GSR course evaluation	Started	Jan. 08
Management effectiveness	Faculty course load studies	Done	Jan. 08
Enrollment & retention	Annual Enrollment Report	Ongoing	
OIR self-assessment	Review of graduate data collection process	Started	Jan. 08
Instructional program effectiveness	IPEDS indicators coordination	Ongoing	Ongoing
Enrollment & retention	Math entrance exam validity project		Feb. 08
Management effectiveness	Faculty evaluation paperwork validity project	Ongoing	May 08
Enrollment & retention	PEDS indicators coordination	Ongoing	Jan. 08
Instructional program effectiveness	High course failure rate analysis (Trigger courses)	Ongoing	
OIR self-assessment	Data warehouse update	Ongoing	Ongoing
Program effectiveness	Academic support unit benchmarking project	Ongoing	Ongoing

**List of Supporting Documents**

Appendix A: *GSR (General Studies Requirements) Evaluation Report*

Appendix B: *Admission Standards Simulation Report*

Appendix C: Predictive Validity of the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) Versus the COMPASS Reading Score in Placing Entering Freshmen in English Courses

Appendix D: Report on Academic Affairs Position Review Project

*Italics* indicate reports in progress.

## Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention

### Overview

In October 2007, the interim dean of Enrollment Management and General Studies presented a strategic enrollment plan as part of the MSCHE reporting process. (See Section IV of [September 2007 Monitoring Report](#).) This plan is based on recommendations from the president's Enrollment Work Group, which reviewed a variety of documents including enrollment reports from 2002 to 2007. (See [Foundations of Excellence \(FOE\) recommendations](#).) The goal of the plan is to return Gallaudet to an undergraduate enrollment of 1,180 by fall 2008 and to increase the six-year graduation rate to 55% by fall 2014 while maintaining a diverse student body. To do this, the university must recruit a minimum of 295 academically qualified new students each year and retain 75% in the first year. (See [strategic plan indicators](#).) This plan has guided the student admissions and retention initiatives, which includes raising admissions standards, recruiting more strategically and developing and strengthening retention initiatives.

### Recruiting and Admitting New Students

To support the mission of a high quality education, ACT standards were raised to scores of 14 in reading, English and math (composite or average) for AY 2007–2008 admissions. This admission requirement was based on the Office of Institutional Research's (OIR) analyses of characteristics likely shared by successful Gallaudet students. Increased ACT admissions requirements have resulted in a 25% smaller pool of fall 2007 applicants who meet eligibility requirements than pools from the past ten years. Mindful of the need to broaden recruitment opportunities to increase applications, recruitment initiatives have targeted students in mainstreamed programs and transfer students. OIR's "Projecting Enrollments" report showed these students have been a relatively untapped group. Concerns regarding the viability of the bilingual mission and the ability to recruit more students from mainstreamed programs were raised by MSCHE and explored via the class of 2008—the first to be required to take ASL courses. While the difference was not statistically significant, mean scores on the factor, "Sense of Belonging," from the [Educational Benchmarking Inc. First-Year Initiative Assessment](#) (EBI-FYI) were the highest in the five years of collecting EBI-FYI data.

Recruitment efforts have also focused on understanding and responding better to the needs of specific groups of students. For example, the university has new Web pages to answer questions students typically ask when considering applying to Gallaudet. These pages include: "[New to Sign Language?](#)" "[Academic Bowl for Deaf and Hard of Hearing High School Students](#)" and a [Parents and Families](#) Web site. These pages are in addition to more traditional college preparation and recruitment information such as "[Prepare for College: Plan Early for College](#)," "[Taking the ACT/SAT](#)" and "[Middle and High School Youth Programs](#)." To support recruitment, the university has also clarified and improved how Gallaudet awards both transfer and Advanced Placement (AP) credit. In addition, it has designed an admissions assessment process using multiple measures that weigh and balance characteristics, such as high school GPA and ACT scores, with quality of courses taken and letters of recommendation, thus enabling the admissions team to make decisions based on the total student profile. Whenever student admissions decisions are in question, a faculty review committee is convened to make decisions. Admissions simulations were run using this new rubric to further define the efficacy of the admissions criteria. (See Appendix B.)

Criteria for admissions and placement are in print material and on the [Undergraduate Admissions Web site](#) and have been defined for [new freshmen](#), [transfer students](#), [international students](#), [hearing undergraduates](#), [readmitted/second degree students](#), and [special/visiting/exchange students](#). Criteria for admissions to the majors are also on the [Web sites for each academic department](#). Information regarding diagnostic testing for students prior to admission and [diagnostic testing for learning disabilities](#) for admitted and continuing students is available online, in the [Student Handbook](#), the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) and through [academic advisors](#). The accuracy of placement testing was assessed after a recommendation made by the [FOE study group](#). It was determined that the ACT score for math and English will be used for initial placement. Additional assessments (e.g., Degrees of Reading Power, Gallaudet Writing Exam, American Sign Language assessment, COMPASS for Math and specific levels of Applied Literacy or General Studies) will be given during [New Student Orientation](#) to place students more appropriately in courses. (See also Appendix C.)

[Institutional undergraduate student learning outcomes](#) are part of the General Studies Requirements (GSR) curriculum and are described in print materials. Information on [institution-wide undergraduate performance indicators](#) is available to prospective students, and program-based outcomes assessment results will be available for the entering cohort of 2009 through Gallaudet's Office of Assessment Web site. Accurate and comprehensive [financial aid, grants, loans, refunds and scholarships](#) information is available in both print and on the Admissions, Financial Aid, and academic department Web sites. The divisions of Academic Affairs and Administration and Finance are presently reviewing all rules governing endowments and determining which scholarships can be awarded annually. When this review is complete, all scholarships and loans will be awarded through the Office of Financial Aid and will be accessible to prospective and current students. Procedures and targets for ensuring students' access and a timely response to deadlines will be set by June 2008.

Although increased ACT admissions requirements resulted in a 25% smaller pool of eligible fall 2007 applicants, the number of students *accepted* from that fall applicant pool for AY 2007–08 is similar to that of the past five years. This data supports the current direction of recruitment strategies, particularly given the challenge of raising standards and accreditation concerns. A new Web-based software tool, [Hobsons](#), has allowed for more customized approaches to student recruiting as well as the ability to track student communications. All students who have been accepted have met either the new criteria or have been reviewed and approved by a faculty admissions committee. Efforts to increase the yield of admitted to enrolled students from 73% to 85% are in place. For example, faculty have made significant connections through telephone and video conferencing campaigns with admitted students.

### **Admissions and Retention**

As a result of ongoing research and improvement (most recently through the [FOE project](#)), admissions and retention are understood by many in the institution to be integrated and continuous processes. Programs and services for conditionally admitted students have been redesigned for the entering class of 2008. These programs include:

- **Jump Start Program.** This program is intended for newly admitted first-year students who would be required to attend either Summer Bridge Program (SBP) or, possibly, New Signers Program (NSP), based on their entering characteristics (e.g., ACT test scores, GPA, inexperience with ASL). In the past, these programs were not optional. The two component programs are:

- **Summer Bridge (SBP).** Students enroll in a one-credit personal discovery course that promotes problem solving, communication, cultural awareness and critical thinking skills. In addition, participants take seminars in student success, wellness/physical fitness and leadership training. They also volunteer as student ambassadors during New Student Orientation.
- **New Signers Program (NSP).** The New Signers Program offers new students a four-week immersion program in ASL and Deaf Culture. This program is offered primarily for mainstreamed students who do not use sign language as their primary language and have not experienced learning in a deaf-centric environment. For the entering class of 2008, NSP will be strongly recommended for some, but not all, students, depending on other entry characteristics and direct assessment of student skills rather than self-report. The impact on recruitment and subsequent admissions, enrollment and retention must be assessed before this becomes a requirement for all new signers.
- **New Program Leading to Undergraduate Success (PLUS) Program.** This program will be in place for all new students in fall 2008 (and continuing students on academic warning or probation), who have been identified as needing either extra academic support or study skill support. Students will be in special sections of GSR 101 (formerly First Year Seminar) and will be required to access support services such as tutoring, coaching and time management. Presently the university is exploring policies to make a one-credit student success course mandatory for students on academic warning or probation.

The [Department of Applied Literacy](#) (DAL) works collaboratively with the Admissions Office, the Jump Start and PLUS programs and GSR faculty to ensure that students who marginally meet admissions requirements develop the requisite skills for freshman-level coursework. Gallaudet also has several other support services through [Tutorial and Instruction Programs](#).

The Office of the Dean of Enrollment Management and General Studies, in collaboration with OIR and other units, has developed analyses of the relationship between the characteristics of students who persist and their entering characteristics as well as predictors of retention and academic success. Reasons vary as to why students leave between semesters, with most being categorized as personal, financial and academic. Efforts launched in fall 2007 to support students who left for financial reasons include an appeals process to pay off debts and establishment of payment plans. The university has also developed more detailed action plans that include strategies to ensure students and families are aware of dates, timelines and resources, so that responses are proactive as opposed to reactive.

Early intervention plans were developed for fall 2007, including the use of Academic Progress Reports, a software program to identify students who are experiencing academic and personal difficulties. This software also alerts faculty of students who are on academic probation and those red flagged upon admission. Gallaudet has learned that putting systems in place is not enough and is now moving to professional development for faculty and staff, along with greater accountability through deans and associate deans. The university has developed actions plans for retention to address students on academic warning and probation, as well as students who earn a D or F at

midterm. Because math performance has been identified as a barrier to student persistence, an action plan to address the high rate of failure in entry math classes has been developed. Finally, there is also a plan to follow up with students who have left. The newly designed programs for admitted students should lower the number of students in academic trouble. (See Goal 2 [action plans](#).)

### **Integration and Communication on Retention**

The issue of how best to structure interactions and accountability among programs has been raised in [FOE recommendations](#), the Academic Rigor Work Group, and the Enrollment Work Group. The interim dean of Enrollment Management and General Studies has addressed the issue by:

- reviewing all evidence-based materials to define the problem accurately,
- leading numerous meetings to attempt to coordinate functions within the existing structure, and
- providing training programs to elaborate on best practices while providing consistent information updates across campus units.

The interim dean has proposed a review of the current accountability structure to the provost, who will review and act on recommendations in June 2008. As the university implements changes for those programs critical to retention, it will continue to review the impact of action plans and make use of assessment information to modify its approaches.

All enrollment information is shared regularly—weekly with deans, twice per semester with department chairs, two times per year with faculty and staff for undergraduate admissions and more frequently for graduate admissions. Although the major emphasis has been on undergraduate enrollment, efforts are also in place to address recruitment and retention at the graduate level.

One of the key strategies this year for improving and widening the graduate school applicant pool is increasing graduate faculty involvement. This has been accomplished by developing a new, internally restricted, Web-based information sharing tool that includes research-based tips for faculty, emphasizing the importance of their involvement in recruiting. Another tool is a visually rich, up-to-date Web page on admissions data for fall 2008. These tools can provide up-to-the-minute data on the status of a program's recruiting efforts. Extensive training has been provided to both program directors and administrative secretaries on self-service opportunities for the departments to use PeopleSoft. New materials have been developed, and the Graduate Enrollment Office has instituted "The Diversity Project," which focuses on historically black colleges and universities (HBCU) and identifies those which have undergraduate feeder programs and/or ASL classes. An associated marketing piece for HBCUs will be developed and sent to all of the programs identified.

This year, retention has been the primary focus at the graduate level. Each of the graduate programs has developed and submitted to the Graduate School and Professional Programs (GSPP) dean a recruitment plan that identifies who is monitoring progress on graduate recruitment and enrollment. Next year graduate programs will also develop retention plans.

Finally at both the graduate and undergraduate level, the need to provide faculty development is central to both recruitment and retention. Consequently, the university now has a faculty development coordinator. Using the results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the university recognizes that it must engage students in learning as a primary goal. The

most satisfied students also become the best recruiters. NSSE data from 2005 and 2006 identified two areas in which Gallaudet is “below peers”:

- Academic rigor, including:
  - Analysis of basic elements of an idea, experience of theory (such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components)
  - Application of theories or concepts to practical problems or new situations
  - Number of assigned textbooks, books or book-length packs of course readings
  - Number of written papers of 20 pages or more
  - Time spent in studying and on academic work
- Supportive campus environment for freshmen, specifically:
  - Available support to help students succeed academically
  - Relationships with faculty members
  - Relationships with administrative personnel and offices

In addition, one of the [FOE recommendations](#) cited the need to have the most engaging faculty in the first year as well as the need to recognize and reward faculty efforts in such initiatives. Faculty development plans are addressing these topics. Faculty development events focusing on pedagogy and assessment will be scheduled at the start of each semester.

## Standard 11: Educational Offerings

### Overview

Gallaudet University offers 40 undergraduate majors and 30 graduate programs leading to bachelor's and master's degrees, graduate certificates, specialist degrees and doctoral degrees, both clinical and Ph.D. The academic rigor of institutional offerings has been strengthened in several ways: (a) general studies revision; (b) programs focused on student learning outcomes and the use of outcomes assessments to improve programs (c) faculty review of academic program quality at the institutional level through faculty councils and (d) enriched learning resources.

Gallaudet's educational offerings are congruent with its [mission](#) to “ensure...intellectual and professional advancement” and “prepare its graduates for career opportunities in a highly competitive, technological and rapidly changing world.” The majority of the institution's general studies requirements (GSR) are based in an integrated, problem-focused curriculum where students study problems and issues to learn disciplinary tools, such as literacy and critical thinking. [Spring 2008 GSR 150 course offerings](#) include: “Why is Africa Struggling and What is Hindering Economic Development in Africa?” and “Unchopping a Tree: Introduction to Environmental Ethics.” Educational offerings span classic liberal arts majors, such as English, Philosophy and Religion, and Biology, as well as professional studies, such as Business, Social Work and Education.

### General Studies Curriculum

An interdisciplinary curriculum was developed to address five student learning outcomes:

1. **Language and Communication.** Students will use American Sign Language (ASL) and written English to communicate effectively with diverse audiences, for a variety of purposes, and in a variety of settings.
2. **Critical Thinking.** Students will summarize, synthesize and critically analyze ideas from multiple sources in order to draw well-supported conclusions and solve problems.
3. **Identity and Culture.** Students will understand themselves, complex social identities, including deaf identities, and the interrelations within and among diverse cultures and groups.
4. **Knowledge and Inquiry.** Students will apply knowledge, modes of inquiry and technological competence from a variety of disciplines in order to understand human experience and the natural world.
5. **Ethics and Social Responsibility.** Students will make reasoned ethical judgments, showing awareness of multiple value systems and taking responsibility for the consequences of their actions. They will apply these judgments, using collaboration and leadership skills, to promote social justice in their local, national and global communities.

The curriculum was designed to respond to the following needs: (a) to provide students with high quality general studies course work that will prepare them for their chosen majors, life-long learning and challenging careers; (b) to closely align the general studies curriculum with current empirically supported best practices in higher education; (c) to give students and academic departments more flexibility and discretion to customize their own programs to meet demands of a fast changing and highly integrated professional world and evolving accreditation requirements; (d) to reflect Gallaudet University's new mission statement that makes explicit that it is a bilingual institution and (e) to respond to recommendations by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)

that Gallaudet substantially reduce its required general studies. The GSR curriculum is intentional and designed to be a coherent curricular approach to achieving the [institutional undergraduate student learning outcomes](#).

To achieve these learning outcomes, the proposed general studies curriculum follows a 3-staged model, which totals 40 credits: (a) freshman foundations (12 credits), (b) integrated learning coursework (24 credits) and (c) a capstone experience (4 credits). The following paragraphs describe how the 3-staged model curriculum works.

The initial stage of the curriculum consists of four 3-credit courses, which are intended to provide students with the fundamental tools they need to sustain their subsequent academic studies. These courses are designed to improve students' communication skills, start them thinking about their own identities and college life and ensure they have practical competence in quantitative reasoning. Students take a cluster of three integrated/linked courses in First Year Seminar (GSR 101), Critical Reading and Writing (GSR 102) and ASL and Deaf Studies (GSR 103). These courses are integrated in such a way that students build language skills by reading, writing and signing in response to the First Year Seminar content. Based on linguistic readiness, they are placed in appropriate classes to ensure reasonable chances for success in college. Students also take GSR 104: Quantitative Reasoning Approach, a course that teaches the mathematical and problem solving skills needed to make numerically informed judgments.

The integrated learning courses that follow the foundation courses address and assess progress toward the five [institutional undergraduate student learning outcomes](#) and employ an interdisciplinary approach. These courses are taught by faculty from at least two disciplines who emphasize how different approaches can be integrated. GSR 150 courses are designed to help students attain basic competence in all five of the learning outcomes and to become comfortable with applying the methods of different disciplines to a clearly defined topic or question. Instructional materials and assignments are appropriate for a freshman level course. During their second semester, students also complete a majors and careers workshop, offered by the Career Center. This is required but does not earn credits toward graduation. It is expected to benefit students as they contemplate their plans for the future and select courses and majors to explore.

GSR 200 courses use more advanced instructional materials and have higher expectations for student performance and increased rigor. Additionally, although each course addresses all five learning outcomes, each course emphasizes a particular one:

<b>Course</b>	<b>Learning Outcome Emphasis</b>
GSR 210/211: Comparing Multicultural Perspectives	Identity and Culture
GSR 220/221: Methods of Multiple Disciplines	Knowledge and Inquiry
GSR 230/231: Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning	Knowledge and Inquiry
GSR 240/241: Ethical Evaluations and Actions	Ethics and Social Responsibility

Students must complete at least one 200-level integrated learning course that has a service learning component.

Finally, after completing the coursework from the first two stages of the general studies curriculum, students participate in a general studies capstone experience. It is distinct from the capstone courses included in many majors and is centered on a service project. General studies capstone students will be expected to take an active role in determining what must be done and to use their research skills and other academic knowledge to plan and execute their service. Students will then devise and implement an innovative solution to their problem. Doing the project and reflecting on the experience will bring together all five learning outcomes.

#### *Assessment for Program Improvement*

The GSR revision has been the first major curricular initiative undertaken by Gallaudet that has extensively used assessment data, both during the initial curricular revision and as a key component of ongoing implementation, including faculty development and course improvement.

GSR was developed through data analysis during an intensive month-long faculty summer retreat by the Academic Rigor Work Group. The work group reviewed earlier analyses of assessments, including the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Educational Benchmarking, Inc. First-Year Initiative Assessment (EBI-FYI), and previous self-studies and MSCHE responses. Some of these analyses had been part of the [Foundations of Excellence](#) process, which yielded recommendations that directly apply to first-year initiatives and the general studies curriculum. The work group also compared these analyses to successful models for general studies curricula used at other universities, looking especially for curricular models that responded to the needs identified by Gallaudet (e.g., the NSSE Academic Challenge area of “applying theories or concepts to practical problems”).

Implementation of the GSR curriculum, begun in fall 2007, includes a commitment to data-driven assessment to guide continuous curricular and faculty development. GSR assessment has used both direct and indirect measures, including: writing samples with a rubric, ASL “texts” with a scoring guide, Degree of Reading Power test, GSR course grades and evaluations for all sections, EBI-FYI survey data and [focus group data](#) from GSR 101/102 instructors. The GSR coordinator meets weekly with the GSR assessment fellow to discuss what kinds of data will guide future decisions. They also meet regularly with GSR course instructors and with the faculty development coordinator to discuss faculty and course needs in response to data.

At the end of fall 2007 (the first semester of implementing the new GSR), the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) collaborated with the GSR assessment fellow to analyze data from several of the assessments, as well as the relationships among the assessments. The goal of this analysis was to get a snapshot of instruction as well as learning outcomes from the new curriculum. The goal was also to better understand the assessment processes being used in order to improve them. For example, the GSR Evaluation Report notes that relationships between grades and performance on outcomes assessment varied among the four GSR foundation courses. As a result, faculty development in the use of the GSR outcomes assessments is being emphasized. (See Appendix A.)

#### *Assessment of Student Learning*

GSR faculty have developed a [Gallaudet Outcomes Timeline](#) through which capacity to assess institutional outcomes will be developed. Components of this assessment include:

- identifying or developing instruments
- identifying where the instrument will be used
- receiving faculty council approval for institutional use of the tool
- developing faculty capacity to use the assessment
- evaluating the reliability and validity of the tool
- collecting assessment data
- analyzing data
- establishing benchmarks and targets
- revising the program based on assessment data

Two of the learning outcomes, Language and Communication (including both written English and ASL) and Critical Thinking have been identified as the focus for assessment development and use during AY 2007–2008. Identity and Culture, Knowledge and Inquiry, and Ethics and Social Responsibility will be the focus for AY 2008–2009. Resources have been set aside to support intensive assessment development in both summer 2008 and 2009.

For fall 2007, the first semester of the new GSR curriculum, the Language and Communication outcome was the primary emphasis. Assessment tools were identified or developed and piloted for both written English and ASL. The university conducted faculty training on the use of these assessments and collected preliminary data. The Council on Undergraduate Education (CUE) approved the use of the Gallaudet University Writing Rubric to assess writing. (Tools intended for any institutional assessments must be approved by the faculty legislative councils, CUE and the Council on Graduate Education, CGE.) When GSR 103: ASL and Deaf Studies was first offered, CUE had not yet approved the Gallaudet University ASL Rubric. However, GSR 103 instructors were able to gather student performance data via the course’s ASL “text” final examination, and that text was then scored using a five-point [scoring guide](#) developed by the Department of ASL and Deaf Studies. Although Critical Thinking was not a focus for outcomes assessment during the semester, OIR found, through a factor analysis, that several subscales of the writing rubric, taken together, also assess critical thinking, thus enabling assessment of critical thinking skills.

Because this was the first semester that writing and ASL rubrics were used to assess outcomes, benchmarks and criterion levels have not yet been established for student performance. However, the outcomes data collected provides a snapshot of student performance on Language and Communication, as well as Critical Thinking. As the university progresses to full implementation of the GSR curriculum, it will continue to collect data on student writing, ASL and critical thinking performance, including data on student improvement as they matriculate through the program.

- **Writing.** Writing samples collected at the end of the semester were scored with the [Gallaudet University Writing Rubric](#), which included subscales for analysis, synthesis and integration (among other subscales). Analysis of these student papers indicated that students at all levels (S = language support, R = regular placement, A = accelerated, H = honors) were able to analyze and synthesize ideas from multiple tests with their own ideas at levels consistent with other writing subscales. Assessment of student writing showed average scores (i.e., all subscales combined; with low of 1 and high of 5) yielding 15% at 1 (pre-college), 43% at 2 (emerging), 29% at 3 (developing), 12% at 4 (mastering), and 0% at 5

(exemplary).<sup>2</sup> Student average scores on all 15 combined subscales was 2.6 (between emerging and developing).

- **ASL.** Using a five-point [scoring guide](#), faculty members rated their own students' performance on both content and language skills for the course. Student scores, course grades and course evaluation data were analyzed and summarized in the GSR Evaluation Report. (See Appendix A.) The data indicated that rater reliability was high, student performance was highly related to performance scores on this measure, and students were satisfied with the course across sections.
- **Critical Thinking.** The Gallaudet Writing Rubric was also used to assess critical thinking skills for fall 2007 students and followed the scale of 1 = pre-college to 5 = exemplary. The average student score on the five critical thinking subscales was around 2.5 (between emerging and developing). These data provide evidence that students are receiving direct instruction in critical thinking skills, including analysis, synthesis and integration, and are practicing integrative thinking skills in multiple contexts via the new curriculum design. GSR faculty are seeing both perceptions of increased emphasis on these components of critical thinking (evidenced in the course evaluations and the EBI-FYI) and also evidence that critical thinking skills are developing at the same rate as other writing skills being emphasized in the courses.

### Curricular Review

The quality of educational offerings is ensured through reviews by the faculty legislative councils, [Council on Undergraduate Education](#) (CUE) and [Council on Graduate Education](#) (CGE). Beginning in fall 2008, CUE and CGE will require all new and revised course proposals and syllabi to include expected student learning outcomes stated in observable terms, expectations for how students will achieve the learning goals and expectations about how students will demonstrate their learning. During AY 2007–2008 CUE has worked with academic departments to ensure (a) inclusion of learning outcomes for Language and Communication and Critical Thinking in all courses taught at Gallaudet and (b) course catalog language and prerequisites reflect changes in GSR. CUE also approved Advanced Placement equivalencies for academic departments and general studies equivalencies for transfer students.

CUE and a work group of faculty teaching GSR 150 in spring 2008 met and developed common objectives, assignments and assessment plans to ensure learning outcome emphasis, consistency and rigor across GSR 150 courses. CUE also met with faculty from different disciplines in work groups for GSR 210/211, 220/221, 230/231 and 240/241 to accomplish the same kinds of consistency in GSR 200 courses.

CUE and CGE have also developed syllabus review timelines that will enable the councils to review all previously approved program and course proposals to ensure they meet the new criteria. The councils ask department chairs to verify that all course syllabi are in compliance. In addition, review of fall 2008 course syllabi will be due to the deans by September 15, 2008. Review of spring 2009 course syllabi will be due by February 2, 2009. Sample syllabi demonstrate the current range of compliance in articulating student learning outcomes.

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2. Scores were tabulated as 1 to 1.999 = 1. Note that a student would have to get scores of 5 on all subscales from both raters to receive a 5.

CGE ensures graduate level standards through course review forms that require programs to specify features of the proposed program that qualify it as a graduate program, distinct from an undergraduate program. In addition, CGE requires that all graduate programs have a candidacy examination, that all doctoral and specialist-level degree programs have a comprehensive examination and that all Ph.D. programs require a formal research-based dissertation. In addition, CGE adheres to a policy that specifies criteria for full, associate and adjunct graduate faculty status. A full graduate faculty member must demonstrate, for example, a “record of scholarly activity that the department chair and graduate program coordinator consider to be graduate level scholarship.” Graduate faculty status is required to chair thesis and dissertation committees.

Program self-study and academic program review (APR) are additional vehicles for ensuring academic rigor in programs. Gallaudet’s 18 professional programs (nine undergraduate and nine graduate) already undergo a self-study process that utilizes student learning outcomes data and institutional indicators to assess program effectiveness and needs. Program self-studies are then submitted to external reviewers for feedback. The Academic Quality and Accreditation Committee (AQAC), which reports to the provost, proposed a similar process for APR to the legislative councils in a combined meeting. (See [APR Power Point](#) and [APR Visual](#) for details.) Both councils have formally approved the proposed APR process, which makes CUE, CGE and the Provost’s Office jointly responsible for conducting APRs every seven to eight years.

### **Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

The institution has established several mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular experiences for students. Systems are in place to use assessment results for program, as well as student, growth and improvement. The Office of Assessment coordinates these efforts. In fall 2007, the Office of Assessment instituted an assessment cycle process that facilitated the assessment of student learning outcomes. At the end of the semester, departments prepared assessment reports that included a description of methods for assessing outcomes, an analysis of assessment results and a description of how data results would be used to improve student learning. Assessment fellows provided guidance and support to the programs that demonstrated a need, and the executive director of the Office of Assessment analyzed the reports to provide specific suggestions on how programs could alter their approach to assessment to improve student learning and teaching.

Student learning and program outcomes have been identified for 100% of both undergraduate and graduate programs. Assessments were conducted on learning outcomes for 87% of the 31 undergraduate programs and 93% of the 12 graduate programs during fall 2007. Four other undergraduate programs have set timelines that will enable them to complete outcomes assessments by spring or fall 2008. (See [Institutional Assessment Progress Report](#).) Twenty-seven undergraduate programs and nine graduate programs that have assessed student learning outcomes have summarized and shared the data (see “[What Gallaudet Learned About Student Learning and Its Assessment Practices](#)”), and many have begun to identify how they will use the data for program improvement.

Examples of undergraduate programs that used assessment results to inform program improvements include:

- **GSR.** The General Studies curriculum is now including library workshops in GSR 150 courses for spring 2008, following a review of fall 2007 EBI-FYI results, which indicated entering students were not reporting increased knowledge of information literacy in the GSR 101–103 sequence.
- **Business.** Seventy-five percent of students scored at “Level 2” in their writing skills, indicating “there are more than occasional errors in grammar and spelling. The presentation of ideas and the transition between ideas are vague and choppy.” Consequently, the department plans to: (a) re-examine English prerequisite requirements across courses, (b) consider providing workshops on business writing for students and (c) integrate business writing requirements/training into various courses.
- **Social Work.** Early prefield agency reports (2003–2004) indicated many of the majors were not prepared to provide direct services, and social workers were only comfortable allowing students to shadow professional staff, role play problem situations created by a social worker and complete sample agency intake forms. Subsequent program changes include: (a) eliminating prefield practice sites that only allow students to observe and (b) adding content to the case management course on practice evaluation.

An example from graduate programs of data-based changes comes from the Deaf Studies M.A. program, which requires students to take the Praxis II Certification Examination on deaf and hard of hearing content. An analysis of the results suggests that candidates perform poorly in areas requiring case studies. Program faculty are in the process of reviewing and revising the existing courses to include case studies and possibly including another performance assessment that focuses on case studies. (See [Exemplary Assessment Practices at Gallaudet University](#) for details.)

### **Learning Resources, Facilities, Instructional Equipment and Library Services**

Previous library reviews recommended increased allocation to learning resources and library services. During FY 2006 and FY 2007, Gallaudet made substantial investments in its learning resources, facilities and instructional equipment by (a) updating existing computers in classrooms, central computer labs and the tutorial lab, (b) updating projectors in the Jordan Student Academic Center, (c) adding computers and projectors to make 98% of classrooms electronic, (d) adding Echo360/Apriso classroom recording and Gallaudet “Press to Sign” systems in five locations, (e) adding student computers to a classroom that supports the new general studies program and (f) providing students taking GSR 103: ASL and Deaf Studies in fall 2007 with Web cams to create ASL assignments. In FY 2006, the [Blackboard Content System](#) was licensed, thereby providing the academic community with new tools for collaboration, e-portfolios and Library e-reserves. Other learning tools were also licensed, including [Respondus and Study Mate](#) for learning assessments, [Safe Assign](#) for plagiarism detection and [Learning Objects](#) Web 2.0 social learning tools for searches, blogs, wikis and portfolios/personal Web sites. In FY 2007, the [Waypoint Outcome System](#) was licensed to enable integration of rubric-based assessment with course content and assessment within the my.Gallaudet Blackboard learning system. Gallaudet also developed an in-house system, called [myMedia](#), for the community to publish video on the Web. The Gallaudet [Video Library](#) and [Video Catalog](#) were launched in FY 2006 and FY 2007, the result of grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and North Plains, Inc.

Further evidence of the institution’s support of learning resources and library services was shown in the provost’s decision to combine the Academic Technology and Library units to create Academic Technology, Library and Archive Services (ATLAS Learning Resources). Dr. Cynthia M. King, a

faculty member and the former executive director of Academic Technology, was appointed dean of the new unit. ATLAS's mission is to support the Gallaudet community in developing and enhancing information literacy and technological competence and to provide resources, services and tools that support the university's learning, teaching, research and scholarly activities. The reorganization has allowed the university to make significant progress in improving Library services and resources, including optimizing the use of space, seeking additional sources of funding, collaborating on information literacy instruction and enhancing the use of technology in its services. (See [2008 Library Progress Report](#).)

ATLAS established a new advisory council in March 2008 to address instruction, assessment and campus-wide collaboration on information literacy and technological competence. The [Information Literacy Advisory Council](#) (ILAC), whose charge and action plans are available online, comprises reference and instruction librarians, Academic Technology staff, faculty representatives from the four freshman general studies foundation courses, the coordinator of Tutorial and Instructional Programs (TIP), the executive director of Assessment and the faculty development coordinator. Additional members will be added to represent undergraduate and graduate curriculum issues. The council met for the first time in early March, reviewed data from assessments of fall 2007 GSR courses and began creating an action plan to improve the integration of information literacy in these GSR courses.

Gallaudet has both long-standing programs and new initiatives that promote student use of information and learning resources. In December 2007, the Library licensed and began promoting and teaching use of [RefWorks](#), software that can enhance academic rigor and collaboration on campus by supporting appropriate citation of sources, sharing references and correctly formatting bibliographies and reference lists. [Online RefWorks resources](#) have been shared with students, faculty and staff, and workshops are currently being developed.

For AY 2007-2008, curriculum work centered on integrating Gallaudet's new bilingual mission statement, in part through a focus on students' creating assignments in ASL. Academic Technology worked extensively with faculty in the Department of ASL and Deaf Studies beginning in summer 2007 to ensure students would have success in creating ASL assignments. Having the new eLearning Lab in B130 Merrill Learning Center (the University Library) for class demonstrations and drop-in visits has contributed significantly to promoting student learning and success. Assessment of the fall 2007 GSR courses with ASL assignments has identified improvements needed in technology training and support for video-based assignments, and Academic Technology, ASL and Deaf Studies and the General Studies director are using the assessment results to plan for future semesters.

## Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

### Overview

In the [2006 Periodic Review Report](#), Gallaudet University acknowledged that its approach to assessment was fragmented, allowing for pockets of assessment to grow in some areas while remaining stagnant in others. In July 2007, the provost re-established the Office of Institutional Research and established a new Office of Assessment. These offices were charged with examining how the university could use research and assessment to support student learning at the institutional, department/program and course level. Since that time, the primary focus of the Office of Assessment has been to develop a culture of student learning outcome-based assessment by: (a) increasing the campus community's understanding of the assessment cycle; (b) developing a critical mass of faculty and staff who have a working knowledge of student learning assessment; (c) providing venues for discussing assessment; (d) making use of the assessment expertise on campus; (e) improving teaching and learning through the analysis and use of assessment data and (f) creating processes to guide the first university-wide collection and reporting of student assessment data.

### Sustainable Assessment

During summer 2007, the university established processes and began critical work to create a sustainable, university-wide approach to assessment. The following was accomplished:

- The campus community adopted a new mission statement.
- The undergraduate faculty adopted five institutional undergraduate student learning outcomes and developed assessments for two of the five outcomes.
- The Office of Assessment, supported by its [advisory board](#), established a [calendar of professional development events](#) including concurrent workshops during the provost's fall semester opening day program.
- An assessment audit was conducted and provided baseline data about current assessment practices.
- An [assessment handbook](#) was developed, disseminated and placed online.
- The Office of Assessment offered assessment workshops and met with academic departments and programs to ensure a shared, campus-wide understanding of basic assessment cycle principles and closing the assessment loop.
- The offices of Institutional Research and Assessment initiated regular meetings to share data.
- The Provost's Office provided substantial funding for professional development as a part of the permanent budget of the Office of Assessment.

By the fall 2007 semester, the evolving assessment process gained momentum. Academic departments and programs examined and, in some departments, revised their mission statements to ensure their alignment with the university's. In addition, the faculty legislative councils (Council on Undergraduate Education, CUE and Council on Graduate Education, CGE) have revised their proposal review criteria to include student learning outcomes. The councils are also currently reviewing a proposal for an academic program review process that will support external reviews of programs and learning outcomes to ensure they are consistent with disciplinary standards. (See Standard 2 and 11 for details.)

### Assessment Progress Report

During the fall 2007 semester, all departments and programs engaged in a full cycle of student learning assessment. At the semester's end, they reviewed their first sets of data and submitted reports in which they described the assessments they used, what they learned from reviewing the data and how they planned to use the information. Two faculty/staff peers and the executive director of assessment reviewed each report for 25 different criteria, including the relationship of assessment to outcomes, the use of multiple measures with direct evidence of student learning and use of data to inform the learning process. (See [Assessment Report Feedback Sheet](#).) The results were compiled in the [Institutional Assessment Progress Report](#), yielding a portrait of a university actively engaged in assessment. At the university, program and course levels, the undergraduate community was using the assessment process to better understand what students were and were not learning. Of the 30 programs leading to an undergraduate degree, 87% completed the assessment cycle for the fall semester. Those submitting reports after the February 1 deadline submitted a progress report indicating when they anticipated closing the loop.

Although faculty and staff used various assessment methods for measuring student learning outcomes, most departments and programs used direct methods. Students demonstrated their knowledge and skills in multiple and varied ways including, but not limited to, portfolios, supervisor evaluations, written and signed presentations, student written assignments, embedded questions on examinations, research papers, internships and practicum experiences, artistic performances, national examinations, satisfaction surveys, course grade comparison to national norms, course evaluations, lab reports, analysis of videos, analysis of literature, filmed reports, capstone projects, case study analyses, simulations, major field assessment tests and peer evaluations. ([Individual reports](#) with more detail are available online.) Table 14-1 provides an example of how one academic department used student learning assessments.

**Table 14-1 Department of Family and Child Studies Assessments of Student Learning**

Learning Outcome	Assessment Analysis	Use of Assessment
FCS majors will apply knowledge of effective and developmentally appropriate methods and materials to develop and implement curricula that promote young children's development and learning.	66% of interns assessed by site supervisor as having negative disposition, <i>nervous</i> .  33% of interns assessed by site supervisor as having negative disposition, <i>hesitant</i> .	Develop an ASL video of disposition definitions and post the video on the FCS Web page.  Revise rubric to increase emphasis on reflection on disposition assessment & feedback.  Increase hands-on learning opportunities to address the negative dispositions, "hesitant" and "nervous." When interns feel better prepared to lead activities rather than simply following the plans of others, it is likely the interns will be more confident and decisive.

The growing use of rubrics to measure student learning has increased the university's capacity to measure learning across disciplines and within the new general studies requirements (GSR). Departments in the College of Liberal Arts, Sciences, and Technologies began to pilot the use of a writing rubric in major-level courses. The GSR program developed a [writing rubric](#) that is used in its courses. Two academic support programs, Academic Advising and the Career Center, also used rubrics to measure student learning. Efforts to develop and refine rubrics were facilitated by conference attendance, books in the Office of Assessment's Resource Center, and a visit to campus

by a well-known expert in grading and rubric development. The consultant's visit included a half-day workshop for 43 people from 11 departments followed by private consultations with departments. The university intranet (Blackboard) has a site for assessment-related issues, which contains examples of rubrics, both those that are works in progress and those that are polished from years of modifications.

Because nine out of twelve graduate programs are accredited by their discipline-specific accreditation bodies, they are accustomed to framing instruction around student learning outcomes defined by their professional organizations and accrediting bodies. Graduate program assessment plans include both assessment of student ability to meet national standards and processes to continuously analyze and use assessment data to improve student outcomes. Given this knowledge of graduate programs, the emphasis for fall 2007 was on the undergraduate academic departments. Graduate departments provided evidence of student learning with minimal or no guidance from the Office of Assessment. Two graduate academic departments observed that the process seemed to lack an appreciation for the difference between graduate and undergraduate programs. This requires more discussion in the upcoming months. Two departments which house both undergraduate and graduate degree programs elected to assess only the undergraduate degree program. Of the remaining ten graduate departments, nine (90%) completed the assessment cycle. After a review of all graduate assessment plans, one department was asked for clarification of its use of assessment data and another department was asked to resubmit its report in a summary format.

Departments and programs that completed the assessment cycle have compelling evidence of student learning and the use of that data for improvement. As an incentive to act on needed assessment-based improvements, faculty and staff can apply for summer 2008 stipends and participate in assessment workshops. The reports, "[Exemplary Assessment Practices at Gallaudet](#)" and "[What Gallaudet Learned About Student Learning and Assessment](#)," highlights findings from the first assessment cycle of fall 2007. The data analysis portion of each report identifies the specific findings by the department/program.

Some examples of evidence that students are achieving key institutional and program learning outcomes include:

- **Religion and Philosophy.** Students performed better at more basic skills than more sophisticated critical thinking skills: at least 44% were at "developing" or "mastering" levels on stating the issue/thesis, explaining background information and selecting information from varied sources; 36% were at "developing" or "mastering" for summarizing and analyzing information and synthesizing diverse ideas... This was not surprising, given that the majority of students evaluated were enrolled in 100 level courses.
- **Hearing, Speech and Language Sciences, Speech-Language Pathology Program.** Most students have adequate writing skills. Three students were given an unsatisfactory grade for writing and clarity by either 1 or 2 of 9 readers. All other students obtained a satisfactory grade for writing from all 9 readers. Rubric was used.
- **Gallaudet Athletics.** The percentage of All-American student-athletes (GPA greater than 3.2) at Gallaudet has risen from 27.7% to 42.9% since 2001. This year, the percentage (42.9%) surpassed the Capital Athletic Conference average of 41.14%.

### **Assessment Beyond Academic Departments**

Gallaudet is committed to assessing student learning wherever it occurs, i.e., on or off campus, in service learning and study abroad opportunities, and in national and international internships. Therefore, the university also assessed intentional teaching and learning that happens in academic support services and student development programs. These academic programs established student learning outcomes or service goals, used appropriate measurement tools, assessed student learning and/or service delivery and used the data to improve student learning and programming.

There is evidence of change in how Gallaudet—and higher education in general—think about student development and student academic support. One national professional organization, the National Academic Advisory Association, is helping academic advisors redefine their advising role as teaching and encourages assessment that focuses on student learning outcomes. Accordingly, Academic Advising and the Career Center used rubrics to demonstrate student learning. Administrators in Student Affairs recently attended an institute on “Improving Outcomes-Based Assessment for Student Affairs.” The College of Professional Studies and Outreach (CPSO); Academic Technology, Library, and Archive Services (ATLAS); Student Affairs and the Center for Academic Programs and Student Services (CAPSS) are positioning themselves to focus not only on student services but also on student learning outcomes. For example, Student Affairs has identified learning outcomes for leadership skills development that aligns with institutional learning outcomes and has identified which of its programs offer learning opportunities to develop leadership. This summer, these programs will align their training syllabi with the outcomes and develop a rubric for each program to use next year to assess leadership skill development in their students.

The Division of Administration and Finance (A&F) also gathers data continuously to demonstrate how its services affect students, as they directly affect the learning environment and therefore contribute to student retention and student learning. The Bison Shop (campus bookstore), the Department of Public Safety, Student Health Services and Information Technology Services, to name a few, shape the environment in which students live and learn. A&F offices have participated in assessment workshops to support campus-wide efforts to become an evidence-based culture that asks all units to demonstrate how they influence the Gallaudet experience for students. Programs with direct impact on the quality of student life have been the first within A&F to examine their contribution to fostering student success by revisiting their mission statements, goals and targets. As the university continues assessing all aspects of the learning environment, the offices of Institutional Research and Assessment will ask A&F services to provide evidence of their effectiveness in achieving stated goals and targets.

### **Next Steps in Assessment of Student Learning**

The peer review of assessment plans revealed areas for faculty and staff development. Departments/programs received a summary of the peer review feedback and had the opportunity to revise their reports or meet with the assessment fellow. Feedback focused on the components of the assessment process rather than on the process itself. (See the [Assessment Report Feedback Sheet](#).) The feedback that revealed the greatest need for professional development among faculty in undergraduate departments was in the area of analyzing and using assessment data. Specifically, 7 of 30 departments received feedback recommending changes in the area of data analysis, and 8 of 30 undergraduate departments received recommendations for improving their use of assessment data. An emphasis on understanding these two components in the assessment cycle was even greater among the nonclassroom programs. Fortunately, expertise to address these two areas already exists on campus. The future focus on assessment feedback to departments will be for both process and

quality with a modified peer review process in which the assessment system for each department/program will be reviewed on a three-year cycle. (See “assessment of student learning outcomes” in [“Planning, Resource Allocation, Institutional Renewal Cycle.”](#))

### **Institutionalizing Student Learning Assessment**

The assessment process has been institutionalized this past year and will be sustained by the university’s investment of human and fiscal resources. The university has an Office of Assessment, staffed with an executive director, assessment coordinator and graduate student workers. The office receives support from institutional research and three other bodies: (a) an assessment advisory board, (b) [assessment fellows](#), some with release time and (c) department/program assessment coordinators. The advisory board provides the office with continuous feedback on assessment planning processes and documents. Seven assessment fellows—two faculty with full release time, one assistant dean and four staff members—are responsible for providing assessment assistance for 10–15 units each. Assessment coordinators, one from each department or program, serve as liaisons between the Office of Assessment and campus units. They strengthen communication and understanding of assessment expectations, procedures and resources. All told, 38 individuals from both Academic Affairs and A&F are directly involved with the Office of Assessment, which has greatly enhanced information sharing and community involvement in assessment processes.

Faculty and staff receive support on assessment issues from the executive director, assessment coordinator, assessment fellows, the department/program assessment coordinators and 13 campus consultants, who volunteered to work with their colleagues. In addition, the Office of Assessment has produced [“Exemplary Assessment Practices at Gallaudet,”](#) the Assessment Handbook, a Web site and an intranet (Blackboard) site to explain the process, provide examples from work done by Gallaudet faculty/staff, define terms, outline reporting expectations and deadlines, provide instructional presentations and connect to other Web sites.

In addition to an infrastructure that supports ongoing assessment, a substantial portion of the office’s budget is devoted to professional development. Since July 2007, 52 members of the campus community have attended seven national assessment conferences and shared their learning with the campus during “brown bag lunch” meetings. Individuals have been financially supported by the Provost’s Office, the Office of Assessment, the General Studies Program, Student Affairs and the Office of the Vice President of A&F. Attendees have included the provost, deans, faculty governance leaders, faculty, and staff from academic support services, Student Affairs and A&F.

In its assessment plan, the university included a section on sharing to maximize data use and to encourage faculty and staff to consider how their findings might benefit the campus community. Faculty and staff indicated that information about student learning will be shared with department members, deans, the provost, the Board of Trustees, funding agencies, prospective students, potential majors, alumni, parents and accrediting agencies. At a recent meeting, the assessment fellows discussed how to share their reports other than through writing. They identified four other venues: (a) an appearance by assessment coordinators on the [President’s Vlog](#); (b) interdisciplinary roundtable discussions this spring, (c) a presentation to the Board of Trustees in May 2008 and (d) a poster session in fall 2008.

Student learning assessment is a component of each department’s and program’s curricular process. Assessment use will be reviewed at the department level, as well as by the Office of Assessment. In addition, student learning assessment results will be a major component of Academic Program

Reviews conducted by CUE and CGE. (See Standard 11 for more detail.) Student learning assessment will also be a component of institutional effectiveness [indicators for Goal 2](#). Thus, each year faculty councils, deans, the provost, the president and the Board of Trustees will review assessments from GSR courses for progress toward the institutional learning outcomes, as well as content-area licensure examinations for students in professional programs.

Gallaudet University has made tremendous strides in the assessment of student learning outcomes over the last eight months. The initial emphasis was on process, sustainability and recognition of the process as beneficial to teaching and learning. That has been accomplished. One of the next steps is to review what has been done with a critical eye to ensure that outcomes are measurable, that data analysis can be used, and that there is a direct link between lessons learned from data analysis and improvements to teaching and learning. The “Reflections” section of each department’s assessment report, as well as the summary “Reflections Report,” points to the need for more time and professional development to which the university is committed. The overwhelming majority of participants in the assessment peer review process recognized that using assessments will improve teaching and learning.

## Conclusion

The past year has brought about a level of commitment to institutional renewal that is perhaps unprecedented, at least in Gallaudet's recent history. Key elements of the renewal process have included: (a) a re-examination of Gallaudet's mission statement; (b) a shift from an input and process orientation to one that focuses on student learning and institutional outcomes; (c) planning and decision making based on evidence, especially outcomes data and (d) using outcomes data to improve institutional and program effectiveness. While Gallaudet cannot yet claim to have changed from a tradition and intuition-based organization to one that fully utilizes systematic data-driven decision making, the understanding of what the change "looks like" and means has spread throughout the institution.

The recent changes at Gallaudet were begun in response to a crisis precipitated by the commission's calling into question the university's compliance with accreditation standards. However, as a result of its response to the "accreditation crisis," Gallaudet has established mechanisms and committed resources that can provide ongoing and continued growth in core areas that include general studies revision, a climate that increasingly supports diversity and respect, student learning outcomes assessment, assessment through institutional research and systemic planning. The university is mindful that it is now engaged in a continuous process of institutional change, and it anticipates continuing to learn how to support growth and renewal. Meanwhile, Gallaudet has identified four areas of challenge and, therefore, focus for the immediate future:

1. Institution-wide understanding by individuals of the meaning of institutional strategic objectives in their day-to-day work (to be accomplished through action planning and resource allocation at the institution and unit level);
2. Systematic and consistent integration and coordination of mechanisms, resources and efforts for assessment and renewal;
3. Timely allocation of resources to support strategic priorities and
4. Effectively "closing the loop" between data collection and program improvement at all levels of the institution.