

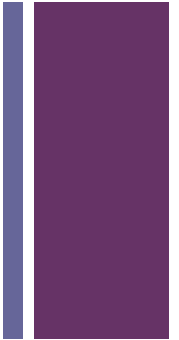


# Gallaudet Town Hall Meeting

May 6, 2008  
CBG Consulting Team

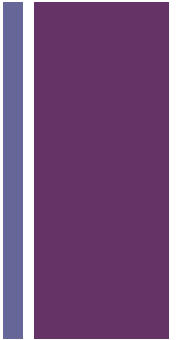
# + Contextualizing the Data

- This data is derived from CLIMATE interviews, not fact-based investigations; this does not mean that the data are either factual or unfactual, **but it does mean that they are, to some extent, unverified.** Nonetheless, they are representative of the multiple, complex perceptions of diversity-related climate concerns that exist within the Gallaudet campus community.



# + Contextualizing the Data

- It is important to note that perception is reality until it is checked (U.S. Justice Department).



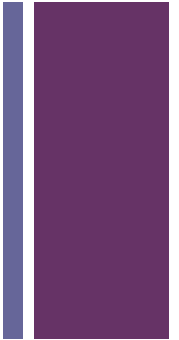
# + Contextualizing the Data

- The process through which the consultants engaged the campus community (i.e., confidential face-to-face interviews (of individuals and groups), written communication via e-mail, and online surveys) was designed to solicit and collect perceptions about climate, not to determine the veracity of those perceptions. *In essence, in presenting this summary of findings, the consultants are holding up mirror like prism through which the Gallaudet community can view themselves from multiple, **complementary** and **competing**, points of refraction.*

# + Contextualizing the Data

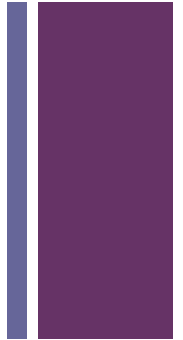
- While we (the consultants) are engaging the campus community in this climate process, several other things are happening on campus:
  - a series of hate/bias incidents occur;
  - the MSCHE accreditation work is being undertaken;
  - there are negative reports about the university's accreditation situation in the media; etc.
  - People eagerly join the ad hoc Diversity Team (about 25 to date)
  - People enthusiastically volunteer for the Dialogue Facilitator Training (about 40 to date)
  - More than 150 people participate in the Campus-Wide Dialogue

# + Contextualizing the Data



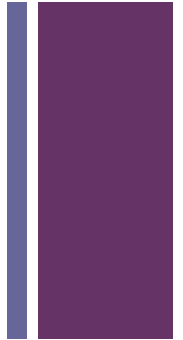
- If you keep the confluence of all of these occurrences in mind, when you look at the data, this data should not only not be a surprise to you, but understandable

# + Contextualizing the Data



- So, while it is true that quite a bit of the data is not yet different from data collected previously, what is different is:
  - there seems to be a general institutional willingness to set up “something permanent” (for example, a campus-wide intergroup dialogue program) that will allow Gallaudet to finally address and resolve the problems the data point to

# + Contextualizing the Data

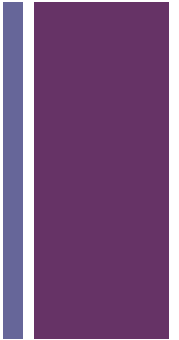


- Again, while a lot of the data is not markedly different from data collected previously, what is different is that:
  - there is a cautious, albeit fragile, optimism that came out in the climate interviews
    - while the participants self-selected and, thus might easily be assumed to have an axe to grind, that was not our (the consultants) experience of where people were coming from in these interviews
    - thus what might appear to be negative commentary should be understood as honest concern, thoughtful reflection, and sincere engagement

# + Contextualizing the Data

- Taking all of these things into consideration, we (the consultants) felt that it was important for us to keep two things in mind as we present this data to you:
  - People know what they told
  - So while some of the data may be difficult to accept, to continue to nurture that cautious optimism, it is paramount that the campus be willing to honestly engage this data in order to develop concrete strategies that address the problems identified

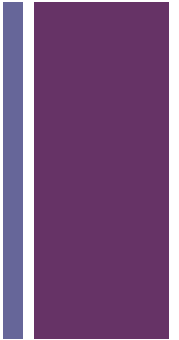
# + Summary Finding Areas



- Since the Protest
- Student-specific Issues
- Understanding Diversity
- Bilingualism
- Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, Hearing
- Larger Campus Community

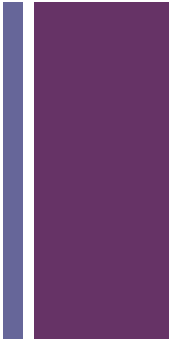
# + Since the Protest

- There is a mixed sense of whether things are “better” at Gallaudet in the wake of the protest. **There is some optimism, though it is extremely cautious and fragile (largely from faculty and staff), but there is also a lot of skepticism (largely from students), and yet students are still actively engaged in campus life**



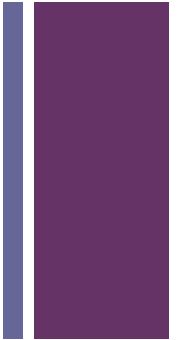
# + Since the Protest

- There is a widespread sense that there are *still* serious communication problems on campus (related to access to, and dissemination of, information), BUT they are related to the “mechanics” of communication (i.e., not identity based, not related to Deaf/HH/hearing status and/or communication mode)



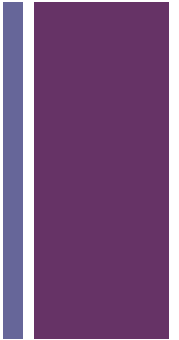
# + Since the Protest

- There is still a LOT of fear on the part of faculty and staff around speaking one's mind and being the target of retaliation or reprisal, and a sense that there is a general lack of civility on campus; **BUT** this is felt regardless of the position taken during the protest, regardless of race and Deaf/HH/hearing status, and regardless of positionality on campus (faculty (tenured and untenured), staff at all levels (including professional staff in leadership positions); **AND students do not generally feel this fear**



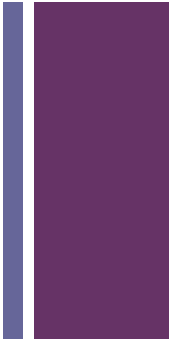
# + Student-specific Issues

- Leadership in the SBG is perceived to be overtly hostile to student of color organizations and this is a perception that is held not only by students of color, but also white students, and not only by students, but also by faculty and staff (both faculty of color and white faculty); BUT there is a strong sense sense from students that this can be resolved with guidance from faculty and staff



# + Student-specific Issues

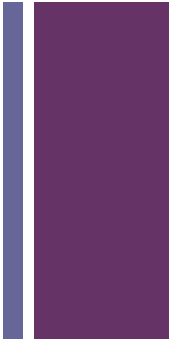
- Classified staff who are primarily people of color and hearing, feel profoundly mistreated by Deaf and white students, BUT this is not a Gallaudet-specific problem, **so while it *absolutely* needs to be addressed**, it is not an issue connected to the protest



# + Understanding Diversity

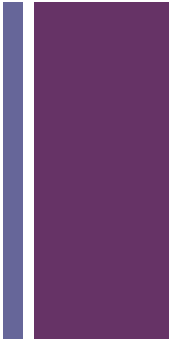
- Among white people AND people of color, there is a sense that at Gallaudet race-based concerns focus on U.S. born black people, and that this focus is situated within a Black/White racial paradigm. Other people of color, Latinas/Latinos in particular, feel that their issues are not of concern and, therefore, are not being addressed. The sense of an Asian Pacific American presence on campus is zero. Recently, Latina/Latino students have begun to raise their concerns and parts of the campus are beginning to develop strategies for responding to, and eventually addressing, these concerns

# + Understanding Diversity



- Most faculty and staff understand that *in theory* diversity should include a broader “laundry list” of social and cultural identity categories related to power, privilege, and oppression (LGBT and sex/gender are two that came up a lot), **BUT that *in practice* diversity emerges only as Deaf/HH/hearing status and race.**

# + Understanding Diversity

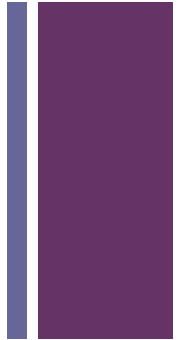


- People want to find capable applicants for open positions who will also add to the diversity of the campus, **BUT feel that search and selection processes have been misused to hire friends and/or “figurehead” candidates**

# + Understanding Diversity

- People feel that equity- and diversity-related roles and functions are currently being managed by people on top of their “regular” responsibilities and, thus, lack coordination, BUT feel confident that a centrally coordinated equity and diversity function would strengthen and enhance these efforts

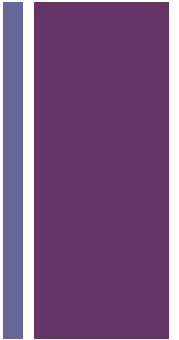
# + Understanding Diversity



- People believe they can benefit from *basic* education on campus about diversity to counter the “hierarchy of oppression” or “my pain is greater/worse than your pain” (perhaps expressed as Deaf oppression is worse than race oppression or visa versa) diversity dynamic on campus, BUT they also recognize that this dynamic runs contrary to the goal of building unity through diversity.

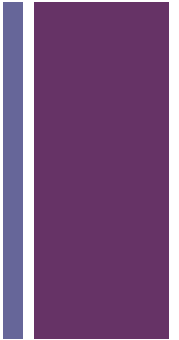
# + Bilingualism

- There are mixed interpretations of what “bilingual education” means at Gallaudet. Some people believe that it means creating an ASL-dominant, and thus Deaf-centric, environment. Others believe that it means people choosing their preferred mode of communication without pressure, judgment, or ridicule. **Almost everyone believes that the campus can avoid problems with its implementation by pro-actively addressing these competing understandings, perhaps through a consensus building dialogue on this topic.**



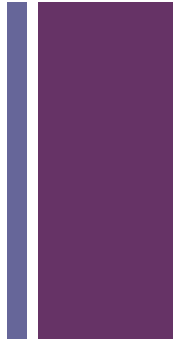
# + Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, Hearing

- There is deep ambivalence about what to do with hearing, white people on campus. People recognize that hearing people, especially hearing white people, have skills that are needed at Gallaudet, BUT bristle when hearing people communicate with each other at Gallaudet in ways that are not only not Deaf-sensitive, but not Deaf-centric.





# Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, Hearing



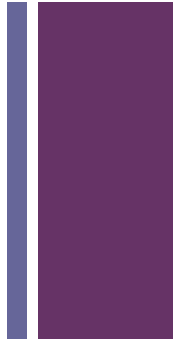
- HH people (students, faculty, and staff) all express a sense of not being fully accepted in the Deaf community at Gallaudet because of how they were often mainstreamed in school and their resulting identity and communication norms. They also express not being fully accepted in the hearing community off campus despite how they were often mainstreamed in schools. This duality is often accompanied by concerns about non-fluent use of ASL, voice, and SIMCOM and/or having a hearing aid/cochlear implant. There is some extremely nascent, but positive, discussion of these issues beginning to take place on campus, and most people feel that there is a lot more to be said/explored on this topic.

# + Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, Hearing

- Hearing people (and some HH people) feel that they are not given enough time to become ASL proficient, at the same time that Deaf people and some HH people do not feel that hearing people are trying hard enough to become ASL proficient; **EVERYONE** is frustrated about the issue of ASL proficiency and wants to find a fair and meaningful way to resolve it.



# Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, Hearing



- There is deep ambivalence around the role/status/power of interpreters in the campus community. Interpreters are often individuals with organic connections to the Deaf community who care deeply about the campus, BUT their status as usually hearing people can get in the way of their acceptance by Deaf people at Gallaudet (i.e. the perception of their having and/or behaving in a manner that suggests “power over” Deaf and HH people). Further, without some kind of organic relationship to Gallaudet (as opposed to simply the Deaf community), many interpreters consider the campus unfriendly, and even disrespectful, to their profession (i.e., they are “the help”) or skill in their profession (never good enough to capture meaning accurately).

# + Larger Campus Community

- The Clerc Center and MSSD feel disconnected from the main campus of the University, BUT are actively reaching out to the rest of campus because they strongly desire to strengthen and maintain on-going, close relationships with the rest of Gallaudet

