

*Report to the  
Faculty, Administrators, Trustees, Staff, and Students  
Of  
Gallaudet University  
Washington, D.C.*

*By*

*An Evaluation Team Representing the  
Commission on Higher Education  
Of the  
Middle States Association  
Of Colleges and Schools*

Prepared after Study of the Institution's  
Self-Study Report  
And a  
Visit to the Campus on April 8-11, 2001

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At the Time of the Visit

**Date when instruction began: 1864**

**Year of first graduating class: 1869**

**President: Dr. I. King Jordan**

**Chief Academic Officer: Dr. Jane K. Fernandes**

**Chair of the Board of Trustees: Dr. Glenn B. Anderson**

## Introduction

The Middle States Association (MSA) process provides institutions the option of four approaches to ten-year accreditation reviews: comprehensive, special emphases selected topics, or alternative approaches. Gallaudet elected the selected topics approach with emphases on technology and student assessment and outcomes. In addition to the special attention given these topics, the MSA Visiting Team made inquiry into the areas of: organization, administration and governance; education programs and faculty; and planning and resource allocation, inclusive of financial resources.

## Mission

Any review of the effectiveness of an organization in achieving its stated purpose must necessarily begin with an examination of the mission and the extent to which that mission is understood by those entrusted with its fulfillment. At Gallaudet, the mission is clear, "...to serve as a comprehensive, multi-purpose institution of higher education for deaf and hard-of-hearing citizens of the United States and of the world." It is, in fact, "...the only liberal arts university in the world designed exclusively for deaf and hard-of-hearing students." That historic mission is well articulated in key University publications, and evidence abounds of the passion and commitment with which Trustees, administrators, faculty, staff and alumni embrace the University mission.

The Gallaudet mission, because of its uniqueness, is enduring. However, the University community recognizes the changing environment growing out of more aggressive enforcement of the *Americans With Disabilities Act* and related legislation; the rise in cochlear implants; the decline in the size of the cohort of deaf infants over the last two decades; the closing of a branch campus for conditionally-admitted students; and the general trend of main-streaming of deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Gallaudet is perhaps first to realize that with deaf and hard-of-hearing students now having the option of attending mainstream hearing colleges and universities, it may have to shift its emphasis. It may have to recalibrate the balance between its role as direct and sole provider of educational opportunity for deaf and hard-of-hearing students versus its role for setting the standard for such educational programs around the world. The ideal is to offer the unique educational experience that only Gallaudet can provide; one that combines the time-proven advantages of educating the deaf and hard-of-hearing within the deaf community environment with any benefits that might accrue from the integration of such students into mainstream higher education institutions.

To its credit, the University has already begun the process of accommodation through increased diversity in the student body; the focus of its academic programs and

services; varying instructional delivery strategies and techniques and the facilities it provides. More importantly, the University community is committed to continuous accommodation as scientific advances in genetic engineering and other environmental changes occur. It is this keen sense of need to adapt to a rapidly changing landscape that assures the Middle States Team of the continued relevance of the institution's mission and the ability of its faculty, administration and staff to fulfill that mission.

## Organization, Administration, and Governance

In examining how the University is structured to achieve its mission, the MSA Team was impressed with the Board of Trustees. The twenty-one (21) member Board is, in many ways, a microcosm of the Gallaudet community with regard to non-hearing versus hearing members, racial composition and national descent. They are persons with differing spheres of interest and influence, with three trustees being members of the United States Congress. The latter trustees are particularly important given Gallaudet's major reliance on federal appropriations.

The Trustees are respectful of shared governance and are particularly mindful of their policy-making and fiduciary responsibilities. The Board appreciates the role of faculty, students and administrators in the operation of the University while ultimately holding the President accountable for Campus operations and management. According to the Board Chair, the President has an excellent relationship with the Trustees, owing primarily to his exemplary performance over the last 13 years. The Chair stressed that the President is particularly adept at fund-raising, citing how the endowment increased from \$10 million in 1988 to \$150 million in 2000. The sentiments of the University Trustees generally are shared throughout the University community.

Gallaudet recently reorganized its administrative structure to reflect a rather streamlined model. The duties and responsibilities of four vice presidents and seven deans were collapsed into a Provost with four deans and a Vice President for Administration and Finance with four executive directors. The new structure establishes clear lines of responsibility and authority and provides for greater communication, coordination, and cooperation among administrative units. Even with a more streamlined administrative organization, institutional management is a major challenge. At Gallaudet, faculty appear to insist on a direct, rather than an advisory role in the operations of the institution. In addition to their involvement in departmental decisions, the faculty exercise considerable control over management of the institution through a series of seven Faculty Senate standing committees, two legislative councils, a Faculty Sign Communications Proficiency Committee, and the University Council. Yet another faculty committee, the Cost-Benefit Analysis Committee, was being formed as the MSA evaluation was in progress. These committees deliberate on issues ranging from faculty welfare, curriculum and academics, quality, admissions and student welfare to items as mundane as the revision of administrative forms.

The faculty committee structure is duplicative, cumbersome, and extremely burdensome. Several committees often deliberate or adjudicate the same issues, making decision-making a long and protracted process. The potential benefit of some decisions are frequently lost before they are decided. The system is much too involved for a small campus of 2,500 students and 224 faculty. It consumes an enormous amount of faculty time and energy that might be better used to advance the core functions of teaching, scholarship and service. Ironically, the faculty complains that the demands on their time are so great that they hardly have enough time for their primary duties. The faculty structure tends also to undermine the legitimate authority of the President, Provost, Vice President, and deans to make administrative decisions or otherwise carry out their duties and responsibilities as administrative officers of the University.

In short, the current system of faculty governance causes great paralysis in the management of the University. Left unaddressed, the MSA Team believes it could seriously impede the effectiveness and efficiency of the campus in achieving its unique mission and thus, adversely affect its reputation as one of America's most treasured special purpose institutions. The issue is of such importance that the MSA Team suggests the President might wish to consider engaging three or four higher education consultants to review the structure of faculty governance with particular attention being given to the appropriate role the network of committees, councils, and other groups should or should not have in the management of the University.

## Faculty

It was very clear to the MSA team that Gallaudet faculty members possess first-rate academic credentials and that they are well-prepared for their roles as instructors of and role models for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. It does appear, however, that the University depends to a very large degree on its own graduates for faculty recruitment. While the University actively depends upon the city environment to counteract the academic community's nurturing and sustaining insularity to some degree, because balance is important preparing students for the world outside Gallaudet the MSA team recommends that the institution place increased emphasis upon recruiting and hiring deaf faculty from a broader range of institutions than it has in the past.

Several faculty spoke of the tremendous opportunity the University had provided them for completion of the doctorate. However, some of the younger faculty expressed a need for the University to provide deaf faculty with additional support. We learned that hearing faculty are given release time in order to improve their skills in American Sign Language—the mastery of which, we note, is essential to being granted tenure at Gallaudet. Given the very real difficulties of mastering this second language, that entitlement seems completely justified. In a similar manner, the University may wish to consider any special opportunities and incentives it may offer deaf faculty seeking graduate degrees and/or pursuing tenure.

## Curriculum

The MSA team was extremely impressed by the Gallaudet undergraduate curriculum. It seems to us to closely approximate the curricula of institutions that do not cater to the special population that Gallaudet does. It is a highly ambitious curriculum. Given that special population, it seems that the First Year Seminars (FYS) are a lynchpin of the institution's teaching of skills as well as its well-conceived introduction of students to college level study; it is also clear that they have a positive impact on student retention, which is a significant problem on the campus. The MSA team recommends that the University consider making the FYS a requirement for all freshmen. The MSA team also believes that the issue of fostering English literacy must be paramount at Gallaudet, not only in developmental courses, but throughout the curriculum of the University on both undergraduate and graduate levels. Without English competence, students are destined not to succeed academically and the University will not achieve its goal of increasing retention rates. The English Works! program is a laudable effort and needs increased institutional support. Some faculty members strongly endorsed such action, even if it meant curtailing offerings in other areas. (One faculty member went so far as to suggest that the University consider offering daily one-on-one tutorials to every student whose English literacy level suggests that s/he is incapable of succeeding independently.) Therefore, the MSA team strongly recommends that the University redouble its efforts to help struggling students achieve higher levels of English competence. Every institution in the country has found itself sacrificing coverage of subjects to the development of reading, writing and speaking skills in its students; in this, as in so many things, the Gallaudet faculty's challenge is greater than those experienced by colleagues at other institutions, as will be the gratification which their students' skills improvement in reading, writing and speaking will give them.

Faculty, administrators and students alike expressed concerns about the number of general education credits (54-60) required of all students. The team agrees. The MSA team suggests that the University consider reducing the number of required courses devoted to general education in order to allow for more flexibility in teaching and learning, particularly if the campus adds first year studies and computer literacy courses to its requirements.

Two other issues raised by students and faculty are worth noting. On the positive side, some of Gallaudet's "best and brightest" students mentioned how challenging they found their honors courses. More critically, they asserted the belief that regular courses tend to be less stimulating, often because of the lack of responsiveness in class of their fellow students. What these students are invoking, of course, is the very real academic schism at Gallaudet between the extremely well-prepared and less than well-prepared students. There is no magic solution to this tension which is so endemic to Gallaudet's mission of supporting gifted and less-gifted students of the deaf community, but we

might suggest that departments make every effort they can to support the institution's most ambitious students with independent projects or honors projects in which the students can more fully explore and expand their capacities for intellectual work. The MSA team recommends, additionally, that the University consider the creation of more honors courses, especially at the upper levels. This might be done in conjunction with a review of the general education credit requirements.

The MSA team further recommends that GU continue to explore ways of creating credible, externally recognized, credentials that might reward students' efforts when they are not able to complete bachelor's degree requirements. Such credentials might be in the form of associate's degrees, certificate of competence, or some other means that would provide recognition and an honorable exit from the institution.

## Library

In addition to maintaining a collection of general library materials to support the University's academic and research missions, the GU library makes extensive use of the internet to access information resources. The library staff takes great pride in managing the world's largest and most up-to-date collection of literature and media related to deafness. They also oversee a unique archival collection on this subject. Because of the special, concentrated focus of this collection, the cost of purchasing new texts, journals and non-print resources often is substantially more than for comparable materials in other fields of study where the market generally is larger. As a result a considerable amount of the library budget must be allocated for these special purchases. The uniqueness and high cost of such materials also make them targets for theft by certain individuals who either cannot afford to purchase them or simply want to possess them. Therefore, it was quite disturbing for our team to learn that the library's security system has not worked for several years and that no corrective measures have been implemented to date. According to the 2001 Library Review Team Report, some of the missing materials "may be irreplaceable."

The GU administration should review and act upon the all recommendations contained in the 2001 Library Program Review Team Report. The recommendations are clustered into seven categories, all of which are reasonable and important. As noted above, special attention must be given immediately to the issue of security. The University cannot allow such a world-class collection to continue to be unprotected.

The library budget also needs immediate attention. The percent of the University's budget devoted to library funding is substantially below that of comparable institutions and should be increased at least to the level of the national average, 4.6% of general and educational expenses. This is especially important since so much is spent on special collections.

The University must make every reasonable effort to grow and maintain its own on-site collection while maximizing use of the Washington, D.C. area consortium of which it is a part to supplement the resources it has available on campus.

## Technology

The part of the Gallaudet University Self-Study report that focused on technology identified four related issues that required attention: communication, coordination, training and planning.

Although the MSA Self-study report described an array of technology services which support the use of technology in support of instruction in the classroom, a reorganization of these functions has been put into place since last fall. The creation of the Academic Technology unit and its four component parts seems to focus on the learning teaching process with a unified approach to meeting the needs of the users. We found evidence to support the conclusion reached as stated on page 68. “As Gallaudet considers how best to collaborate to support technology, the importance and value of technology in fostering the learning and student success must be kept foremost in mind.” An issue related to seamless support of technology is the training of both faculty and students. Training for faculty in the use of GDOC, the collaborative classroom software that provides discussion groups for out-of-class experiences is pervasive and of high quality according to faculty members interviewed. However, training for students in the use of technology is presently part of the First Year Seminar (FYS) which is not required of all students. For those students enrolled in the First Year Seminar the training seems to be effective. Faculty training in the use of the student information system (GNOSIS) is described as insufficient for their needs in advising and supporting students. The issue is summarized by the statement in the report, “These matters (faculty training and training in GNOSIS) must be given a high priority if students are to progress smoothly toward graduation.” Again, we found evidence that would support this position.

The issue of technology planning is on-going, and requires attention at the institutional level. The President’s Technology Advisory Committee and PeopleSoft Transformation Board each have a role in laying the foundation for the future. At present, steps are being taken to correct the PeopleSoft problems described in the Self-Study report. In particular, the Student Administration part of PeopleSoft is now operational, except for the advising and degree audit review sections. Once faculty are trained in using the Student Administration part of PeopleSoft, some of the problems noted in the Self-Study should be alleviated. The complex and comprehensive nature of technology planning requires information to support technology decisions which have long-range consequences for the University. Technology planning needs the approach as stated on page 73. “Clearly, we must take a unified, proactive approach to anticipate, finance and plan for future technological improvements and upgrades to support Gallaudet’s mission and keep our students competitive in a rapidly changing world.”

Since the writing of the Self-study, it is clear that significant strides have been made in addressing the technology weaknesses delineated in the report. Of particular note are the strides made by the newly appointed technology directors in achieving a level of cooperation and collaboration not seen before. Their efforts to provide users with a seamless array of support services through the help desk is but one example of efforts that must continue.

The continuing problem with e-mail described in the report seems to be solved at the present time. ITS has addressed the e-mail problem (p. 67) by outsourcing this function to a vendor. Faculty members, staff and students seem to be generally satisfied with e-mail at present with some minor reservations.

In the area of administrative support and information systems, ITS staff are now more focused on the service aspect of their positions. They understand that ITS is a service function and are making an effort to be more responsive to users. In recent months they have cross-trained with the Academic Technology staff to better coordinate response to user service calls. One example is the Windows NT training that was conducted for both ITS staff and Academic Technology staff. The most impressive progress has been made in the significant strides in remedying the e-mail deficiencies which were referenced in the self-study report. This was accomplished by outsourcing the e-mail operation.

The challenges presented by implementing the PeopleSoft modules are formidable and complex. Skills of the staff charged with PeopleSoft implementation are being upgraded through professional development opportunities. The use of the PWC consultancy and the creation of the PTB board have clarified the issues in achieving full functionality for PeopleSoft modules.

On the academic support side of technology, on-line web support for classes (GDOC) has been integrated into 264 courses by 45% of instructors, which exceeds implementation by most institutions. Faculty, staff and student training by Academic Technology in the tools necessary to implement GDOC have been applauded by the faculty. Another commendable initiative in Academic Technology is the integration of technology as a part of the First Year Seminar. The success of the FYS technology skills instruction is validated by student results on TekXam and anecdotal information from student interviews. A third area of excellence is the innovative approaches in the area of multi-media, such as video streaming, digital video and the use of Internet II for ASL with English captioning. These are evidence of Gallaudet's forward-looking commitment to technology in support of its unique instructional mission.

The plans described to us for the technology facilities in the proposed Student Academic Center are exciting and forward-looking. Faculty, staff and students expressed the need for functions to be housed in the facility (especially the 24 hour computing facility for students). Overall, technology issues have been raised to an appropriate level of institutional attention and some infrastructure deficiencies are currently being addressed. However, these efforts have been more management-oriented than directed at

supporting the teaching-learning enterprise. The present attention to technology issues should result in a more stable environment in year or two, if attention is devoted to the continuing challenges as identified below.

While a good deal of progress is evident, the University faces a number of continuing challenges.

1. The highest priorities for further implementation of PeopleSoft modules should continue to be determined by academic needs such as advising support, degree-audit review, transcripts and class schedules, grade reporting, etc. ITS currently is dedicating 65% of its PeopleSoft expenditures to the Student Administration module for FY 2002. This level of commitment is laudable and should continue until the academic needs for advising and degree audit review are fully implemented. Faculty training in using the software needs to be included as part of the PeopleSoft implementation plan.
2. Campus-wide technology policies and specifications need to continue to be established. For example, only in November 2000 had a minimum standard for network PCs been determined. This lack of a standard is indicative of a general need for technology standards and policies which would simplify support requirements and increase the efficient use of institutional technology resources.
3. Deficiencies in the physical layer of the campus network (hubs, premise wiring, etc.) as well as documentation of technology resources are currently being addressed. Until these steps are completed, a strategic direction for technology to support GU's unique instructional mission will be difficult to establish. For example, a decision about whether to lease or purchase PCs to attain the goal of a three-year replacement cycle will be difficult in the absence of an accurate and up-to-date equipment inventory.
4. While PTAC and PTB can serve as ad hoc mechanisms as the University addresses infrastructure challenges, a careful reconsideration of alternative structures for continuing to address the strategic directions of technology should be considered in the near future.
5. At this time, the campus-wide IT plan is working its way through the institutional review and critique process. Alternative strategies for achieving technology objectives should be considered in the implementation of the plan. Further, significant resources are being devoted to new technology, upgrading of existing technology and on-going maintenance and replacement costs. Thus, the IT plan and funding priorities should be aligned with both the strategic objectives and the academic priorities of the institution.

In discussions with those administrators charged with the oversight and management responsibilities of technology, it became clear that they are aware of and prepared to address these and other challenges. In the past year, remarkable progress has been made at Gallaudet University in establishing technology priorities as well as coordinating and streamlining technology services. Should the pace of progress continue for the near future, many of the challenges outlined above will find a resolution

appropriate for the University. It should be noted that these issues are not unique to Gallaudet University but are being confronted by many institutions.

## Enrollment and Student Services

Students come from diverse backgrounds and seem genuinely enthusiastic about their decisions to matriculate at GU. They share common values and recognize the unique opportunities available to them. The University makes a strong effort to mold the students into a supportive community.

According to the self-study, Gallaudet has traditionally been an open admission institution for the deaf and hard of hearing community. In the last few years, as students who traditionally would have been candidates for admission to Gallaudet began to consider and be recruited by other institutions, the office of enrollment services (primarily admissions and financial aid) reorganized to become more proactive in identifying students who would be the right fit for the institution. With mainstreaming, students come to Gallaudet with varying communications skills; some are fluent in American Sign Language while others have no facility with ASL. The level of English literacy varies considerably as well. Through anticipating the changing demographics of the student body, and enhancing services to support the changing population, the institution is positioning itself to maintain a competitive edge in the future.

To reshape the recruitment process, Gallaudet has undertaken many of the same strategies hearing institutions employ, and invited the campus community to become more involved in the recruitment process. These included professionally produced publications, cultivation of influencers (such as vocational rehabilitation counselors), use of alumni and faculty in the recruitment process, and the development of special recruitment events on and off-campus, such as open houses and the academic bowl. A Presidential scholarship program has encouraged applications from academically talented students. The admissions staff also makes home visits, which they feel have been very beneficial in engaging the family in the college decision. President Jordan indicated that the quality of the entering student has improved over the last ten years, as evidenced by the number of students being admitted into the Honors program and the increase in English literacy among new students.

Recruitment and enrollment support for the graduate school has also grown in the recent past. Staffing appears to be adequate and well-coordinated. New students can participate in a “Culture and Language Colloquium” which includes a seminar on deaf history and deaf culture, as well as a new student orientation. A note-takers seminar is also offered for students who seek employment in that area. Because they also feel competition with other institutions, the graduate staff expressed a need for additional graduate stipends. The establishment of a coordinated administration under one dean for

the graduate and professional programs should generate increased enrollments through the ability to be more entrepreneurial and responsive to public demand.

As a result of its liberal undergraduate admission policy, it is not uncommon for students to take several years more than their hearing peers to complete a bachelor's degree program. This is a commendable procedure since, in many instances, it provides marginal students with opportunities that in all likelihood would not be available at other colleges and universities. Usually such students are required to take developmental courses, which can add years to their studies before matriculation in a bachelor's degree program. The unfortunate result of such an admissions practice is that, despite the best institutional efforts, a high percent of students withdraw before completing their degree programs. In many cases, students simply do not have the resources to remain for the period required to complete a degree. It is clear that the faculty, support staff and students are aware of and seeking solutions to the concerns that have been raised.

There is some question as to whether students consistently meet the admissions standards for the University; however, some have concluded that it is difficult to define standards in the first place for the population Gallaudet serves. Should entry standards be more stringent than exit standards? Should Gallaudet be held to the same standards as other institutions, given the special population the institution serves? Should performance measures be consistent with hearing institutions? There is on-going discussion with Committee G (Admissions, calendar and academic standards) of the faculty senate to review and evaluate admissions standards, including the utility of a standardized test such as the SAT or ACT. Discussions like these are important in supporting an institutional understanding of the entering characteristics of the student body, and provide input necessary from the faculty perspective.

Gallaudet has established a series of transitional programs to engage the student before matriculation, starting with a week-long pre-college program the summer prior to the senior year. The orientation office coordinates a New Signers Program (for non-ASL users), New Student Orientation, orientation for new international students (just prior to NSO), and a family orientation for family members of new students, to help acclimate them to Gallaudet. The First Year Seminar program overlaps with New Student Orientation, so there appears to be ample opportunity for students to bond and become familiar with on-campus services. There is a strong desire on the part of faculty and staff working with the First Year Seminar program for enhanced technology support, and a high level of interest making the First Year Seminar mandatory for all students.

According to the Dean of Student Affairs, Gallaudet is moving from a student service to a student learning model. They consider themselves to be “partners in education” with the faculty, and are committed to supporting academic and student success with student centered education and programs. Living –learning communities are being developed, including theme-based communities in the dormitories. New residence options for older and married students have been developed. Space to meet varying housing needs will continue to be a challenge as the student population changes.

Community service hours are now required for graduation. There is some concern that Gallaudet students are not accustomed to “giving back”, and engagement in community service encourages students to understand lives other than their own. They are to be commended for providing students with this opportunity.

Overall, there appeared to be a strong desire to develop an early intervention model to address the complex issues facing the Gallaudet student. This sentiment was expressed by every staff person who has responsibility for retention activities, from academic advising, to the office of students with disabilities. As the director of multicultural affairs so aptly stated, “Gallaudet is a huge place of self-discovery.” The challenge is one of taking the student who is unique in the general population and making him or her a typical student at Gallaudet. The ability to share the entering characteristics between and amongst the service offices and staff is key to developing strategies for success for each student.

According to the staff, 38% of students who leave the University in good standing owe more than \$1,000 upon departure. The financial aid office makes every attempt to take into account the appropriate expenses (including individual educational/disability related costs for equipment, etc.) in constructing the student budget, and meets a high proportion of student need with grant aid. However, each family is expected to contribute toward the students education as part of the equation, and educating families about the intricacies of college financing may also help combat some of the retention challenges the University faces.

The most informative meeting during the visit was with students. Much of what the staff had to say about service delivery was confirmed by the students, who generally feel very positive about the Gallaudet experience. They particularly appreciated the opportunity to be in an environment that is not isolating. They also appreciate the traditions of the University. As a student from Tucson put it, Gallaudet is the place that provides “the blueprint to understand who I am”. When asked about what Gallaudet could do to make their experience better, both the undergraduates and graduate students in the group expressed very succinctly their desires. The undergraduates would like to see more challenging experiences for high achieving students. There is some concern that faculty tend to “teach to the middle” of the class. There are a limited number of honors courses within the departments, although the general education honors courses are well received. There seems to be some concern about attention being focused on the graduate programs, and an expressed desire to shift the focus back on the undergraduate program to make it more challenging. There is also strong desire for more interaction with faculty outside the classroom, which, according to two students who were in attendance in the 1980’s, was more the norm in the past. Generally speaking, the students appreciate the opportunities for leadership, accessibility, and to be with students of similar values. They are concerned about student retention. One specific request the students made was for a “one stop” center for first year students, which would aid with retention efforts. This idea may be worth exploring as the new academic service center comes on line. The graduate students expressed a desire to have better signing skills among their peers. With many hearing students in the graduate program, communication challenges are greater. They

very much appreciate the internship and residential living opportunities provided for them.

## Finance and Management

The Division of Administration and Finance of Gallaudet University is organized in a manner that facilitates planning and assessment activities to help the University pursue its mission and goals. The leadership has demonstrated a capacity to be both focused and resourceful as it addresses the challenges of funding for technology improvements as well as capital improvements. Gallaudet has a unique funding relationship with the U.S. Congress (\$88 million in FY 2001, or 70%, of its revenues). All indicators suggest that the relationship will continue and that Gallaudet will have a partner in meeting its future challenges. However, the institution recognizes both the inherent strength and weakness in depending on Congressional support for such a large portion of its operating revenues. Thus, to reduce this dependence, the leadership has responded and is to be commended for having launched a capital campaign entitled "Unite for Gallaudet" a multiyear effort to increase the growth of private giving and to increase the \$150 million endowment.

The Division of Administration and Finance (A&F) is staffed with dedicated professionals led by the Vice President for Administration and Finance. Under the most recent organizational restructuring of the University, the Vice President responds directly to the President and serves on the President's Council (Cabinet), as well as numerous other committees for the purposes of information technology development and strategic planning. The current organizational structure allows for direct supervision and control over the Administrative services of the University, including audit, budgeting, Administrative information technology services, facility management, auxiliary services and Finance. It is a clear and understandable organizational structure.

The A&F Division is responsible for a program review process called "GASP", the Gallaudet Assessment of Services and Programs. The review process focuses on the linkage between administrative programs and services and the President's strategic objectives. The process appears to be all encompassing including a wide array of the campus community as well as the external consultants from other institutions and the private sector. The Division is to be applauded for accepting the recommendation from the "GASP" process and completing over 80% of the administrative improvements.

The University's annual budget is prepared by the Gallaudet University Budget Committee (UBC). This committee includes representatives from the campus community, allowing for an open inclusive and deliberative process. The committee considers the many important factors that affect the University's resource base, with a particular focus on the Federal Appropriation. The UBC develops each year's budget within the context of a financial plan covering five years. The recommendations of the

UBC are clear and concise and provide a blueprint for the annual strategic resource allocations for the University. The recommendations are supported by specific internal and external economic quantitative data.

The University leadership has expanded its efforts to increase private support. The Capital campaign “Unite for Gallaudet” has successfully increased support by over \$11 million in 1999. With the appointment of a newly created Executive Director of Development, the University can continue its efforts to reduce its dependence on the Federal Appropriation. The University must, however, plan for staffing the capital campaign in order to ensure its success and to increase alumni participation.

The Executive Director, Facilities handles facilities planning and management, reporting directly to the Vice President for Administration and Finance. The management of this division appears to have detailed knowledge of the campus physical environment. The work of this unit is reflected by a campus that is very beautiful and reflective of a rich heritage. However, addressing deferred maintenance in the future will be a major challenge for the campus. The University has developed a comprehensive five-year plan for addressing deferred maintenance issues and has been providing significant funding for the plan. Over the next few years, addition funding will come from a federal appropriation. The University also plans to hire a consultant to prepare a list of deferred maintenance issues and provide an independent estimate of project costs.

The funding of technology improvements also presents a major challenge at Gallaudet as elsewhere. However, the University is committed to a five-year \$16 million plan to upgrade its technology infrastructure. As of FY2001, the fourth year of the plan, the University had exceeded its planned commitment to technology upgrade.

In fiscal year 2000, the University experienced a negative (\$1.58 million) reduction in unrestricted net assets from operations. While the University considers this a one-time event, this indicator must be monitored closely by the Financial management team. If it continues, it could have a negative impact on the University’s ability to support its many important programs. It is recommended the University Budget Committee reexamine the assumptions underlying its budget and revenue projections with a particular emphasis on projected levels of the federal appropriation.

## Assessment and Outcomes

Gallaudet University is to be commended for its efforts toward the design and implementation of various assessment strategies. It is evident that the University segments are cognizant of the need for assessment for evaluation of effectiveness and planning. It is apparent that the faculty, staff and students enthusiastically embrace the concept of and the need for assessment as a means of determining outcomes. However, the issue of assessment could be enhanced.

Clear and measurable objectives leading to expected outcomes should be delineated for the University in general and for the various segmental units in particular. A university-wide committee such as the GASP could be expanded to include the initial structuring of outcomes assessment plans that could aid in the coordination and integration of the data collection and analysis process. Currently, there is a lot of data that have been garnered by individual units. These data could be made available and communicated to all other units for planning purposes via a well designed and executed outcomes assessment plan. This plan should be more than just a review of various programs. The results should be paramount for effective change and desirable outcomes that assure student success.

Outcomes assessment should be revisited and its inclusion required as an integral part of the planning of all segments related to the success of students. A well-designed mechanism should be developed to facilitate the integration of data collected by the various student services units so that there is a sharing of information for planning and evaluation purposes. The feedback from the assessment of outcomes strategies and activities should be shared with the respective individuals involved in a very timely manner.

Assessment practices should be multidimensional, and student cognitive development should be only one of several components. Gallaudet has made an attempt to employ a multidimensional approach to student outcomes assessment. There were a variety of assessment tools that targeted various constituencies and purposes. Some of the tools employed are (1) alumni survey, (2) faculty peer evaluations for teaching effectiveness, (3) student evaluations of the quality of instruction, and (4) exit interviews for students to assess levels of satisfaction with their educational experiences, including curriculum and/or major programs, etc.

Assessment programs should include research and analyses on the effects of the assessments upon institutions, students, and the teaching and learning process. There was a plethora of isolated data assessing or targeting specific objectives in order to determine outcomes. For example, as part of GASP, seventeen units within the University were assessed for performance, including some indirect assessment of student learning outcomes. The Division of Administration and Business conducted the assessments and the data were analyzed and submitted in reports within this division. There was no comparable comprehensive outcomes assessment on a large scale conducted by the academic affairs division.

Assessment programs should be launched with realistic expectations of fulfilling their stated goals. Gallaudet designed assessments but lacked clearly defined outcomes (goals) that were measurable. The impact from the data collected did not reach those who could engage in activities/programs that would make a difference. For example, the Advising Center staff did not receive the appropriate data in a manner that could be used for programmatic change or improvement. Therefore, the concept of outcomes assessment was well developed, but there was no apparent follow-through that would have resulted in realistic outcomes.



## Postscript

Many American universities these days spend a great deal of time fabricating reasons to declare themselves unique. Gallaudet University, the MSA team is convinced, truly *is* unique. Gallaudet is unique in its student body of deaf and hard-of-hearing students, unique in the deeply daunting challenges with which those students present the administrative staff and faculty, and unique in the very real diversity those students bring to the institution. Gallaudet's achievement of a minority population of 24% is an extraordinary accomplishment, one your visiting colleagues, from the vantage points of our various institutions, can only envy. We envy as well the very substantial contribution the University is making to improve the lives and futures of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals in America and throughout the world. Every college these days has a mission statement; Gallaudet actually has a *mission*. It has been the MSA team's great pleasure to spend two days within the deaf culture of Gallaudet University, meeting with administrators, faculty, and students, learning a few basics of the incredibly intricate art of signing, and gaining a profound respect for the dedication of the professionals here who have committed their lives to validating the proposition that deaf students can be anything they aspire to being at Gallaudet, and beyond it as well.