

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

**GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY
Washington, DC 20002**

September 14, 2007

**Prepared by
Gallaudet University Faculty and Staff**

**Date of Small Team Visit:
October 9 and 10, 2007**

**Chair of Small Visiting Team:
Dr. Margaret Mary Fitzpatrick**

Subject of the Monitoring Report

I. Governance:

Steps taken to improve, and detailed evidence of, the effectiveness of shared governance including the presidential search process;

II. Climate:

Steps taken to improve, and detailed evidence of, a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff and administration for a range of backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives;

III. Mission and Strategic Plan:

Detailed evidence of mission review and implementation of a comprehensive institutional strategic plan;

IV. Enrollment Management:

Detailed evidence of implementation of a comprehensive enrollment management plan that addresses student recruitment, retention, graduation, and placement; and

V. Academic Rigor:

Detailed evidence of the academic rigor of degrees offered.

Issues addressed in monitoring report:

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education requested that this report by Gallaudet University cover the following five issues:

I. Governance:

Steps taken to improve, and detailed evidence of, the effectiveness of shared governance including the presidential search process;

II. Climate:

Steps taken to improve, and detailed evidence of, a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff and administration for a range of backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives;

III. Mission and Strategic Plan:

Detailed evidence of mission review and implementation of a comprehensive institutional strategic plan;

IV. Enrollment Management:

Detailed evidence of implementation of a comprehensive enrollment management plan that addresses student recruitment, retention, graduation, and placement; and

V. Academic Rigor:

Detailed evidence of the academic rigor of degrees offered.

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Institutional Context

This is a second report to the Middle States Commission 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 protests surrounding the appointment of a new president that began in May 2006. As a result of the protests, 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. The University submitted a Supplemental Information Report (SIR—attached as Exhibit A) on April 3, 2007, which was followed by a small team visit on April 30 and May 1, 2007. Thereafter, the Commission informed Gallaudet that:

- (i) it had placed the University on probation, effective June 28, 2007;
- (ii) the current monitoring report would be required by September 15, 2007; and
- (iii) it would be followed by a small team visit, now scheduled for October 9 and 10, 2007.

On January 2, 2007, President Davila initiated plans to respond to the Commission's concerns. These plans were described in detail in the April 3 SIR. Significant progress has since then occurred in each of the areas 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 three times in extraordinary sessions during this period. Dr. Weiner acted immediately to appoint Directors of Institutional Research and Assessment and a new Academic Affairs Management Team. These initiatives produced the following results:

Summary of Progress

I. Governance

- A. The Board of Trustees established a committee, including diverse community representation, to review the unsuccessful 2006 presidential search process and make recommendations for a new presidential search process.
- B. The President has recruited three nationally recognized higher education leaders to provide him and Gallaudet university guidance in developing and implementing its Transformation Plan: Dr. Don Langenberg, Dr. Al Simone, and Dr. Freeman Hrabowski.
- C. The Board of Trustees demonstrated a high level of engagement conducting three extraordinary meetings in June, August, and September. At these meetings, they accomplished the following:
 - i. The Board of Trustees engaged nationally recognized consultants in the area of higher education governance, Dr. Barbara Taylor and Dr. Don Langenberg.
 - ii. The Board of Trustees adopted new mission and vision statements developed by a diverse group of faculty, staff, students, and alumni.
 - iii. The Board of Trustees completed a self-assessment instrument to be discussed at an October retreat where an action plan will be developed.
 - iv. The Board of Trustees has identified skill and knowledge sets needed to fill Board vacancies.
- D. Shared governance has been promoted by on-going meetings among Board members, administration leadership, and faculty officers.
- E. An ad hoc Faculty committee developed revised by-laws to improve the faculty governance structure, with consideration for approval by the full faculty in October 2007.

II. Climate

- A. The Office of Institutional Research developed a new campus climate survey, field testing it in September 2007, planning for full implementation March, 2008.
- B. The President established an Ombudsman Office.
- C. The President set forth a seven-point diversity agenda.
- D. A Diversity Work Group completed its report and recommendations.
- E. A continuous campus communication plan concerning climate issues was implemented, including the President's videologs and town hall meetings.
- F. A year-long lecture and campus discussion group series called "Inclusive Bilingualism and the Gallaudet Mission" is being implemented.
- G. Recommendations to improve student / Department of Safety and Security relations have been implemented.
- H. A study of policies and practices related to freedom of expression was commissioned.

III. Mission and Strategic Plan

- A. A work group on mission developed new mission and vision statements through a broadly based campus process and submitted them to the Board for approval.
- B. A central coordinating group drafted a revised strategic plan based on the new mission statement.
- C. A new budget process was implemented to promote stronger links to the strategic plan and promote teaching and learning.

IV. Enrollment Management

- A. The Enrollment Management Office developed a strategic enrollment plan.
- B. The Faculty acted to raise undergraduate admissions standards.

V. Academic Rigor

- A. Current evidence of the academic rigor of degrees offered is being assessed.
- B. Results of a survey of Gallaudet alumni have been reported. Bachelor's degree recipients continue to earn advanced degrees at a high rate.
- C. The Council on Undergraduate Education developed a new undergraduate education curriculum (being implemented this semester) that is based on best practices, with fewer course requirements and built-in assessment components.
- D. Progress is being made on developing assessment standards for written English.
- E. Progress is being made on developing ASL assessment standards.
- F. A Data Warehouse has been implemented.
- G. NCATE assessments are being implemented.
- H. The University has begun development of an institutional effectiveness assessment process, with a campus-wide education program aimed at infusing the University with a culture of assessment.

With very few exceptions, this report will not repeat what is in the April 3 SIR. For example, we will not replicate the detailed information on academic rigor that is provided

in that report—interested readers should refer to it there. Instead, this report will focus on significant progress since the previous MSCHE small team visit on April 30 and May 1, 2007.

We recognize that several of the issues of concern to MSCHE can be addressed by what might be termed technical improvements—for example, we have developed more sophisticated and comprehensive approaches to strategic planning, enrollment planning, and assessment; and we will continue to revise and improve those plans and processes. In addition, we have made tangible changes to our curriculum and governance structure. However, we also recognize that some of the challenges, in the areas of climate, academic culture, and diversity are more fundamental and will require longer term planning and programs of community education. What follows are detailed descriptions of progress in the various areas of concern to MSCHE.

Progress to Date: Detailed Narrative

I. Governance: Steps taken to improve, and detailed evidence of, the effectiveness of shared governance including the presidential search process.

Progress since May 1, 2007:

A. The Board of Trustees established a committee, including diverse community representation, to review the unsuccessful 2006 presidential search process and make recommendations for a new presidential search process.

In its April 3, 2007 Supplemental Report to MSCHE, Gallaudet pointed out that its Board had conducted a successful search for an interim President and that President Davila had been successfully installed. Dr. Davila has now completed almost 9 months of service as president and has himself conducted a successful search for a new provost, Dr. Stephen Weiner. Dr. Weiner has reconstituted the academic administration of the University and is currently directing Gallaudet's response to the issues raised by MSCHE. Following is a brief excerpt from the April 3 report describing how the interim presidential search was conducted by the Gallaudet Board:

What follows is an initial analysis of the differences between the original search process and the interim president search. One major perceived flaw in the search process was the extent of involvement by the Office of the President. There was a widespread perception that the outgoing President heavily favored the Provost to succeed him. Thus, the designation of one of the assistants to the President as the Board's administrative assistant/liasion for the search process was perceived by some as proof that the process was open to manipulation in order to achieve predetermined results, an interpretation that became pervasive. This approach was avoided during the search for the Interim President. The involvement of the Office of the President was minimal, and the administrative assistant to the Board was a staff person with no apparent allegiance to someone in the upper administration. The University's EEO Officer was a member of the Interim President Search Advisory Committee (IPSAC). The EEO officer's professional advice and insights were seen by Committee members as invaluable and helped ensure that the process was as fair as possible. The person designated as the EEO consultant does not have to be a member of the search committee; but he/she should serve as a resource person to the committee, sit in on the deliberations and offer both solicited and unsolicited advice. There was only one Board member on the IPSAC, and her role was primarily as liaison between the search committee and the Board Chair. The presence of too many Board members could give them deliberative weight out of proportion to their numerical strength on the search committee. Since the role of the search committee is to recommend candidates to be selected for Board interviews, campus visits and interaction with campus stakeholders, the credibility of the fairness of the process was increased by limiting the number of Board members on the search committee.

The new committee on the presidential search will review this and other information as it analyzes the failed process in 2006 and develops plans for a new search.

B. The President has recruited three nationally recognized higher education leaders to provide him and Gallaudet university guidance in developing and implementing its Transformation Plan: Dr. Don Langenberg, Dr. Al Simone and Dr. Freeman Hrabowski.

C. The Board has held three extraordinary sessions during the summer:

- (i) an Executive Committee meeting on June 15 and 16;
- (ii) a full Board meeting in Chicago, during the first weekend in August;
- (iii) an Executive Committee meeting on September 7 and 8.

The June meeting was to enable the Executive Committee to review and provide feedback to the University work group on mission. (See question 3 below for a full discussion.) Following is an excerpt from a memo addressed to Jean Morse and Linda Suskie of MSCHE by Outgoing Board Chair Pamela Holmes, Incoming Board Chair Benjamin Soukup, and Board Vice Chair Frank Wu, dated June 22, 2007:

In correspondence to the MSCHE from the Gallaudet administration in May, the University committed itself to addressing a series of issues related to its accreditation during this summer. The proposed activities included review of the Gallaudet mission by a work group established by President Davila. This group drafted a revised mission statement and presented it to the campus community for review and comment. Following this process of review, the Board Executive Committee met at Gallaudet on June 15 and 16 to discuss the revised statement with the work group and other members of the Gallaudet community. After a very productive and positive meeting with the Executive Committee, the work group is making further revisions to the statement and will be transmitting a final draft to the Board for electronic discussion and voting later in the summer. We are confident that a new statement will be completed and approved within the coming weeks.

At its extraordinary August meeting, the Board approved a revised mission statement along with other activities designed to improve its operations and its oversight of shared governance at the University. As an expression of the Board's commitment to improved communication with the campus community, Board Chair Benjamin Soukup sent the following message to the campus community on August 8, 2007:

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you about the special Board of Trustees meeting held in Chicago last weekend. I am excited to announce that during this meeting the board approved the proposed mission statement developed by the University Mission Workgroup. I want to extend my sincere appreciation to the people who undertook this important task, under the leadership of Dr. MJ Bienvenu and Dr. Simon Guteng. I recognize that this was an enormous job, especially considering the tight timeframe. It is truly inspiring to see this level of dedication and determination happening on Kendall Green.

The special board meeting was held to further discuss critical issues facing the university as we strive to keep our accreditation. We had valuable input from President Davila, who was joined by Dr. Donald Langenberg, chancellor emeritus of the University System of Maryland, and Dr. Barbara Taylor, an advisor on Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) issues and board development. Drs. Langenberg and Taylor assisted the board as it mapped out a plan to not only address MSCHE issues but also to strengthen and enhance the board.

We discussed immediate plans for defining and addressing the issue of shared governance. We reviewed the roles and responsibilities of trustees, as well as plans to ensure that these roles are clearly defined and understood not only by all trustees but also the Gallaudet community. During our discussion, we explored plans to increase and improve interaction between the board and the community and the possible ways we can restructure our board meetings to facilitate this.

One important issue we discussed was that of board composition. As you may know, we have several vacancies on the board, and a great deal of our attention during this meeting was given to these vacancies. We recognized the need to look more carefully into which specific skills and knowledge Gallaudet needs in light of the issues the board and the University face.

There is an air of optimism and excitement at Gallaudet. I felt it at the board meeting. I see it in the impressive amount of work the community has accomplished this summer. Yes, Gallaudet has serious challenges ahead, but we also have an incredible opportunity to transform Gallaudet—for our students. I see a new Gallaudet emerging and it is because of the incredible commitment of the faculty, staff, teachers, students, and my fellow trustees.

One outcome of this meeting, facilitated by former Association of Governing Boards (AGB) Vice President Barbara Taylor, was the adoption by the Board of a self-assessment instrument based on an instrument that she provided. A copy of the self-assessment instrument is attached as Exhibit B. At its August meeting, the Board also reviewed its own composition with a goal of filling existing vacancies with qualified individuals possessing skills that the Board currently lacks.

Following adoption of the self-assessment instrument, the Board of Trustees recently completed a comprehensive self-assessment. Survey topics included Board roles, Board structure and processes, Board composition, trustee orientation, and Board development, Board dynamics, Board engagement, and individual trustee experiences. In response to open-ended questions, trustees also expressed views on the most important questions that should occupy the Board's attention and initiatives that would dramatically strengthen the board's effectiveness.

Survey responses revealed a board that is both critical of its past performance and committed to dramatic improvement. There was consensus that the Board must focus on improvements in the following areas:

- Engagement with institutional strategy
- Board meetings that focus trustee attention on the most critical issues facing the University
- Various areas of Board performance, including utilizing the capabilities of all trustees, exercising independent judgment, and acting with courage and willingness to take appropriate actions.
- Working relationships with others, including the president and key constituents such as faculty, staff, students, and alumni
- Board composition and trustee selection
- Trustee orientation and education

At a joint meeting of the Board's Executive Committee and Retreat Planning Committee on September 7-8, 2007, trustees, senior staff, and consultant Barbara Taylor discussed the survey results and planned a Board retreat agenda for October 3, 2007 that will address areas of critical concern. The retreat agenda will focus on the following topics:

- Trustee expectations
- Board-staff relations
- Constituent relations, communication, and shared governance
- Use of time at Board meetings
- Trustee education

In addition, the retreat will result in a long-term plan for Board development aimed at addressing all of the issues raised in the self-assessment.

D. The April 3 SIR indicated the occurrence of meetings of small groups of Board and Faculty to open dialogue concerning shared governance issues. These meetings, conducted at both the March and May regular meetings of the Board and the September 7-8 meeting of the Board Executive Committee, have proven productive and are scheduled to continue at the October meeting. These have served especially to reduce what has been perceived as a lack of direct communication between faculty and Board members.

E. A Faculty committee developed revised by-laws to improve the faculty governance structure. The impetus for ongoing changes in the structure of faculty governance has been recommendations articulated by the 2001 MSCHE Visiting Team and a report delivered in 2003 by consultants on shared governance. A summer 2007 work group constituted by the President began its review of campus governance by examining these earlier recommendations. All campus constituencies deliberated on a set of recommendations which were ultimately submitted to a specially designated ad hoc Faculty committee at the start of the current semester. Bylaws changes recommended by this committee include the following:

1. Broadening the definition of shared governance to include students and staff;
2. Adding a non-voting Staff representative to the Faculty Senate;
3. Adding non-voting student representatives to select faculty governance bodies;
4. Streamlining faculty governance as follows:
 - a) reduce slightly the size of the Senate;
 - b) replace the standing Committee on Grievances with an ad hoc body;
5. Eliminating letters to designate standing committees so as to minimize confusion; in the future they will be referenced only by a name reflective of their function.

It should also be noted that the Faculty Chair recently asked all faculty committees to take under advisement the existing Bylaws stipulation that non-voting administrative representatives to each committee be identified and invited to attend committee meetings as appropriate. This mechanism may prove helpful in nurturing a mutually supportive and collaborative stance between Faculty and Administration.

A proposal to amend the Bylaws pursuant to the ad hoc committee's recommendations will be made to the Faculty in mid-September for action at the regularly scheduled fall Faculty Meeting on Oct. 22, 2007.

II. Climate: Steps taken to improve, and detailed evidence of, a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration for a range of backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives.

Progress since May 1, 2007:

A. The Office of Institutional Research developed a new campus climate survey, field testing it in September 2007, for full implementation in March 2008. During May 2007, documents created by the consultants' report of March 2003 on the Campus Climate improvement project were used as the basis for generating the first version of an online Campus Climate Survey. Starting with the original reports, a content analysis identified a series of themes that summarized the major ideas that emerged from the various reports including respect, trust, fairness, institutional communication, information sharing, management style, access to both ASL and English, and academic culture. Through cooperation of the working groups on Diversity and Healing, a 41 item Likert scaled survey was produced. The online version of this instrument was pilot tested in mid-August, 2007 with 25 faculty and staff members. A validity and reliability study was begun August 30, 2007 and concluded on September 7, 2007 using the entire faculty and staff of the University. The goal of that phase of the project was to produce approximately 30 items that will represent four or five major themes. The ultimate goal is to initiate an annual data collection cycle in March 2008. A report on this project is included as Exhibit C.

B. In May, President Davila announced the creation of an Ombudsman office that has now been placed within the Office of the Provost. A description of the ombudsman function is attached as Exhibit D. The Provost is in the process of filling the position of Director.

C. In July, the President set forth a seven point diversity plan to improve campus relations. Essential elements include:

1. making research and development in the area of minority achievement a top priority.
 - a. creating a national task force on minority achievement
 - b. increasing attention to the needs of minority children in K-12 settings
 - c. improving Gallaudet's retention and graduation rates for minority students
2. finding ways to secure scholarship support for students of color and making an increase in minority scholarships a funding priority.
3. making the issue of diversity a top priority for the President's office by establishing the President's Diversity Team.
4. ensuring that divisions and departments establish measurable targets for the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff.
5. adding a person of color (minority) to the University's Officer Group.

6. providing for a university-wide orientation and education program to promote understanding, respect, and a commitment to diversity.
7. seeking an active partnership with each of the national organizations including the National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA), National Asian Deaf Congress (NADC) and the National Hispanic Council of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NHCDH) to explore ways to help promote and achieve common goals.

D. The campus work group on climate and diversity completed its report and recommendations. The attached work group report (Exhibit E) provides additional recommendations and guidance to the campus as it implements the President's seven point diversity plan. The recommendations include the following: 1. developing plans for multicultural education and organizational development with the help of professional consultants, 2. reestablishing a university-wide Diversity Council, 3. developing a formal Intergroup Dialogue Program, 4. revitalizing the Gallaudet Community Relations Council, 5. Eliminating institutional policies identified as interfering with equity in professional and academic progress.

E. The President established a continuous campus communication plan including frequent videologs and townhall meetings.

F. The Office of the Provost is launching a year-long, campus-wide discussion of the implications and contexts for the new University mission statement, specifically as it recognizes the bilingual nature of Gallaudet. This initiative, "Toward Inclusive Bilingualism: Gallaudet's New Mission," will feature lectures, panel discussions, and a one-day conference on October 16th featuring prominent speakers on bilingual education, with a special focus on bilingual universities. Topics for the year-long dialog will include: bilingual language assessment; politics of minority languages; language policy and planning; the economic implications of bilingual universities; and the cultural, cognitive, and psychological dimensions of bilingualism. In addition to increasing awareness about the host of complex issues regarding bilingual universities, a significant aspect of this discussion is that we will deliberately engage in constructive discussion relating to one of the most contentious issues on campus—the minority status of American Sign Language. This effort has already begun with a well attended panel discussion on August 20, 2007, entitled "Gallaudet's New Mission Statement: What does it mean for me?" Subsequent panel discussions and lectures will engage issues at the heart of the new mission statement—the need for respect for language differences at the same time that we promote higher standards of ASL and English usage. As it reaffirms its essential bilingual character, the University also reaffirms its character as a multicultural institution that welcomes students from all racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

G. We have implemented recommendations to improve relations between the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and students. There has been a history of misunderstanding and confrontation between students and DPS officers. During the protest there were claims that security personnel used excessive force in carrying out their duties. While an

independent review of one of these claims, conducted by Eric Holder, a former official of the U.S. Department of Justice, showed that the claims could not be substantiated, it also identified communication problems between students and security officers and made recommendations for improvements. DPS has implemented a number of improvements in response to Mr. Holder's recommendations, including:

1. Hiring five new deaf or hard of hearing officers;
2. Increasing training in ASL for officers who are not fluent;
3. Improving DPS access to ASL interpreters through Gallaudet Interpreting Services;
4. Increasing training for officers in the appropriate use of force;
5. Increasing training for response to protests;
6. Developing educational programs for students conducted by personnel from DPS and Student Affairs;

H. The Provost will commission a study of policies and practices at other universities concerning freedom of expression during academic year 2007-2008, employing either internal experts or outside consultants. The goal will be to upgrade Gallaudet's policies following an analysis of policies at other universities.

III. Mission review and strategic planning: Detailed evidence of mission review and implementation of a comprehensive institutional strategic plan.

Progress since May 1, 2007:

A. A work group on mission developed new mission and vision statements through a broadly based campus process and submitted them to the Board for review and approval. The twenty members of the University Mission Work Group represent a broad spectrum of Gallaudet's constituencies, including faculty, staff and students from a range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In developing the new mission statement, they consulted many sources, including the current University Mission Statement, the Education of the Deaf Act (EDA), the MSCHE "Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education," research on the future demographics of the potential Gallaudet student body, mission statements of other colleges and universities, especially those with specialized cultural and bilingual characteristics, and a long list of suggestions collected from the faculty throughout the spring 2007 semester.

Once the first drafts of the mission and vision statements were developed, the work group sought feedback from the campus community through a Town Hall meeting which was broadcast through streaming video. In addition, the mission and vision statements were presented online accompanied by an online survey to gain feedback from students, staff, faculty, and alumni. After a two-week period, the work group compiled the results and shared them with the community. The first draft of the mission statement was greeted with very significant support.

After receiving feedback from the community and from other work groups, the mission group revised the mission statement, which was then shared with the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees at its meeting in June. This meeting represented an important collaboration between faculty, staff, students, and the Board of Trustees. At that point, the Board provided an initial sense of strong support for the affirmation of Gallaudet's bilingual heritage in the new mission statement and offered minor suggested revisions.

Once the Mission Group arrived at the third draft, it was shared with the University Faculty Senate which expressed clear support. After the Senate's approval, the 3rd draft of the mission statement was then given to the President's office to be shared with the Board of Trustees for their full approval, which was granted at the August meeting described in the response to question 1 above.

The full text of the mission statement follows:

Gallaudet University, federally chartered in 1864, is a bilingual, diverse, multicultural institution of higher education that ensures the intellectual and professional advancement of deaf and hard of hearing individuals through American Sign Language and English. Gallaudet prepares its graduates for career opportunities in a highly competitive, technological, and rapidly changing world.

The University believes that the new mission statement represents a significant advancement in the clarity of direction and purpose for Gallaudet University. Perhaps the most significant change in the new statement is a conscious declaration that Gallaudet University is a bilingual university. Though it has been so since its inception, Gallaudet has not deliberately embraced bilingualism in its mission statement.

It needs to be made absolutely clear, however, that we endorse an inclusive and supportive model of bilingualism, where, in keeping with the Education of the Deaf Act, we welcome all qualified deaf students from the full spectrum of educational backgrounds, with varying degrees of proficiency in ASL and English. The difference, however, is that we commit ourselves to supporting and expecting all members of our community to develop bilingual proficiency during their time at Gallaudet. This new mission statement embraces ASL/English bilingualism as a cognitive, cultural, and creative resource that has been central to the heritage of our unique institution.

Further, the inclusive process used in developing the new mission statement, as well as the planned year-long discussion of bilingualism stands to strengthen our community's ability to engage in respectful and challenging discussion about the deepest concerns of the University—while also demonstrating the ability of constituencies—faculty, staff, students, administration, and the Board of Trustees—to work together toward a common goal.

The Board also considered a draft vision statement to accompany the mission statement, and requested revisions. These revisions were made by the mission work group, and the statement follows.

Vision Statement

Gallaudet University achieves its mission by:

- *Providing the highest quality liberal and professional education through undergraduate and graduate programs for deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing students.*
- *Offering a welcoming, supportive, and accessible bilingual educational environment for teaching and learning through direct communication.*
- *Embracing diversity within the university community by respecting and appreciating choices of communication while guiding students through their process of linguistic and cultural self-actualization.*
- *Pursuing excellence in research, pedagogy, scholarship, and creative activity.*
- *Leading the advancement of intellectual, social, linguistic and economic vitality in deaf people through educational, outreach, regional, international and leadership development programs.*

- *Preserving deaf history and using visual media to promote the recognition that deaf people and their signed languages are vast resources with significant contributions to the cognitive, creative and cultural dimensions of human diversity.*
- *Positioning our university community to reach its full human potential and assuming its role as a progressive global entity committed to civic responsibility and social justice.*

A statement defining inclusive bilingualism and a set of questions and answers concerning bilingualism at Gallaudet are attached as Exhibits F and G. The next section of this report describes how this newly stated mission is being used to guide strategic planning at Gallaudet.

B. A coordinating group for MSCHE related activities in the Provost's Office drafted a new strategic plan that includes a set of strategic goals distilled from previous strategic planning activities reported to MSCHE by Gallaudet. The current draft of the plan is attached as Exhibit H. This draft gives an historical overview of Gallaudet; summarizes previous strategic planning at the university; presents the new mission and vision statements, with the rationale for these statements; and describes the challenges and opportunities facing the University. Five major strategic goals are presented with objectives under each. We are in the process of completing the action plans associated with these objectives, although many are already in place. As we developed this document, we benefited by reviewing strategic planning documents from other universities, especially that of Cheyney University of Pennsylvania. Officials at Cheyney University also generously provided helpful advice to Gallaudet staff.

C. A new budget process was implemented to promote stronger links to the strategic plan and to support teaching and learning. During the summer of 2007, the University commissioned the development of a new budget process to replace the process that has been in use for the past decade. This effort was led by Stephen Chaikind, Gallaudet Professor of Economics and Finance and former staff member in the Congressional Budget Office. Dr. Chaikind's work was overseen by an expanded budget committee that included representatives from each of the University's major operating divisions and faculty, student, and staff organizations. The overall purpose of the project was to improve the articulation between strategic planning and institutional budgeting. A report on the new process is attached as Exhibit I. Following review of this document by the President's Management Team, significant changes to the existing process, designed to improve the University's responsiveness to strategic priorities, were implemented as follows: 1.) centralization of most payroll; 2.) retention of a representative budget committee but use of it as an advisory panel; 3.) designation of the officer group as the final budget authority, 4.) development of more formalized mechanisms for justifying budgetary redistributions.

IV. Enrollment management: Detailed evidence of implementation of a comprehensive enrollment plan that addresses student recruitment, retention, graduation, and placement

Progress since May 1, 2007:

A. The enrollment management office has prepared a comprehensive plan addressing recruitment, retention to graduation, and post-graduation placement for undergraduate students. The planning process identified as the principal issue in recruitment the need to improve recruitment of undergraduate deaf students from non-residential programs. In our strategic enrollment plan under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), we have established a goal of 1,180 degree-seeking undergraduate students and a first-year retention rate of 75%. Our 6-year graduation rate is to increase from its current rate of about 30%, but this is necessarily a longer term goal. A fundamental strategy in retention and persistence to graduation is to limit admission to applicants who have a greater probability of success in our baccalaureate program, rather than to establish earlier “honorable” exit points. The full report is attached as Exhibit J.

The enrollment management office has detailed action plans, developed with the assistance of Dr. Amanda Yale, Vice Provost of Slippery Rock University, for the strategies described in Exhibit J and for other important aspects of enrollment management, and these will be available for inspection by the visiting team. We also recognize explicitly that Gallaudet has enrollment issues at the graduate level that must be addressed, but we have chosen to focus our efforts and resources on the undergraduate program at this point in the University’s history.

B. The faculty acted to raise the admissions cut-off to an ACT score of 14 in both English and Math, effective academic year 2008-2009. While student success and persistence to graduation are defined by a number of variables, the first and most obvious is to recruit students based on an academic profile that is consistent with students who are likely to graduate. Thus, successful students are defined as students who place in College English upon admission or who will be able to complete their conditional English courses and eventually move on to College English within four semesters. Our research involving a study of 772 students (from 1999 to 2004) shows the following: 84% of students who scored 14 on the ACT Reading test successfully completed their conditional English courses or were placed in College English upon admission. Students with an ACT score of 13 or less were most often placed in ENG 50 (the lowest developmental English course) and MAT 011(pre-algebra) and had less than a 10% chance of graduating within 6 years. Given the profile of entering students during the past ten years, the increase to an ACT of 14, in both English and Math, would result in a reduction of the entering class by 25%. However, President Davila has announced as our highest priority a goal of maintaining undergraduate enrollment at current levels by much more intensive recruitment of students from non-residential backgrounds.

V. Academic rigor: Detailed evidence of the academic rigor of the degrees offered.

Progress since May 1, 2007:

A. We are assessing the current evidence of the academic rigor of the degrees offered. Exhibit K aligns current Gallaudet indicators of academic rigor with the list of “fundamental elements of educational offerings” on pages 43 and 44 of the MSCHE document “Characteristics of Excellence.” We will provide examples of evidence of academic rigor for review by the small visiting team in October.

B. We have recently completed a follow-up survey of all alumni. Beginning in the early 1980’s, Gallaudet has periodically surveyed all of its alumni for the purpose of gathering information relevant to employment, further education, and the effectiveness of the various major programs. These surveys have consistently shown that virtually all graduates of Gallaudet’s graduate programs obtain professional positions in their fields of training, that bachelor’s degree respondents earn advanced degrees at a very high rate—40 to 50%, and that these bachelor’s recipients have employment histories similar to those of other college graduates. A report on the most recent survey is attached as Exhibit L.

C. The Faculty Council on Undergraduate Education (CUE) developed a new undergraduate general education curriculum based on best practices, with fewer course requirements and built-in assessment components, and implemented it in the fall semester. Undergraduate students entering Gallaudet University this fall will follow a new general studies curriculum. The sweeping reform, passed by the University Faculty Senate at its special meeting on June 25th, includes a three-staged general studies curriculum. It also calls for a reduction in general studies requirements to 40 credit hours from 60 and lowers the number of credit hours for graduation to 120 from 124.

This new curriculum draws on best practices in higher education, articulates specific, assessable learning outcomes, offers unprecedented opportunities for collegial inter-faculty collaboration, and integrates learning across disciplines. Outcomes are grouped in these areas:

- (i) Language and Communication: Students will use ASL and written English to communicate effectively with diverse audiences, for a variety of purposes, and in a variety of settings.
- (ii) Critical Thinking: Students will summarize, synthesize, and critically analyze ideas from multiple sources in order to draw well-supported conclusions and solve problems.
- (iii) Identity and Culture: Students will understand themselves, complex social identities, and the interrelations within and among diverse cultures and groups.
- (iv) 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.

- (v) Ethics and Social Responsibility: Students will make well-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.

Freshmen will take four foundations courses for 12 credits; a series of integrated learning courses for 24 credits, and a capstone experience for four credits. The four foundations courses are GSR 101, First Year Seminar; GSR 102, Critical Reading and Writing; GSR 103, American Sign Language and Deaf Studies; and GSR 104, Quantitative Reasoning. These courses will give students the tools they need to progress toward the five learning outcomes. GSR 101, 102, and 103 will have linked content, with students practicing reading, writing, and signing in all courses. GSR 104 will teach mathematics and problem-solving skills, or quantitative literacy.

University faculty will select content for interdisciplinary courses that will also address the five learning outcomes to varying degrees. These courses will include GSR 150, Introduction to Integrated Learning; GSR 210, Comparing Multicultural Perspectives; GSR 220, Methods of Multiple Disciplines; GSR 230, Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning in Context, and GSR 240, Ethical Decisions and Actions. Finally, GSR 300, the Capstone Experience course, will bring together all five outcomes and challenge the students to apply their knowledge and skills to solve real world problems. Gallaudet will invite community groups to present problems and needs. Students will work on project teams to research, plan, and implement innovative solutions. There is, in addition, a career preparation requirement. This non-credit program helps students prepare for a major, learn about potential career opportunities, identify needed skills, and maximize their potential during their college years and post-graduation employment search. Students should complete this requirement during the second semester of the first year. Comprehensive assessment of student progress is a built-in component of the curriculum.

The new curriculum is described in detail in the undergraduate catalog, as are the existing requirements for graduation, and newly developed policies on academic integrity. (Exhibit M). Similar information concerning graduate programs is contained in the graduate catalog (Exhibit N).

D. Progress on assessment of written English. Improving reading and writing skills is the University's first undergraduate academic priority, and Gallaudet is addressing it in a variety of ways. The first step has been to raise admissions standards beginning in 2008, since it has become clear that the University has admitted students who are unlikely ever to develop sufficient reading and writing skills. The second step has been to create a new general studies curriculum in which reading and writing are central to every course. This fall, the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) is working on a concurrent and predictive validity study of the Degrees of Reading Power and Compass tests as instruments for making placement decisions based on incoming skills. Also this fall, the final writing assignment in each new general studies course will be assessed according to a new rubric developed during the summer. OIR will conduct validity and reliability studies of the

rubric, and deans and department chairs will evaluate the results with respect to the need for improvements in the new curriculum. During the academic year, the University will present a series of programs on bilingualism and will further refine its expectations concerning appropriate skills in written English for Gallaudet graduates. By the end of the academic year, the University plans to have a trial instrument for assessing exit skills that can be pilot tested during the 2008-2009 academic year and various course level benchmarks that will indicate progress towards the graduating skill set. This instrument will also have sub-scales or sub-measures that will permit departments other than English to make decisions about accepting students into a major.

E. Progress on ASL assessment standards. Even though Gallaudet students have been communicating in ASL since the University's inception, it has never conducted formal, comprehensive assessments of students' signing skills. In August 2007, for the first time, Gallaudet freshmen took an ASL screening test to determine placement in the new curriculum. Then, as these students progress through the General Studies curriculum, their ASL proficiency will be periodically assessed. Traditionally, the University has used the American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI) or the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) to assess faculty, staff, and students' signing skills. However, a new assessment of ASL is needed to measure specific aspects of ASL as it is used in academic discourse. In order to coordinate this effort, the Department of ASL and Deaf Studies is developing a University-wide rubric for ASL assessment that parallels the Gallaudet University Writing Rubric. The ASL and Deaf Studies Department will then collaborate with the Office of Institutional Research to conduct reliability and validity studies of its assessment strategies.

F. Implementation of Data Warehouse system for department level assessment and planning. In August, 2007, the Office of Institutional Research introduced to the Provost, Deans, and Executive Directors the Data Warehouse concept which is a relational database system for the speedy retrieval of institutionally generated assessment information. In the Data Warehouse, key data already in the University's PeopleSoft system is pulled into a centralized location with standardized reporting definitions tied to user friendly reporting and analysis tools. Essentially, the Data Warehouse eliminates the need for separate written reports on institutional functioning which would have to be periodically updated or revised. In this system, 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 department chairs can easily retrieve information about their specific departments, 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 so on. In the future, reports which tie together student performance indicators and budget allocations will be added. Training for department chairs in the use of the system will take place in October, 2007. Full implementation, including goal setting and justification of budget allocations, is expected by January 21, 2008.

G. NCATE Assessments. Programs that specifically prepare Gallaudet graduates to work in schools are accredited as the Professional Education Programs (PEP) Unit by the

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. The Assistant Dean for Accreditation and Certification for the Graduate School and Professional Programs (GSPP) was charged with leading the development and implementation of a systematic and comprehensive assessment system to be used for candidate and program decision-making. The Gallaudet NCATE Unit includes eleven programs in five departments. Seven of these programs are at the undergraduate level¹ and two at the graduate level² in GSPP, and two in graduate programs in the College of Liberal Arts, Sciences, and Technology (CLAST³).

Each program uses the standards of its profession as its learner outcomes, and each has identified data that provide evidence of progress on these standards/outcomes that is collected at four transition points: 1) Entry/Admission to the program; 2) Acceptance into Early Practicum; 3) Acceptance into Capstone Internship; and 4) Program Completion. Although some of the data are external (e.g., Praxis Certification Test), much of the data are based on performance tasks in key program experiences, with scoring criteria that are aligned with program standards/outcomes. In addition, at a Unit level (i.e., across all ten programs) the University has collected exit surveys from graduating students for the past three years. In Spring 2007, the Unit began the next phase of Unit-level assessment with alumni and employer surveys for 2004 graduates. Each year we will do the same for the subsequent year of graduates.

Aggregated assessment data are used for student review, support, and decision-making. For example, students may be asked to submit additional assessment evidence, engage in more in-depth learning experiences (e.g., additional courses, lengthier internships), or leave the program, based on the assessment data. The Teacher Preparation programs and the School Psychology program have been collecting and aggregating data from 5-6 key assessments for the past two years. In addition, last year the programs began systematic review of and decision making based on assessment data for program improvement. During the summer, the remaining programs began collecting and aggregating data.

As PEP Unit programs began to use data for decision-making, it quickly became clear that we needed a technology-based system to facilitate the timely and efficient use of data. In January 2007 Gallaudet's Unit adopted Campustools' TK20 assessment and management system. TK20 provides a system for tracking students' progress through licensing program transition points, completing assessments (both on and off campus), and aggregating and reporting data in alignment with standards/outcomes. We began adoption of TK20 with assessments in the teacher preparation program and anticipate full adoption by all Unit programs by the end of the 2007-2008 academic year. Exhibit O displays the NCATE Unit Assessment Audit.

H. Institutional effectiveness assessment process. Although the Office of Assessment's immediate function is to infuse a culture of assessment into all academic activities, it has

¹ Early Childhood, Elementary, Secondary Biology, Secondary Mathematics, Secondary Social Studies, Secondary English, K-12 Physical Education.

² Deaf Education and Educational Leadership

³ School Social Work and School Psychology

also provided an assessment workshop to the Division of Administration and Finance (A&F) and will continue to provide technical and logistical support for A&F's newly-formed Assessment Team. On August 20, 2007, the Assessment Office provided a series of Professional Development workshops to new and returning faculty and staff within the Division of Academic Affairs. These workshops focused on various levels of assessment from fundamentals to demonstrations of WayPoint, an E-scoring software for rubrics which will become available this semester for general use within all units of Academic Affairs. The specific intention is that the bulk of the Professional Development subject-matter will form the basis of the Assessment Handbook which will strategically guide faculty and staff in providing evidence of ongoing teaching, learning and research. Exhibit P presents an overview of Gallaudet's assessment plan, with an initial focus on educational outcomes. Exhibit Q is a detailed implementation plan for the components of the overall plan that are designed to assess academic rigor.

Conclusion

Under President Davila's leadership, Gallaudet University has paid very close attention to the message that the MSCHE has delivered in both written form and verbally during two site visits by small teams in January and April of this year. We have understood the message and recognize that we need to improve in several areas, including: shared governance and mission; academic rigor; strategic planning; a climate that fosters respect for a variety of backgrounds and opinions; and institutional assessment. We believe that the evidence described in this document and its attachments demonstrates significant progress in each of the Commission's areas of concern. At the same time, we will continue to pursue President Davila's agenda for transforming Gallaudet into a vibrant institution responsive to the needs of 21st Century students.

List of exhibits

- A. April Supplemental Information Report**
- B. Board self-assessment instrument**
- C. Report on new Climate Survey**
- D. Ombudsman job description**
- E. Report of work group on diversity**
- F. What is inclusive bilingualism?**
- G. Bilingualism Q's and A's**
- H. Draft Strategic Plan**
- I. Report on new budget process**
- J. Enrollment Plan**
- K. Indicators of academic rigor**
- L. Follow-up study of all alumni**
- M. Undergraduate catalog**
- N. Graduate catalog**
- O. NCATE Unit Assessment Audit**
- P. Progress Report: Institutional effectiveness assessment process**
- Q. Implementation plan for academic rigor assessment**

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