GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Committee on Academic Affairs and Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment
October 11, 2018

Academic Affairs Highlights
Carol J. Erting, Provost

Academic Programs:

- The Department of American Sign Language and Deaf Studies is hosting the 2018 Deaf Studies Conference at Gallaudet University Kellogg Conference Hotel on November 1-3. Organized around the theme of Transformations, the program will feature three keynote speakers:

  Dr. Annelies Kusters is Assistant Professor in Sign Language and Intercultural Research at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, Scotland, since April 2017. She currently leads a large research project called “Deaf mobilities across international borders: Visualising intersectionality and translangaging”, funded by the European Research Council (2017-2022) (mobiledeaf.org.uk). The title of her presentation will be “Deaf Studies as a Transformed and Transformational Field: inspirations across disciplines and nations.”

  Dr. Maartje De Meulder is a postdoctoral research fellow at the research group on multilingualism of the University of Namur in Belgium. Her current research focuses on the language practices, motivations and ideologies of deaf and hearing ‘new’ and ‘traditional’ signers in Flanders, Belgium, and how they see themselves as playing a role in vitality. The research draws on a sociolinguistic ethnographic methodology using interviews, language use diaries and language portraits. The title of her presentation will be “Transformations in Deaf Studies: implications for sign language policy, revitalization, and rights.”

  Dr. Yutaka Osugi is a Professor at the Tsukuba University of Technology (NTUT) in Japan. He teaches various topics related to Deaf Studies to Deaf and Hard of Hearing students as well as conducts research in the field of Signed Language Linguistics. The title of his presentation will be “Transforming Research into Sign Language and Identity Advocacy in the Community.”
The registration is open through October 14. For more information see: https://my.gallaudet.edu/2018-deaf-studies-conference/conference-keynote-presenters

- After several years of planning, innovation, and development, ASL Connect will launch on November 1. Supported in part by a $250,000 grant from the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, ASL Connect is an online American Sign Language (ASL) educational resource available to the public. Offerings include ASL levels one through four online, an ASL certificate program, a nationally ASL Placement Test, ASL coaching and individualized tutoring, massive open online lessons, and a resource center, which will serve as a clearinghouse for ASL and Deaf Culture.

- The Tinkerlab located in the Washburn Arts Building opened its doors on March 30, 2018. It is in full swing with members of the campus community using computer numerical control (CNC) routers, three CNC sewing and embroidering machines, three laser cutters, virtual reality headsets, tablets, and computers programmed with 3d print and Geomagic Touch tool. Tinkerlab knowledge assistants work with those who use the lab, guiding them in using the equipment.

- From June 18th to July 13th, Gallaudet University hosted a NEH Summer Institute for College and University Teachers on "Global Histories of Disability." The institute was led by Dr. Sara Scalenghe, Loyola University, and Dr. Jeffrey Brune, Associate Professor of History at Gallaudet University. Dr. Gene Mirus, a faculty member in the Department of ASL & Deaf Studies, and Dr. Brian Greenwald, a history faculty member in the Department of History, Philosophy, Religion, and Sociology (HPRS) also led sessions on Deaf Culture and Deaf History, respectively. Based on feedback from the NEH and the 25 participants, the institute was a resounding success, thanks to Dr. Roberto Sanchez, chair of HPRS, who was instrumental in getting this institute off the ground.

- Dr. Danielle Thompson-Ochoa, a faculty member in the Department of Counseling, co-led a week-long workshop in Trinidad focused on the education of deaf and hard of hearing children on the island. Held in June, the intensive workshop was attended by educators, deaf children, and their families, and included hands-on sessions addressing how to support deaf children academically and emotionally. Also, the department’s Community Counseling Lab run by practicum and internship students in the department has recently opened for its second semester, providing supportive counseling services that augment the other resources on campus. Increasing numbers of referrals to the Community Counseling Lab indicate a positive reception from the campus community.

- The Gallaudet Innovation and Entrepreneurship Initiative (GIEI), led by director Ryan Maliszewski, was busy during the summer supporting
the Youth Summer Programs (YSP) through innovation & entrepreneurial activities and the GIEI Director gave a workshop at the Youth Leadership Camp (YLC) in Portland, Oregon. GIEI is offering a new course on Social Entrepreneurship this Fall semester and is partnering with Convo to launch an exciting student-centric BisonTank Innovation Playoff Competition. In addition to offering self-employment workshops such as the Global Startup Weekend sponsored by Grow With Google and weekly mentoring sessions for students, GIEI is also piloting a new speaker series focusing on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Leadership called BisonTalks. GIEI is working closely with student organizations to support the recent launch of a proof of concept marketplace to taking place at the LLRH6 Co-lab.

- The Center for Continuing and Online Education (CCOE) has undergone further restructuring to tighten its focus on providing continuing and online education programs and has developed an ambitious growth plan for guiding the university with regard to the development, implementation and assessment of online, hybrid and continuing education programs in the next several years. This plan will help accelerate Gallaudet’s progress in the digital landscape of learning and advancing opportunities for learners across the lifespan.

- The nine working groups in the American Council on Education (ACE) led Internationalization Laboratory (IZN) initiative to enhance Gallaudet’s global presence are completing data collection and analysis, and will soon focus on planning and recommendations for linking their findings to Gallaudet’s strategic plan. On a related note, Provost Carol J. Erting has been named a member of ACE’s Commission on Internationalization and Global Engagement. Another initiative related to international engagement is the Gallaudet Go Global Fair, devoted to helping students find opportunities to study, research, intern, or take classes in another country. This is a new activity, co-sponsored by the Office of Research Support and International Affairs (RSIA) and the U.S. Department of State-funded National Clearinghouse on Disability Exchange, and takes place on campus October 12.

Student Success:

- The Office for Student Success & Academic Quality (SSAQ) continues to identify and institute improvements to the most crucial aspects of Gallaudet’s physical, digital, and community environment including the launch of Guide, a mobile app for our undergraduate students, and Navigate, a companion desktop platform for faculty and professional staff. This “coordinated care network” brings together a number of campus services through interactive checklists, reminders, and alerts along with a backend analytics engine that serves as an administrative dashboard. The Guide app navigates students through roadblocks toward graduation and supports them in making better
choices along the way. In addition, Gallaudet’s Career Center Task Force completed its first round of recommendations toward the development of high-impact career readiness strategies, including student internships. Some of its recommendations include implementation of early assessment and identification of student career interests and providing our students with employment on campus that is intentional and aligned with their career interests supported by faculty/staff mentors with similar career interests.

SSAQ’s newly restructured Retention Council, a cross-divisional collaboration with the Dean of Student Affairs and the Vice President of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI), has begun to identify and address institution-wide barriers to student success. Lastly, SSAQ provides support for two mentoring programs that have launched this fall: 1) one through the Department of English to specifically identify students of color in developmental English - a gateway course that continues to have high D, F, WD rates, and 2) in collaboration with EDI to provide intrusive mentoring for our Black/African American Students.

- The Graduate School has begun a new initiative to improve the graduate student experience through the formation of a working group centered on graduate student success. This group will engage multiple units around campus in a collaborative asset mapping process in order to identify resources and services available to meet the needs of graduate students, with a focus on existing internal resources. This group will build relationships across units to coordinate more efficient service delivery, enhance capacity to support graduate student success and develop a resource guide to create broader awareness of available programs and services. This group will also plan and evaluate the impact of pilot initiatives and programs (e.g., writing coaches) and explore and propose ways to utilize available resources for the greatest impact (e.g., a referral-based system).

Research:

- The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) provides services and support to Gallaudet faculty and staff seeking external federal funding for research and training projects. Major awards received include:
  - Dr. Raja Kushalnagar, a faculty member in the Department of Science, Technology and Mathematics (STM), received funding from the National Science Foundation for his “Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Site: Accessible Information and Communication Technologies Project” in the amount of $392,212. Providing a research to practice experience, this 3-year project exposes undergraduate students to hands-on research experiences in accessible computing, broadens students’ research perspectives, and encourages underrepresented students to consider and stay in the
computing field through support from peer and faculty role models like themselves.

- **Dr. Christian Vogler**, Director of the Technology Access Program (TAP), and Dr. Raja Kushalnagar received a grant in the amount of $475,000 each year from the Department of Health and Human Services’ Disability Research Projects Community Living and Participation program for his project “Twenty-First Century Captioning Technology, Metrics, and Usability.” The goal of this five-year partnership with Gallaudet University, the Rochester Institute of Technology, and Apptek, in consultation with consumer and industry stakeholders, is to devise a modern, evidence-based approach toward meeting the caption quality and caption user interface/user experience needs of viewers who are deaf or hard of hearing.

- **Dr. Patrick Boudreault**, a faculty member in the Department of Interpretation and Translation, was awarded $323,479 from the National Endowment for the Humanities for his 3-year project “Exposing the Borders of Academia: Sign Language as a Medium of Knowledge, Production, Preservation, and Dissemination.” This project will preserve and migrate past issues of the Deaf Studies Digital Journal (DSDJ) to a new open access, technologically sustainable platform, which adheres to and advances accessibility standards in publishing through fully bilingual video and text articles, advanced interactive videos, integration into library databases, and innovative peer-review processes.

- **Dr. Lorna Quandt**, a faculty member in the Program in Educational Neuroscience (PEN) and Science Director of the VL2 Motion Light Lab (ML2) and **Ms. Melissa Malzkuhn**, Creative Director of ML2, received $300,000 for “Signing Avatars & Immersive Learning (SAIL): Development and Testing of a Novel Embodied Learning Environment.” Quandt and Malzkuhn will develop and test a system in which signing avatars (computer-animated virtual humans built from motion capture recordings) teach users ASL in an immersive virtual environment. SAIL will help users to visualize and embody a visuospatial language by creating an embodied, immersive learning environment which could revolutionize ASL learning.

- **Dr. Christian Vogler** was awarded $950,000 from the Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration for Community Living for his project Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) on Improving the Accessibility, Usability and Performance of Technology for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH-RERC). The goal of this project is to narrow the gaps between the potential for new technologies to improve the lives of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and their ability to exploit this potential.

- Over the past 4 years, Administration and Finance, the OSP, and the **TAP** have laid the groundwork and nurtured a partnership with the MITRE Corporation and the Federal Communications
Commission (FCC). Years in the making, this performance contract between MITRE and Gallaudet has been realized with an amount totaling $459,156 during FY2018. This collaborative partnership with Gallaudet University’s TAP provides subject matter expertise (SME) and assists MITRE with Internet Protocol Captioned Telephone Services (IPCTS), Video Relay Services (VRS) and other telecommunications user research, IP CTS quality and accuracy testing, and VRS testing.

- **The Deaf Health and Quality of Life (QoL) Center**, directed by **Dr. Poorna Kushalnagar**, recently hired a new postdoctoral fellow, Zachary Featherstone, D.O., who completed his medical training a few months ago. In addition, Dr. Kushalnagar received another 1-year grant from the National Institute on Aging to bring together a new team to gather national data from older Deaf adults who are at risk for dementia and Alzheimer’s disease. A lab-produced HPV/Deaf film was recently accepted to the Global Public Health Film Festival. An undergraduate student, Brianna Keogh, from the lab had her first-authored manuscript accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal while another undergraduate student, Gideon Firl, is lead student producer for a genetics film as part of the Deaf Health and QoL Center’s contract with the National Human Genome Research Institute at NIH.

- **Dr. Brian Greenwald**, professor of history and director of the Schuchman Deaf Documentary Center, was elected president of Deaf History International in July. The Center’s *Deaf NYC: Signs of Change* (NEH Grant Award ZH-252962-17) is now 100% funded as of May 1, 2018. This award will support three years of research, interviews, community panels, and outreach with the New York deaf community. A student assistant is working with the Schuchman Center on research related to sterilization of deaf people in the United States. Jean Bergey, Associate Director, was awarded a grant administered through City Lore and is managing the “Becoming American” film screenings this Fall. These documentary screenings will be followed by panels that discuss immigration experiences. At least 10 faculty will incorporate these films in courses they are teaching this fall semester.

This report has highlighted only some of the many accomplishments within the division of Academic Affairs from May-September, 2018. I want to recognize with gratitude the faculty, staff, students, my administrative team, and my colleagues on the Executive Team for their energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to our students and our mission of academic excellence. Our primary focus is on student success—to support and prepare our students for lifelong learning, success in the workplace, and responsible citizenship in the global community.