

Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, and Students
of
Gallaudet University
by
An Evaluation Team representing the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared after study of the institution's self-study report
And visits to the campus on November 26, 2012, and March 24-27, 2013

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This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the Chair, and it goes directly to the institution before being considered by the Commission.

It is a confidential document prepared as an educational service for the benefit of the institution. All comments in the report are made in good faith, in an effort to assist Gallaudet University. This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the institution and of the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its educational objectives.

AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

President/CEO

Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, President

Chief Academic Officer

Dr. Stephen F. Weiner, Provost

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Dr. Benjamin J. Soukup, Chief Executive Officer of Communication Service for the Deaf, Inc.

MSCHE Selected Topics Self-Study

Report of Evaluation Visits

Gallaudet University

November 26, 2012, and March 24-27, 2013

I. Context and Nature of the Visit

Introduction:

Gallaudet University chose a selected topics self-study for its 2012-2013 decennial review. The self-study substantially addressed Standards 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, and 11 of the Characteristics of Excellence. The self-study partially addressed Standards 2, 12, and 14 of the Characteristics of Excellence. The remaining standards-4, 5, 6, 10, and 13-were examined by generalist reviewers during a visit on November 26, 2012. The generalists' report is attached.

Institutional Overview:

As Gallaudet's mission states, "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 is recognized by deaf and hearing people as a primary resource for all things related to deaf people. President Abraham Lincoln signed into law the bill that authorized Gallaudet to confer college degrees. The institution is rightfully proud of its history and unique mission. Gallaudet is a national treasure.

Gallaudet is an independent, coeducational, residential institution located in Washington, DC. The University makes use of its rich urban environment in its commitment to an integrated living and learning experience. It offers a diverse array of programs at the Bachelor's, Post-baccalaureate Certificate, Master's, and Doctoral levels. In the fall 2012, Gallaudet enrolled 1,118 undergraduate students, 428 graduate students, and employed 187 regular status, full-time faculty and 616 regular status, full-time staff. **Scope of the institution at the time of the evaluation:**

- Degree levels: Bachelor's, Post-baccalaureate Certificate, Master's, Doctor's-Research/Scholarship, Doctor's –other
- Branch Campuses: None
- Additional locations: None
- Distance Learning: Yes Adult Degree Program,
- Self-study process and report: Selected Topics model using the Gallaudet Strategic Plan's five goals as the organizing framework. The process engaged the community and was representative and inclusive.

II. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Eligibility Requirements

Based upon a review of the self-study, interviews, the certification statement supplied by the institution, and other institutional documents, the team affirms that the institution continues to meet requirements of affiliation in *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*.

III. Compliance with Federal Requirements; Issues Relative to State Regulatory or Other Accrediting Agency Requirements

Based on a review of the self-study, certification by the institution and other institutional documents, and interviews, the team affirms that the institution's Title IV cohort default rate is within federal limits. In addition, the team affirms the institution's compliance with the relevant requirements under the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

IV. Evaluation Overview

The selected topics design of Gallaudet University's self-study allowed Gallaudet to maximize the synergy of strategic planning and implementation with the decennial review. Gallaudet's five strategic plan goals served as the unifying and organizing framework for the self-study. The process was enriched and supported by the quality of the written self-study, the comprehensive and accessible range of documents, as well as the nature of the process. The process supported Gallaudet's intentional focus on an inclusive process that enabled the community to examine critical questions raised in a series of campus dialogues. The process enabled the community's ability to improve practices around the achievement of the bilingual mission, fostering student learning, improving institutional effectiveness, making clear pathways to graduation, and planning for, developing, and sustaining a research infrastructure. Moreover, the process has kept your strategic plan at the forefront.

We commend you for your candid approach to self-evaluation and the openness with which you shared the challenges of continuous improvement as you work to analyze the strengths and effectiveness of your practices related to your strategic plan.

We commend you for creating and sustaining a culture of assessment that is evident at all levels of the organization and governance structures

The team's generalist reviewers came to campus on November 26, 2012, to examine the documents provided as evidence of compliance with standards 4, 5, 6, 10 and 13. They found you to be in compliance with these standards. The generalist reviewers also examined documents for partial review of standards 2, 12 and 14. The team addressed these same standards as they relate to your selected topics self-study and we reviewed standards 1, 3, 7, 8, 9 and 11 in total.

V. Compliance with Accreditation Standards

A. Standards Addressed Substantively within the Selected Topics

Standard 1: Mission and Goals

The institution meets the standard.

Summary of evidence and findings: Based on review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Gallaudet's last revision of its mission occurred in 2007 as the result of an analysis completed by a 20-member group including both internal and external stakeholders. This revision was approved by the Board of Trustees. Gallaudet's mission includes providing bilingual, diverse, multicultural higher education, and the 2007 revision formally and consciously made bilingualism a key component of the institutional mission. Gallaudet's mission is clearly stated and publicized in several venues. The team was able to find multiple ways in which the mission guides decision making and planning efforts, and it is clear that the goals and strategies developed as Gallaudet's Strategic Plan have strong roots in the institutional mission.

Examples of Gallaudet's dedication to their mission include: a January 2012 "Memo on Communication and Expectation," which made recommendations about how the campus community can more meaningfully and effectively support a bilingual environment; a robust office of Interpreting Services; several effective programs for new signers; an Office of Bilingual Teaching and Learning; and multiple commitments to bilingual initiatives.

Additionally, the first undergraduate SLO, "Language and Communication," is directly linked to the mission, and there is clear evidence that the GSR reflects the institutional mission statement. Faculty are also encouraged to "assess bilingual aspects of their classroom teaching through multiple measures," and an Ad Hoc Committee was formed to evaluate this.

After speaking with various campus constituencies, it was clear that Gallaudet has a living and breathing mission which serves as the lynchpin for the campus's strategic planning and its daily operations.

Summary of accomplishments:

Gallaudet community members should be commended for their self-reflective passion to fulfilling their mission and for the consistent articulation of that mission in interviews and documentation related to each of the 14 standards.

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

The institution meets the standard.

Summary of evidence and findings: Based on review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The University Planning and Budget Committee (UPBC) has the responsibility to measure and assess the level of, and efficient utilization of, institutional resources required to support the institution's mission and strategic goals.

The University uses a shared governance model to formulate its annual budget. The UPBC is responsible for coordinating the budget process, including issuing guidance and advising units that budget requests should be proposed within the context of the Gallaudet Strategic Plan (GSP), the

Clerc Center Strategic Plan, the Academic Program Prioritization Project (PPTF), the Administrative Program and Services Review (APSRC), and the Board mandate for a budgeted operating surplus.

Over the past five years, the University has been working to evaluate existing resources by conducting academic and non-academic program reviews for long-term planning and strategic resource reallocations. Various plans by the PPTF, APSRC and the Restructuring of Academic Affairs groups have proactively addressed staffing patterns for the next ten years in order to adequately support the University's objectives for student learning.

The UPBC's financial planning and budgeting processes are aligned with the University's mission and goals. UPBC's processes are also aligned with the plan that provides for the annual and multi-year budget and includes the assessment of future budget trends both institution-wide and among departments. The processes utilize planning and assessment documents and address resource allocation and acquisition as well as funds for institutional systems as appropriate.

The University adopted a comprehensive ten-year facilities plan (2022 Campus Plan) that was prepared by a steering committee of constituents and addresses learning resources for all educational and research programs and the library taking into account the staffing needs established by the studies mentioned above. A review of the campus infrastructure was also conducted.

Technology has recently been consolidated into one unit that is responsible for both academic and administrative technology. It reports to the Chief of Staff who reports to the President. This change indicates the important role of technology as an academic resource. An Advisory Council, comprised of all constituents throughout the university, has been charged with guiding the current and future use of technology.

A thorough review of the University's internal audit reports, A-133 reports and other documents indicates that the University has adequate institutional controls to deal with financial, administrative and auxiliary operations in place to determine asset allocations.

The annual independent audit contains an unqualified opinion and no management letters were issued for the last two years.

The University assessed the effective and efficient use of resources by undertaking an Administrative Program Review by the APSRC that included among others, the following areas: GSP and resource allocations to support its initiative; how to restructure the Chief Information Officer's unit; a recommendation to create a unified student experience; how to improve business processes; and coordination of plans for marketing and outreach. In addition, the PPTF assessed and made recommendations for resource reallocation for academic programs. Programs were categorized into five groups: retain and enhance if feasible; monitor and address identified issues; realign, reorganize or integrate; close in current form and replace; and eliminate.

Significant accomplishments:

We congratulate the University for obtaining A ratings from Moody's and S&P based on its financial strength and creditworthiness.

We commend the University for using the Composite Financial Index (CFI) for assessing its finances and taking the appropriate steps to improve.

Although the unrestricted operating margin went from 3.4% in FY 2011 to 2.0% in FY 2012, it still remains strong.

The balance sheet is strong and cash generated from operations provides funds for debt and annual capital projects.

Non-binding findings for improvement:

Consider some change in the decentralization of the budget for interpreting/captioning services to improve prioritization, scheduling and cost control.

With approximately 2/3 of the budget coming from the federal government, the University should consider conducting stress tests on its current and projected budgets for various scenarios of reductions in the amount of federal funds.

There has been improvement in the collaboration between the senior academic and administrative officers, but collaboration among the staff of the two units should continue to be strengthened. In order to accomplish the work that has been identified in the Self-Study, this step should be taken.

Standard 7: Institutional Effectiveness

The institute meets the standard.

Summary of evidence and findings: Based on review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The comprehensive Gallaudet Strategic Plan (GSP) established goals, strategies and objectives, both institution-wide and for individual departments that are clearly stated and reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results. The GSP is linked to mission and goal achievement and is used by the University for planning and resource allocation. Following the adoption of the GSP, the University continued the planning and resource allocation efforts by conducting an Administrative Program and Services Review (APSRC) and an Academic Program Prioritization Project (PPTF). These were designed to link program planning with resource allocation.

The team found evidence of a documented, organized assessment processes including but not limited to the creation and analysis of Annual Enrollment Reports, Alumni Surveys, Annual Campus Climate Survey, NSSE survey data, Annual Report of Achievement, and perhaps most importantly, Gallaudet's Dashboard, which provides a high-level look at the institution's most critical areas, including undergraduate and graduate enrollment, retention rate, graduation rate, alumni outcomes, cost per graduate, dorm occupancy rate, and grants and contract awards. The Dashboard provides targets, actual results, and trend history for each area. Through meetings with BOT members, the team verified that the University regularly examines institutional effectiveness, shares data with key stakeholders, and frequently assesses progress toward the GSP.

It is clear that Gallaudet enjoys an increasingly strong culture of assessment related to institutional effectiveness. Academic departments and academic services are engaged in activities related to unit-

level effectiveness. In addition to the GSP, APSRC, and PPTF, the team also found evidence that departments within Enrollment Management, Administrative Support, and Student Affairs provide Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for their department.

Additionally, in Blackboard's repository of "Program Level Outcomes," there was evidence that several departments within the Student Affairs area have completed Unit Effectiveness Reports and Student Learning Assessment Reports (example: Career Center, Office for Students with Disabilities, Mental Health Center). Reports include information about the number of students served by each office; however, evidence of outcomes assessment could only be documented for the Career Center.

While the team could not find evidence that, at this point, each administrative and student service department is responsible for preparing a unit or department-level report on effectiveness or reporting on progress toward achieving GSP goals, it is clear that efforts to institutionalize assessment are strong and that Gallaudet is committed to continuing along this path.

Solid evidence was found to document that Gallaudet considers multiple data measures that include both quantitative and qualitative metrics. Measures include: student surveys; alumni surveys; dashboard indicators; and faculty/administrative perceptions of effectiveness.

It was clear from interviews with several campus constituencies that data drives decision making at Gallaudet and that administration, faculty, and staff at every level are invested in assessing institutional effectiveness and making changes based on assessment results.

Non-binding findings for improvement:

Gallaudet's leadership should continue to encourage all units to participate in evaluating effectiveness.

Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings: Based on review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Gallaudet has taken a careful, measured approach in defining elements affecting student enrollment and retention that impact the University's ability to successfully live its institutional mission. The identification and use of specific data to reveal and confirm these elements is evident. This information also provides points of measurement that are critical to establishing assessment metrics.

It is also apparent that Gallaudet appreciates, as a specialized institution, that the University needs to finely tease out the implications of demographic and cultural trends. The ability to discern the specific relevancy of these trends will be crucial to envisioning the future that Gallaudet must prepare for today.

The Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP) that was developed in 2007 provided a sound basis for institutional planning and action. This is evidenced by the attainment of all but one of the identified

targets, and the incorporation of the SEP and its five broad initiatives into the Gallaudet Strategic Plan. Gallaudet has realized 15% increase in total University enrollment as well as a ten percentage point gain in degree-seeking students from diverse racial/ethnic heritages in a four year period that began in 2008. When coupled with a 23% increase in first-to-second year retention (70% retained in 2012) and a climbing graduation rate, there is support for the current direction.

Gallaudet has clearly delineated admission policies and criteria that are well organized according to student classification and available on the website and in the University catalog. The institution is attentive to ensuring that recruitment and enrollment prepare the way to graduation, and has in place an admission profile rubric and evaluation process for candidates whose applicant profile might indicate a borderline probability for success. The review by the Admissions Review Committee (ARC) has resulted in enrolling students with a broader range of abilities and preparation. While there has been improvement in the retention of these students through strategies such as JumpStart, FYE, and the early-alert retention tool, Starfish, the institution seeks additional measures to better identify specific supports that may be effective.

There has been significant progress made in freshmen to sophomore retention and the institution appears to be committed to continual process improvement, as evidenced by the FYE assessment plan. The intent to re-launch Starfish utilizing the analysis of initial implementation provides confirmation of assessment and the clear intent to incorporate “feedback loops” into the strategies. Of note is the institution’s intent to focus on better utilization of existing services. Additive processes and services do not always equate with desired outcomes and can dilute resources.

There is accurate and comprehensive information for undergraduate and graduate academic programs published in the University catalog and available on line. Of special note is the planning and progress booklet that incorporated into the First Year Seminar and available to all undergraduate students through the Blackboard portal.

Significant accomplishments:

The University is to be commended in the initiatives taken to support student success and retention. The improvement of the freshmen to sophomore retention is noteworthy. Currently reported at 70% it has realized a 16% improvement over the past five years. There has been significant progress made in freshmen to sophomore retention and the institution appears to be committed to continual process improvement. This is evidenced by the intent to re-launch Starfish utilizing the learning from these initial implementations, the clear intent to incorporate “feedback loops” into the strategies and development of initiatives such as JumpStart, General Studies Requirement courses, First Year Experience programs and identification of institutional gateways to guide the “student’s path to graduation.”

Non-binding findings for improvement:

Prospective students might be better served with links directly to admission policies and criteria in the University catalog from the Admission webpages.

While Gallaudet has set an overall aspirational enrollment goal of 3,000 students, the institution should define the cohorts that comprise this enrollment. Institutional agreement on what is appropriate for Gallaudet would provide clear targets which could better inform strategies and resource allocation, and equate to quantitative metrics against which to benchmark progress.

The recommendation in the Self-Study to analyze student persistence into the third year and beyond should be pursued. The institution has identified patterns of attrition that suggest additional retention strategies during the sophomore year, prior to declaration of a major, could have a significant impact on student persistence.

The Committee supports the recommendation in the Self Study that Gallaudet establish a priority for the revision of the general studies transfer equivalencies to better align with the current General Studies Requirements.

Standard 9: Student Support Services

The institution meets the standard.

Summary of evidence and findings: Based on review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

It is clear that Gallaudet has a commitment to student success, has established student learning outcomes and has made significant advancement in achieving them. Use of the framework of the Gallaudet Strategic Plan as a roadmap with well-articulated objectives and associated strategies has served the institution well. The goal of increasing Gallaudet's six-year graduation rate to 50% has provided a focus that is measurable and has resulted in a culture of accountability for student retention and success that is yielding very positive results. A review of the persistency and graduation data indicates positive trends in both areas. Initiatives such as Jumpstart, FYE have had a positive effect.

The University offers an appropriate range of support services that address educational, personal and professional needs of the students. These services are published on the University website and in the student handbook and University catalog. Appropriate procedures are in place; they are delineated in the student handbook, University catalog and available on the University website.

Gallaudet has done well in establishing procedures and processes for advisement. The Majors and Career project, graduation contract, and the efforts of Academic Advising have resulted in a providing a solid backbone for advising. As noted in the self-study, the University has developed tools to enable students to more clearly see their paths to graduation. It follows that the attention to advising has led to the identification of additional barriers to graduation.

Grievance policies and procedures are published and clear; records are appropriately maintained. Information regarding the location, custodianship, and access of student records is published in the

University catalog and student handbook. Policies and procedures are in place that assure their security.

Significant accomplishments:

Gallaudet has developed significant support for its students and is well on the way to achieving full integration with the education process. The improved first-to-second year retention, growing participation in internships that students cite as "...beneficial in helping them to get jobs after graduation," increased graduation rate and high percentage (95%) of bachelor degree graduates reporting that they had obtained employment or were pursuing additional education speak well to the educational experience and support services at Gallaudet.

Non-binding findings for improvement:

The Self-Study noted that deeper and more consistent assessment will enable better measurement of outcomes. The review of assessment documents and campus interviews revealed an approach to assessment that is both deep and consistent. However, assessment must be able to be maintained over time to be truly useful. The challenge to Gallaudet will be to identify those measurements that are most effective in monitoring institutional progress toward institutional goals. The development of a limited set of performance measurements, such as a balanced scorecard, could integrate performance measures with traditional financial metrics would provide useful assessment data and help to avoid "assessment fatigue."

Recommendations: The University has thoroughly considered barriers to graduation, has identified specific obstacles and developed recommendations to address these issues. In the coming months, the University should develop an estimated resources allocation, rank order and timeline for implementing these recommendations.

Standard 11: Educational Offerings

The institution meets this standard

Summary of evidence and findings: Based on review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Gallaudet University is a true asset in post-secondary education. There is a fabric that binds each of the constituent groups in the community and the institution's impact is felt far beyond the University community. The students, faculty, administrators, and alumni all share a bond which grows stronger with each generation of students. The undergraduate and graduate programs are an extension of this fabric. Over the last eight years, this culture has embraced the fact that diligent and honest evaluation of academic programs strengthens the student experience and thus the entire enterprise.

It is clear from the syllabi evaluation that courses provide an appropriate level of rigor and challenge. The University's bilingual mission is a complex and highly-valued factor in educating undergraduate and graduate students. The bilingual mission appears throughout the institution. For example, the

University's new logo portrays the University's name in American Sign Language (ASL) as demonstrated by the two arches that meet at a point.

An important facet of any healthy educational enterprise is the consistent and honest review of academic goals or outcomes. At the general studies level, there are numerous points of faculty review at the course and program level. For example, courses within the general studies are routinely visited and peer-reviewed. This is one example of a best practice for the University. A rubric of expectations is used to evaluate courses within general studies which includes some of the following:

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expectation: This instructor's students are challenged by and engaged with their learning. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expectation: Design, develop and implement courses and other instructional programs that are academically rigorous and that intentionally facilitate student achievement of GSR Course Objectives and SLOs. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expectation: Use active learning as a primary pedagogical approach. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expectation: Provide prompt and effective feedback on student performance and products. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expectation: Recognize, respect and respond effectively to diversity in students' culture, communication, background, and learning needs. |

The data derived from the GSR class observation rubric is aggregated by the assessment leadership to hold faculty accountable for delivering rigorous instruction that is consistent with the institution's mission.

At the program level, Gallaudet University is in the process of a comprehensive curriculum mapping which will clarify alignment of programmatic outcomes to institutional outcomes. The WEAVE system implemented in the Fall of 2012 is an innovative approach to the improvement of data collection and analysis.

Gallaudet University has a robust culture of evaluation. There are numerous examples, yet the three-year assessment summary report is an exemplar of consistent assessment. The 2008-2012 Gallaudet Full Learning Assessment Report is a meta-analysis of departmental and programmatic annual reports and provides a macro perspective of the institution's pedagogical progress.

The visiting team also evaluated numerous academic support services. Of specific mention, the Library is undergoing a physical transformation in terms of improved collaborative space, new technology, and refreshed infrastructure. The visiting team confirmed the comments in the self-study that the library needs to undergo an organizational transformation where it plays an increased role in the technological lives of Gallaudet students.

Career Services is one of the support services that has a very well-developed evaluation process. The department possesses clear outcomes with associated measurement techniques designed to drive performance toward the outcome. For example, Careers Services has set a goal of having "Student[s] demonstrate the ability to practice and/or apply effective interview skills." Career Services

evaluates this outcome directly through data derived from interview Rubrics completed by external employers to evaluate students' interviewing skills after mock interviews.

Significant accomplishments:

The visiting team commends Gallaudet University for providing a coherent and logical structure for document evaluation.

B. Standards Addressed Partially within the Selected Topics

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

The institution meets the standard.

Summary of evidence and findings: Based on review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The comprehensive Gallaudet Strategic Plan (GSP) established goals, strategies and objectives, both institution-wide and for individual departments that are clearly stated reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results. They are linked to mission and goal achievement and are used by the University for planning and resource allocation. Following the adoption of the GSP, the University continued the planning and resource allocation efforts by conducting an Administrative Program and Services Review (APSRC) and an Academic Program Prioritization Project (PPTF). These were designed to link program planning with resource allocation.

The planning and improvement processes mentioned above were clearly communicated, provided constituent participation and used assessment results. The University has well defined decision making processes and has assigned authority that facilitates planning and renewal. Authority for the GSP and planning processes rest with President who has delegated to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Vice President for Administration and Finance. The Vice Presidents charged the APSRC and PPTF groups with their respective planning processes. The University Planning and Budget Committee (UPBC) submits budget recommendations to the President for approval and he submits them to the Board of Trustees.

Responsibility and accountability for improvements rest with the President. He seeks input from many units within the University, but relies primarily on the UPBC for recommendations. The University publishes an Annual Report of Achievements that contains a section on institutional and unit improvement efforts and results. Also published is a GSP update that shows progress on the GSP goals and strategies.

The UPBC is responsible for monitoring and facilitating the implementation of the planning processes, resource allocation and assessment activities. In addition, the Committee is designated to link resource allocation with planning and institutional renewal.

Significant accomplishments:

The University should be commended for involving all constituents in the planning and resource allocation processes and its record of shared governance.

Non-binding findings for improvement:

- The University should consider developing a method to determine program cost.
- The University should use either the PPTF or APSRC groups – the established process – of vetting new programs and periodic review of existing programs.
- Every key support service should assess its impact on student learning and their effectiveness in supporting key GSP goals.

Recommendation:

- We recommend the University assign specific individuals or units the responsibility to monitor and report on the UPBC's annual budget recommendations and the GSP's recommendations as approved by the President and the Board of Trustees. Those individuals or units should be held accountable for implementation.

Standard 12: General Education

The institution meets the standard.

Summary of evidence and findings: Based on review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Gallaudet's General Studies Requirement (GSR) is a bold, innovative approach to general education. It incorporates many approaches aimed at providing an effective and engaging program for all undergraduate degree-seeking students, such as assessment-based teaching, interdisciplinary study, team-teaching, problem-based courses, and service learning. The General Studies curriculum was revised in 2007 after a thorough review and analysis completed by faculty members and administrators, aided by an outside consultant with expertise in curriculum design. The five undergraduate SLOs incorporated into the GSR include: Language and Communication; Critical Thinking; Identity and Culture; Knowledge and Inquiry; and Ethics and Social Responsibility. The team verified that these UGSLOs are addressed by all undergraduate majors and that the Language and Communication SLO is addressed in each course – further documenting Gallaudet's clear commitment to their bilingual mission. In fact, each of the five UGSLOs have a relationship with the institutional mission.

Strengths of the GSR include: A strong commitment to GSR faculty development; clear publications of the GSR requirements; a movement toward the use of standardized rubrics (AACU) for SLO assessment; and documentation of progressive skill development in GSR classes.

The self-study demonstrated some concerns about the sustainability of the GSR program, since many of these innovative approaches require a considerable resource investment to be effective over time. For example, the GSR relies heavily on adjuncts and appears to borrow faculty members from other departments. To address this, Gallaudet intends to widen GSR participation from faculty in all departments. As an essential method of quality control in the GSR, Gallaudet recognized that strong coordination efforts are necessary to support the GSR program and responded by implementing strong support mechanisms for GSR faculty, including adjuncts. It should be noted that in spite of the admittedly challenging process of recruiting appropriate faculty to teach in the GSR, the GSR

Program Director and Coordinators expressed confidence that the GSR Program continues to move in a positive direction.

A review of the self-study and supplemental documentation, as well as interviews with GSR coordinators, demonstrated that Gallaudet has a multifaceted approach to the assessment of the GSR which includes both direct and indirect measure of student learning. Documents outlining assessment initiatives include Institutional/Program Level SLO Matrix, the General Studies Self Study Workgroup Report, GSR Expectations for Faculty, GSR Class Observation Report, GSR Assessment Process, and the General Studies 2011 Assessment Report. In 2012, Gallaudet began using AACU rubrics to assess student performance in the GSR, and several documents include the results of these rubrics. During interviews with the Program Director and Coordinator, it was clear that assessment results have been used to make changes to the GSR.

The GSR faculty strive to build bridges between the GSR and specific majors, as well as the GSR and developmental coursework and note that work in these areas continue.

Significant accomplishments:

It is clear that a significant amount of time, energy, resources, and passion have been devoted to the conceptualization and implementation of the new GSR. Gallaudet should be commended for the bold and brave steps taken to make the GSR more meaningful and more likely to prepare students to be, as the GSR website states, “successful citizens of the 21st century.” Gallaudet should also be commended for their robust assessment of the GSR and their eager willingness to make changes to the GSR curriculum, provide ongoing faculty development, and revise existing procedures as a result of assessment data.

Non-binding findings for improvement:

When the institutional budget allows, Gallaudet should prioritize adding faculty members dedicated to the GSR.

Although Gallaudet has clear transfer policies related to the GSR, the University would be well served by reexamining transfer policies to better assist students in their paths to graduation.

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

The institution meets this standard

Summary of evidence and findings: Based on review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Gallaudet University is in compliance with Standard 14 based on the document review and onsite evaluation by the visiting team. The institution is clearly a community of faculty, students and administrators that are jointly committed to ongoing evaluation and improvement of instruction. It is apparent that Gallaudet has built a strong foundation of student learning outcomes assessment at the programmatic levels. After review, Gallaudet University clearly has a systematic, sustained and thorough use of multiple qualitative and/or quantitative measures.

The outcomes assessment effort at Gallaudet is faulty-led and coordinated through the Office of Academic Quality (OAQ). The OAQ serves as coordinating entity for several faculty/administrative

committees including the General Studies Requirements committee (GSR) and the Assessment Council. The GSR is a cadre of devoted faculty, who teach within the General Studies program, while the Assessment Council is a body of representatives who serve as the main assessment advocates within the academic departments. The role of both bodies cannot be understated, for these University groups form the evaluation infrastructure of the University.

Compliance is further demonstrated by the participation of all departments on the Assessment Council. As recommended by the Generalist Reviewer, the visiting team confirmed the institution complies with all fundamental elements of this standard.

Gallaudet University was certified in November, and the evaluator indicated that the University possesses a documented and sustained assessment process. Student learning outcomes fundamentally depend upon the existence, analysis, and maximization of data sources. The team inspected a variety of routine reports generated by Gallaudet that are designed to move the institution beyond mere compliance toward an active posture of the honest evaluation of the academic portfolio. One such report is the Learning Assessment Update (LAU) report which is an annual document prepared by a majority of departments to demonstrate the relationship between student learning outcomes (SLO) their respective measures, the data derived from measurement, the analysis generated from the data, and the actions made to improve their programs. For example, The GU History Department described in its LAU that, "the results of our assessment clearly show the value and need to continue to review our assessment practices. We also need to integrate methodology training in our entire curriculum to improve the level of higher level critical thinking and analysis as practiced by historians. Our assessment meetings continue to generate a spirit of collaboration and positive approach to assessment that is practical and useful. Our recent discussion focus on the following: 1) revisiting our SLOs and HAR to have clearer expectations, as well as develop higher level skills 2) identifying introductory and lower level courses that we can incorporate methodology training and assessment 3) further integrating our SLOs with the HAR 4) consistently documenting throughout the semester and reviewing, as a group, targets, expectations, and outcomes." Gallaudet's assessment structures are labor-intensive and produce authentic artifacts of student achievement. Some community members mentioned concern about the institution's ability to sustain such a laborious process. The visiting team believes that the passion generated by the community to serve its unique student population will provide the requisite momentum.

The institution is to be commended for its development of the Senior Literacy Project in both ASL and in English. The Senior Literacy Project is designed to directly measure student competency through authentic writing samples, which are hallmarks of quality student learning outcomes assessment. This assessment is a continuation of the writing assessment conducted each spring since 2009. In addition, the Senior Literacy Project is an attempt to assess ASL Presentation skills.

The ASL and English products are rated on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest score and 4 the highest. The rubrics for ASL were adapted from the AACU Value Rubric for Oral Presentation, while the rubric for written English used this year was the AACU Written Communication Value Rubric. The Senior Literacy Project is an example of the Gallaudet's faculty commitment to ensuring competency and quality of its exiting student class.

As described above, the Gallaudet University Assessment Council provides oversight and feedback regarding programmatic assessment. The visiting team reviewed several mechanisms to aggregate departmental assessment progress. For example, the three-year departmental assessment reports are read and evaluated by the Assessment Council faculty. The Assessment Council feedback is

guided by a rubric specifically designed for the three-year assessment report. The Assessment Council feedback is both supportive and critical, which is a sign of a healthy assessment culture. To illustrate, the following is an excerpt of feedback directed from the Assessment Council to the Biology Department. "It's clear from the report that most of your students are performing at your program's targets (or above) thus it is perhaps not noteworthy but it could be a good idea to keep watch on those trends. Due to low enrollment of seniors annually, consider incorporating an exit interview as it could also produce other kind of meaningful information for the department." This is quite simply an example of best practice exhibited by Gallaudet.

The Academic Council, composed of Academic Deans and Department Chairs, conducts annual meetings to evaluate the assessment practices of the institution. For example, the fall 2011 meeting reviewed strengths and weaknesses in the University's assessment process. In subsequent years, the Academic Council used aggregated data from the LAUs feedback rubric. In addition, the Council discussed learning from conferences, and reviewed resources and expectations. More recently, the Council discussed planning for the new senior literacy assessment cycle, launching the senior assessment initiative, total of learning assessment reports submitted fall 2011.

Significant accomplishments:

The institution is to be commended for its development of the Senior Literacy Project in both ASL and in English.

Non-binding findings for improvement:

The institution would benefit from ongoing evaluation of existing programmatic SLOs as well as clearly-defined criteria for SLOs and the techniques used to reach those outcomes.

The University has a robust culture of assessment. As a result the visiting team recommends that every department continue to demonstrate active participation.

C. Standards Reviewed via Documentation

Based on the review of the documentation the team has determined:

The institution meets the following standards:

Standard 4: Leadership and Governance

Standard 5: Administration

Standard 6: Integrity

Standard 10: Faculty

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

VI. Summary Recommendations Requiring Follow-up Action and Requirements

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

Recommendation:

We recommend the University assign specific individuals or units the responsibility to monitor and report on the UPBC's annual budget recommendations and the GSP's recommendations as approved by the President and the Board of Trustees. Those individuals or units should be held accountable for implementation.

Standard 9: Student Support Services

Recommendations: The University has thoroughly considered barriers to graduation, has identified specific obstacles and developed recommendations to address these issues. The University should develop an estimated resources allocation, rank order and timeline for implementing these recommendations.