



***Ruffalo Noel Levitz Employee Satisfaction  
Survey Results: All Employees***

***Gallaudet University  
Spring 2017 Report***

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November 13, 2017

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Office of Institutional Research

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## Executive Summary

The Ruffalo Noel Levitz Employee Satisfaction Survey (ESS) supports the university in better understanding perspectives of faculty, staff, and administrators at Gallaudet University (GU) on issues that affect campus climate. Spring 2017 semester was the third administration of the Employee Satisfaction Survey (ESS) at Gallaudet University (GU).

A total of 567 regular-status employees (administrators, faculty, and staff) completed or partially completed the survey. The response rate was 72.4% to 76.5%, depending on the survey item. This report summarizes the responses of all regular-status employees for all sections of the survey. The Supplemental ESS Report separates responses by employee role.

### Key Takeaways

#### *Consistency and Credibility*

Gallaudet has administered the Employee Satisfaction Survey for three consecutive years. In 2017, one key takeaway is the consistency of results across all three years. This consistency lends strong credibility to the results and encourages Gallaudet to carefully consider what can be done to respond to the results.

The Employee Satisfaction Survey provides a variety of information about employee perspectives on issues that impact the climate at Gallaudet. Among all this information, Ruffalo Noel Levitz focuses our attention on Strengths and Challenges as we consider how to strengthen Gallaudet's climate.

Four Challenges, all related to resources, have consistently been reported from 2015-2017:

- This institution makes sufficient budgetary resources available to achieve important objectives
- My department has the staff needed to do its job well
- My department has the budget needed to do its job well
- I am paid fairly for the work I do

The results of the ESS for three years have also shown us that employee morale continues to be a top priority for the majority of employees. At Gallaudet, as elsewhere, employees are being asked to work harder and smarter as they strengthen approaches to student success and new generations of students.

Eight Strengths have been repeatedly identified for three years. Gallaudet employees take pride in working at Gallaudet, and in the work they do. They also feel valued and attended to. It would appear that employees are eager to have Gallaudet identify ways in which they can continue to do this work that is so valuable in spite of the fiscal crisis.

- This institution promotes excellent employee-student relationships
- Staff take pride in their work
- Faculty take pride in their work
- I am proud to work at this institution
- The work I do is valuable to the institution
- My supervisor pays attention to what I have to say
- The type of work I do on most days is personally rewarding
- The employee benefits available to me are valuable

***Peer Comparisons***

Although Gallaudet employees' overall satisfaction has steadily been improving over the past three years, GU employees indicate that they continue to be significantly more dissatisfied with almost every specific item on the climate survey. This comprehensive dissatisfaction with everything at Gallaudet may work against efforts to focus and strategically plan for improvement, especially in a time of tight resources. It will be important to strategically consider what can bring the greatest improvement in quality for students, as well as employee morale.

***Gallaudet Priority Targets***

Targets for the 2016 Gallaudet Priority for Campus Climate were achieved and exceeded in 2017.

## I. Introduction

The Ruffalo Noel Levitz Employee Satisfaction Survey (ESS) supports the university in better understanding perspectives of faculty, staff, and administrators at Gallaudet University (GU) on issues that affect campus climate. Employees have been surveyed using the ESS for three consecutive years in the spring. Results from this year's ESS were analyzed longitudinally across the three years, and compared to a cohort of 44 comparable private 4-year institutions (peers). This report summarizes the responses of all regular-status employees for all sections of the survey. The Supplemental ESS Report separates responses by employee role.

### A. Background

Gallaudet has administered an employee climate survey since 2007. The GU Campus Climate Survey (GUCCS) was developed in response to internal issues that were important in 2007, along with concerns from Gallaudet's regional accreditor, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). The GUCCS addressed six themes: 1) respect, trust, and fairness; 2) institutional communication and information sharing; 3) management style; 4) academic culture; and 5) freedom of expression. A sixth theme of bilingualism was added in 2011. Over time, the results of the GUCCS showed repeated patterns, and there was an interest in asking more detailed questions to provide specifics within those patterns. There was also a desire to address a wider range of issues facing higher education, as well as to see how Gallaudet University compared to peer institutions in areas impacting climate. For these reasons, Gallaudet University adopted the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Employee Satisfaction Survey (ESS). Gallaudet first administered the ESS in spring, 2015, and then again in 2016 and 2017 to assess campus climate longitudinally.

As in previous years, ESS consisted of 82 items with 4 open-ended questions. Of these items, 13 were Gallaudet-specific and were designed to address areas of particular interest to Gallaudet, including bilingualism, diversity, ethics, and communication. The survey also included a question regarding the responder's role at Gallaudet to better provide an understanding of who completed the survey. This question was strengthened in 2017 by adding clearer descriptions regarding the responder's role at Gallaudet.

The ESS includes five sections:

- Section 1: Campus Culture and Policies
- Section 2: Institutional Goals
- Section 3: Involvement in Planning and Decision-Making
- Section 4: Work Environment
- Section 5: Overall Satisfaction with Gallaudet

Sections 1 and 4 of the ESS, which address Campus Culture and Policies and Work Environment, ask employees to respond to questions about campus climate using a Likert scale to rate items in two ways: "importance to me" and "my level of satisfaction." Scales range from 1 – 5, with 5 as the highest (very important or very satisfied) and 1 as the lowest (not important at all or not satisfied at all). Mean scores are presented using this 1-5 scale format. Means for Importance are typically in the range of 4 to 5, and mean Satisfaction scores are typically in the range of 2 to 3. Performance gaps are then calculated as the mean difference between perceived Importance and Satisfaction. The larger the performance gap, the greater the discrepancy between how important an employee believes that item to be, and how satisfied the employee is regarding that item. Areas with high Importance and high Satisfaction represent areas of Strength. Areas with high Importance and low Satisfaction or a large mean for the gap between Importance and Satisfaction, identify

Challenges for Gallaudet. (See Appendix A for a copy of the survey instrument and Appendix B for and a copy of the Gallaudet-specific questions.)

For Section 2, Institutional Goals, employees were asked to rate how important each of the 10 institutional goals is on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not important at all and 5 = very important. From the list of institutional goals, they were also asked to rank and list the top three institutional priority goals.

For Section 3, Involvement in Planning and Decision-making, employees were asked to rate how involved each of the eight constituents are in planning and decision-making at Gallaudet University. Again, the rating was on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not enough involvement and 5 = too much involvement.)

In addition to the items surveyed for the four themes, employees were to rate their overall satisfaction with their employment at Gallaudet University on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not satisfied at all and 5 = very satisfied).

**B. Methods**

The Office of Institutional Research surveyed approximately 735 faculty, staff, and administrators using the Ruffalo Noel Levitz ESS during spring 2017 through an on-line link sent via e-mail. Instructions in ASL and English for completing the survey were publicized through Daily Digest and e-mail. A total of 567 employees completed or partially completed the survey. Responses for each item ranged from 532 to 562 responses, which generated a 72.4% to 77% response rate, depending on the survey item. This response rate is an increase from the 30% to 41% response rate for the [2016 ESS survey](#)<sup>1</sup>.

The ESS was intended for regular status<sup>2</sup> employees at Gallaudet University. Although a few surveys (5.4%) were completed by employees in other categories, the role-identifier question allowed the analysis to eliminate those responses. Some respondents chose not to answer the role-identifier question (17.4%). Their responses were also eliminated to assure that the analysis reflected the responses of regular status employees at Gallaudet University. The majority of responders to the ESS were staff (74%), with 51% exempt staff and 23% non-exempt staff. 16% of the respondents were faculty, and 10% were administrators.

**Table 2: Percentage of ESS Responses by Employee Group**

Employee Role		% of Total ESS Responses- 2017	
Faculty		16%	
All Staff		74%	
Exempt Staff	Non-Exempt Staff	51%	23%
Administrator		10%	

<sup>1</sup> For additional data about survey responders see the GU Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Employee Satisfaction Report data online at [ESS Full Report with Demographic Information](#) .

<sup>2</sup> Regular status employees are defined as full-time employees, both staff and faculty.

The demographic representation of respondents in 2017 was very similar to that of 2016. As in previous years, the largest percentage of respondents were staff (74%), with 51% exempt and 23% non-exempt. 16% of the respondents were faculty, and 10% were administrators. Respondents represented a range of years of experience, with 4% having worked at Gallaudet for less than 4 years, 21% for 1 to 5 years, 17% for 6-10 years, 31% 11-20 years of experience, and 27% more than 20 years of experience. Again, these percentages were comparable to last year's. 63% of respondents were White, while 37% were employees were members of racial or ethnic minorities or international employees. 45% of respondents were Deaf, 7% Hard of Hearing, and 46% Hearing.

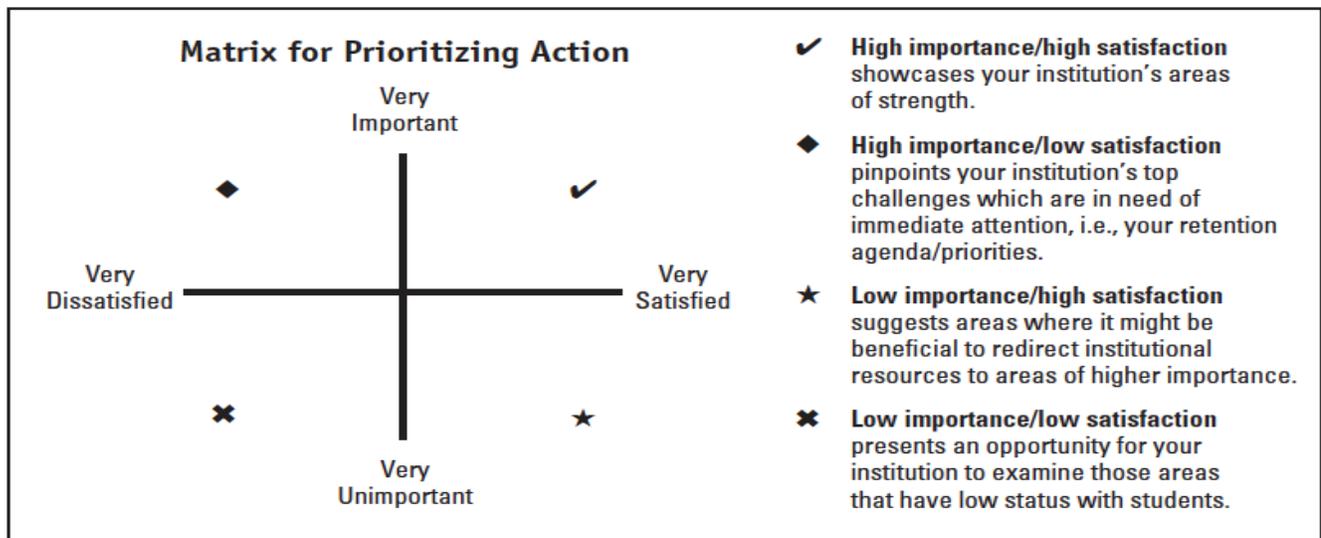
## II. Employee Satisfaction Survey Results

This report presents detailed ESS results as follows:

- A. Campus Culture and Policies
- B. Work Environment
- C. Institutional Goals
- D. Involvement in Planning and Decision-Making
- E. Overall Satisfaction with Gallaudet

Ruffalo Noel Levitz suggests using the matrix in Figure 1 to analyze the ESS results and prioritize actions, particularly for the Campus Culture and Policies and Work Environment sections.

**Figure 1: Matrix for Prioritizing Action**



In identifying areas of Strength, two conditions had to be met: 1) the item's average Importance score was in the top 50% of all items' Importance score and 2) the items' average Satisfaction score was in the top 25% of all items' Satisfaction scores. In identifying areas of Challenge, two conditions had to be met: 1) the item's average Importance score was in the top 50% of all items' Importance score and 2) the item's average

Satisfaction score was in the bottom 25% of all items’ Satisfaction scores or the gap (difference between Importance and Satisfaction) was in the top 25% of all items’ gap scores. In other words, items with high Importance and high Satisfaction are the institution’s areas of Strength, and items with high Importance and low Satisfaction are the institution’s top Challenges, which are in need of immediate attention. This report will also present detailed ESS results for other sections including institutional goals and involvement in planning and decision-making.

**A. Campus Culture and Policies**

Table 3 lists the Strengths and Challenges for Campus Culture and Policies in order of importance. Items that employees found to be highly important, and are also satisfied with include: the way in which the institution treats students; staff and faculty pride in their work; and the respect of the community for Gallaudet. Items that employees found to be important, but are not satisfied with were: the extent to which Gallaudet meets the needs of students; communication between departments; institutional planning; and the adequacy of budgetary resources<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 3: Campus Culture and Policies: Strengths and Challenges**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
This institution treats students as its top priority.	This institution makes sufficient budgetary resources available to achieve important objectives.
This institution is well-respected in the community.	This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of staff.
Staff take pride in their work.	This institution plans carefully.
Faculty take pride in their work.	There are effective lines of communication between departments.
This institution promotes excellent employee-student relationships.	

**B. Work Environment**

For Section 4: Work Environment, employees were asked to rate 30 items. As with Section I, for each item in Section 4, employees were to rate how satisfied they are with the item on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not satisfied at all and 5 = very satisfied), and how important the item is to them on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not important at all and 5 = very important).

<sup>3</sup> For complete analysis by items see the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Employee Satisfaction Report data posted online at [ESS Data Regular GU Employees Only](#).

Table 4 lists the Strengths and Challenges for Work Environment in order of importance. Work Environment Strengths identified by Gallaudet employees focused on the value of the work they are doing with regards to benefits, attention and appreciation from supervisor, and the value of their worth to Gallaudet. Items that employees found to be important, but were not satisfied with were related to resources for their work, and communication<sup>4</sup>.

**Table 4: Work Environment: Strengths and Challenges**

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Challenges</i>
The employee benefits available to me are valuable.	My department has the staff needed to do its job well.
The type of work I do on most days is personally rewarding.	I am paid fairly for the work I do.
The work I do is valuable to the institution.	My department has the budget needed to do its job well.
I am proud to work at this institution.	I have adequate opportunities for advancement.
My supervisor pays attention to what I have to say.	
The work I do is appreciated by my supervisor.	

### C. Institutional Goals

For section 2: Institutional Goals, employees were asked to rate 10 institutional goals using a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not important at all and 5 = very important). In addition, from the list of institutional goals, they were to rank and list the top three institutional priority goals. The table below lists items in order of importance from most important to least important. (See Appendix F for statistical details of the Institutional Goals responses).

Employees found retention of current students to graduation to be the most important institutional goal followed by improving employee morale, improving the quality of existing academic programs, then improving the academic ability of entering student classes.

**Table 5: Importance of Institutional Goals: Mean scores**

<b>RATE: IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all / 5 = "Very important")</b>	<b>Mean</b>
1. Retain more of its current students to graduation	4.73
2. Improve employee morale	4.71
3. Improve the quality of existing academic programs	4.16

<sup>4</sup> For complete analysis by items see the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Employee Satisfaction Report data posted online at [ESS Data Regular GU Employees Only](#).

<b>RATE: IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all / 5 = "Very important")</b>	<b>Mean</b>
4. Improve the academic ability of entering student classes	4.63
5. Increase the enrollment of new students	4.57
6. Increase the diversity of racial and ethnic groups represented among the student body	 4.40
7. Improve comparable standards for use of ASL and English in an academic setting	4.37
8. Increase a sense of security and freedom to express diverse perspectives	4.34
9. Increase research activities to establish Gallaudet as the epicenter of research, development, and outreach	4.29
10. Recruit students from new geographic markets	4.17
11. Develop new academic programs	 4.16
12. Improve the appearance of campus buildings and grounds	4.10
13. Some other goal	3.62

 Indicates an increase from 2016

#### **D. Involvement and Decision-Making**

For section 3: Involvement in Planning and Decision-Making, employees were asked to rate on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not enough involvement and 5 = too much involvement) how involved they felt each of eight campus constituents were in planning and decision-making at Gallaudet University. The table below lists items in order of involvement in planning and decision making from most involved to least involved<sup>5</sup>.

Employees found senior administrators at the vice president and provost level or above to be the most involved in planning and decision-making followed by the deans or directors of administrative units, deans or chairs of academic units, and trustees. Employees also found staff to be the least involved. There was a slight increase in rating of level of involvement of Students.

**Table 6: Involvement in Planning and Decision-Making: Mean scores**

<b>RATE: INVOLVEMENT (1 = "Not enough involvement" / 3 = "Just the right involvement" / 5 = "Too much involvement")</b>	<b>Mean</b>
How involved are: Senior administrators (VP, Provost level or above)	3.94
How involved are: Deans or directors of administrative units	3.56

<sup>5</sup> For complete analysis by items see the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Employee Satisfaction Report data posted online at [ESS Data Regular GU Employees Only](#).

<b>RATE: INVOLVEMENT</b> (1 = "Not enough involvement" / 3 = "Just the right involvement" / 5 = "Too much involvement")	<b>Mean</b>
How involved are: Deans or chairs of academic units	3.50
How involved are: Trustees	3.22
How involved are: Faculty	3.07
How involved are: Students	 2.72
How involved are: Alumni	2.63
How involved are: Staff	2.23

 Indicates an increase from 2016

### III. Open-Ended Responses

The ESS provides four spaces for employees to write comments. These four comment sections ask for additional feedback regarding: 1) Campus Culture and Policies; 2) Work Environment; 3) Feedback on Gallaudet University’s goals; and 4) Other institutional goals the respondent believes to be important. There were 395<sup>6</sup> responses to the first two questions, regarding Campus Culture and Policies and Work Environment, and 261 responses to the sections on institutional goals. Some comments provided feedback in multiple areas. Comments varied in nature and level of specificity. Some of the feedback commented on individual programs, people, and actions taken. Many of the responses reiterated or gave examples for issues already identified in survey questions, especially resource and salary concerns. However, there were six themes in these first two sections that came up often:

- *Favoritism.* Favoritism in hiring and promotions was mentioned frequently, along with what is perceived as inconsistencies in policy implementation.
- *Decision-making and communication* between administration and other employees. Issues that were frequently raised included transparency in administration decisions (including budget); a perception of top-down decision-making; and a sense that feedback from staff and faculty has not been solicited and/or taken into consideration.
- *A need for recognition, appreciation, and reward* for work well done, particularly in connection with what is perceived to be a time of being asked to do more with less. Closely tied to this was an expressed desire that more investment be made in employees, both through supportive supervision and through clear processes for training and mentoring employees, and promotion from within.
- A perception of *a climate at Gallaudet that focuses on the negative*, where members of each of the employee groups (staff, faculty, administrators) belittle, criticize, blame, condescend to and have contempt for members of the other employee groups rather than respecting one another. A number of people

<sup>6</sup> Because individual responses are confidential, it is not possible to know to what extent these are unique or individual responses.

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mentioned divides between faculty and staff, and between administrators and faculty. They also commented that collaboration and collegiality is not rewarded, and that, in general, the campus needs to find more ways to celebrate what is being done well.

- *Strengthen use of policies:* A number of people specifically addressed the need for better, clearer, policies that are understood and consistently followed by all. A number of respondents also described the need for reviewing and updating Gallaudet policies to be in line with current times. Telecommunication, flexible hours, and leave were particularly mentioned.
- *Lack of unity* on what is most important. Included in this theme were specifics such as a lack of shared vision, mutual support and collegial discourse, enthusiasm and optimism for the mission of Gallaudet.

Responses to the two questions about institutional goals included a wide variety of responses, many of which mentioned institutional goals that were listed in the survey, but had not been included in the respondents' top five goals. One such response that was repeated a number of times was regarding the need for new and/or improved academic programs. Two themes that were not included in the original list of goals that appeared frequently in the open-ended responses were:

- *Racial and ethnic diversity in hiring*
- *Stronger and clearer focus on the bilingualism in the ASL and English aspect of Gallaudet's mission.* A number of people mentioned providing stronger support for students in both ASL and English (e.g., through tutoring and benchmarks during their pathway to graduation)

#### IV. Comparing Gallaudet's ESS Results Across Years

Gallaudet has administered the Employee Satisfaction Survey for three consecutive years. The following sections provide longitudinal comparisons for all areas of campus climate addressed in the ESS.

##### A. Campus Culture and Policies: Longitudinal Comparison - 2015, 2016, 2017

Five areas of strength in Campus Culture and Policies were identified for Gallaudet in the 2016 ESS analysis, and again five areas of Strength were identified in the 2017 analysis. Four of these were identical to 2016: 1) Gallaudet's treatment of students as its top priority; 2) employee-student relationships; 3) staff pride; and 4) faculty pride. Gallaudet's consistency of goals and objectives with its mission and values was no longer identified as a Strength in 2017 as it was in 2016. However, a new Strength identified in 2017 was respect for Gallaudet in the community. That item became a Strength in 2017 because the means for both Importance and Satisfaction were higher in 2017 than in previous years.

Three areas of Challenge for Campus Culture and Policies were identified through the ESS in 2016, while four areas of Challenge were identified in 2017. Budgetary resources and inter-departmental communication continue to be Challenges in 2017 as they were in 2016. Institutional planning was identified as a challenge in 2017, as it had been in 2015, but not in 2016. Teamwork and cooperation was no longer identified as a Challenge as it had been in 2015 and 2016 because the mean for Satisfaction was higher in 2017. "Meeting the needs of staff" was identified as a Challenge for the first time this year. This was due to a higher Importance mean score in 2017.

**Table 7: Campus Culture and Policies: Strengths and Challenges - 2015, 2016, 2017**

Item	2015	2016	2017
This institution treats students as its top priority.		Strength	Strength
This institution promotes excellent employee-student relationships.	Strength	Strength	Strength
Staff take pride in their work.	Strength	Strength	Strength
Faculty take pride in their work.	Strength	Strength	Strength
Administrators take pride in their work.	Strength		
This institution is well-respected in the community.			Strength
The goals and objectives of this institution are consistent with its mission and values.	Strength	Strength	
There is a spirit of teamwork and cooperation at this institution.	Challenge	Challenge	
This institution makes sufficient budgetary resources available to achieve important objectives.	Challenge	Challenge	Challenge
There are effective lines of communication between departments.		Challenge	Challenge
This institution plans carefully.	Challenge		Challenge
This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of staff.			Challenge
The leadership of this institution has a clear sense of purpose.	Challenge		
The reputation of this institution continues to improve.	Challenge		

**B. Work Environment: Longitudinal Comparison - 2015, 2016, 2017**

Six areas of strength from 2016 continued to be areas of strength in 2017. These areas of strength included employees’ positive perceptions of their work, the employee benefits made available, and the attention that their supervisor provides. The item regarding clear communication of job responsibilities was no longer identified as a Strength as it was in 2016 because the level of Satisfaction decreased this year.

Three areas of challenge from 2016 continued to be areas of challenge in 2017. These areas of challenge included the availability of resources (staff and budget) to do the job well, and being paid fairly for the work done. A new Challenge in 2017 was “adequate opportunities for advancement” because the level of Satisfaction with this area decreased in 2017. However, “transparent and informed communication” was not

identified as a challenge in 2017 as it had been in 2015 and 2016 because the level of Satisfaction with this item increased in 2017.

**Table 8: Work Environment: Strengths and Challenges: 2015, 2016, 2017**

Item	2015	2016	2017
I am proud to work at this institution.	Strength	Strength	Strength
My supervisor pays attention to what I have to say.	Strength	Strength	Strength
The work I do is valuable to the institution.	Strength	Strength	Strength
The type of work I do on most days is personally rewarding.	Strength	Strength	Strength
The employee benefits available to me are valuable.	Strength	Strength	Strength
The work I do is appreciated by my supervisor.		Strength	Strength
My job responsibilities are communicated clearly to me.		Strength	
I am treated with respect for cultural/personal differences in my unit/department at Gallaudet University.	Strength		
I am paid fairly for the work I do.	Challenge	Challenge	Challenge
My department has the staff needed to do its job well.	Challenge	Challenge	Challenge
My department has the budget needed to do its job well.	Challenge	Challenge	Challenge
Transparent and informed communication is practiced consistently throughout the university community.	Challenge	Challenge	
I have adequate opportunities for advancement			Challenge
There are regular demonstrations of expected ethnical behavior and attitudes by influential University leaders.	Challenge		
Information flows upward and is recognized at higher levels of the administration.	Challenge		

**C. Institutional Goals: Longitudinal Comparison - 2015, 2016, 2017**

Employees who responded to the 2017 ESS identified the same top five institutional goals that were identified by employees who responded to the 2016 ESS: (1) retain more current student to graduation; (2) improve employee morale; (3) improve the academic ability of entering student classes; (4) improve the quality of existing academic programs; and (5) increase the enrollment of new students. The only difference between 2016 and 2017 for the top five institutional goals is that the order of importance for “academic ability of entering students” and “quality of existing programs” was reversed in 2017.

**Table 9: Institutional Goals Means- Longitudinal Comparison – 2015, 2016, 2017**

Institutional Goal	2015 Importance Mean Score	2016 Importance Mean Score	2017 Importance Mean Score
Retain more of its current students to graduation	4.71	4.73	<b>4.73</b>
Improve employee morale	4.71	4.72	<b>4.71</b>
Improve the academic ability of entering student classes	4.58	4.59	<b>4.63</b>
Improve the quality of existing academic programs	4.67	4.65	<b>4.16</b>
Increase the enrollment of new students	4.60	4.58	<b>4.57</b>
Increase the diversity of racial and ethnic groups represented among the student body	4.27	4.38	<b>4.40</b>
Improve comparable standards for use of ASL and English in an academic setting	4.29	4.48	<b>4.37</b>
Increase a sense of security and freedom to express diverse perspectives	4.42	4.48	<b>4.34</b>
Increase research activities to establish Gallaudet as the epicenter of research, development, and outreach	4.32	4.33	<b>4.29</b>
Recruit students form new geographical markets	4.08	4.18	<b>4.17</b>
Develop new academic programs	4.00	4.06	<b>4.10</b>
Improve the appearance of campus buildings and grounds	3.77	4.07	<b>4.12</b>
Some other goal	3.53	3.58	<b>3.61</b>

**D. Involvement in Decision-Making: Longitudinal Comparison – 2015, 2016, 2017**

Responses of employees to the 2017 ESS ranked the involvement of each constituent in the same order as did 2015 responses -- with one exception: Students. Student involvement in decision-making is now rated higher than Alumni involvement, in contrast to 2016.

**Table 10: Involvement in Planning and Decision**

<b>Longitudinal Comparison – 2015, 2016, 2017</b>			
<b>How involved are:</b>	2015 Involvement Mean Score	2016 Involvement Mean Score	2017 Involvement Mean Score
Senior administrators (VP, Provost level or above)	3.90	3.98	<b>3.94</b>
Deans or directors of administrative units	3.58	3.62	<b>3.56</b>
Deans or chairs of academic units	3.42	3.46	<b>3.50</b>
Trustees	3.22	3.36	<b>3.22</b>
Faculty	2.81	2.96	<b>3.07</b>
Students	2.46	2.58	<b>2.72</b>
Alumni	2.48	2.63	<b>2.63</b>
Staff	2.22	2.19	<b>2.23</b>

**E. Overall Satisfaction with Gallaudet**

The ESS asks employees how satisfied they are with Gallaudet overall. In 2017 the mean of Gallaudet employees’ Satisfaction rating with Gallaudet was 3.59, an increase of .12 from 2016 (3.47).

**Table 11: Overall Satisfaction with Gallaudet: Mean Scores Across Years**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>Peer Institutions</b>
Overall Satisfaction with Gallaudet: Mean Score	3.42	3.47	3.59	3.85

**V. Comparing Gallaudet with the National Comparison Groups**

Ruffalo Noel Levitz provides data to allow Gallaudet University (GU) to compare the responses of our employees to those at other peer institutions. For the purpose of this analysis, peers are considered national four-year private institutions whose employees completed the same survey version in the last three academic years. Comparison of Satisfaction on Campus Culture and Work Environment areas allows Gallaudet to better understand the extent to which areas of concern are unique to Gallaudet<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> For a complete list of peer institutions used by Ruffalo Noel-Levitz for the national comparison group go to the GU ESS tables posted online at [ESS Peer Institutions](#).

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Below is a summary of comparisons for employees at Gallaudet University and in the national comparison group for each survey section. Before reviewing the comparisons with peer institutions, it should be noted that responses by employees in the role of staff were higher at Gallaudet than at comparison institutions (74% at GU compared with 53% at peers<sup>7</sup>). In addition, Gallaudet employees had somewhat higher levels of experience at the institution than did peer employees (Gallaudet: 58% with 11-20 years or more of experience compared with 32% with 11-20 or more years of experience at peers<sup>8</sup>).

### **A. Campus Culture and Policies and Work Environment: GU compared to Peers**

Gallaudet University employees are significantly<sup>9</sup> *less satisfied* on all 30 Campus Culture and Policies items GU compared to Peers. They also rated 7 out of 30 Campus Culture and Policies items as significantly *more important*, and 9 items as significantly *less important* than did employees at peer institutions. Three of the seven items that GU employees felt were more important had to do with consistently following clear processes for selecting, orienting, training, and recognizing employee<sup>10</sup>.

Regarding Work Environment, Gallaudet employees were *less satisfied* than employees at peer institutions on 18 of 20 Work Environment items. They were *equally satisfied* on one work environment items (“I am proud to work at this institution”), and significantly *more satisfied* on the item that asks about employee benefits. 14 out of 20 Work Environment items were rated as significantly *more important* for Gallaudet employees than for employees at peer institutions.

### **B. Institutional Goals: GU compared to Peers**

Employees at peer institutions rated the same institutional goals as the top institutional priorities as did Gallaudet employees:

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- Retain more of its current students to graduation
  - Improve employee morale
  - Improve the academic ability of entering student classes
  - Improve the quality of existing academic programs
  - Increase the enrollment of new students
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<sup>8</sup> For a detailed list of item comparisons between Gallaudet University and other institutions see the ESS data posted online at [ESS Peer Comparison Report](#).

<sup>9</sup> “Significantly” means the difference was statistically significant.

<sup>10</sup> For complete analysis by items see the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Employee Satisfaction Report data posted online at [ESS Peer Comparisons Report](#).

**C. Involvement in Planning and Decision-Making: GU compared to Peers**

<b>RATE: INVOLVEMENT (1 = "Not enough involvement" / 3 = "Just the right involvement" / 5 = "Too much involvement")</b>	<b>Gallaudet University Mean</b>	<b>Comparison group Mean</b>
How involved are: Senior administrators (VP, Provost level or above)	3.92	3.66
How involved are: Deans or directors of administrative units	3.54	3.26
How involved are: Deans or chairs of academic units	3.49	3.22
How involved are: Faculty	3.06	2.75
How involved are: Trustees	3.23	3.49
How involved are: Students	2.71	2.47
How involved are: Alumni	2.65	2.65
How involved are: Staff	2.23	2.33

The means for level of involvement of key stakeholders at Gallaudet were significantly different than those at other institutions for all stakeholders except Alumni. For Staff and Trustees, Gallaudet’s mean level of importance was lower than peers’. For all others, the mean level of involvement was higher at Gallaudet. However, when the means were ranked from highest level of involvement to lowest, rankings were virtually identical with the exception of three stakeholders: Trustees, Students, and Alumni. For peer institutions Trustees were ranked as the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest level of involvement, while at Gallaudet Trustees were ranked as the 5<sup>th</sup> in level of involvement. At Gallaudet, Students’ level of involvement was ranked higher than Alumni’s level of involvement, while at peer institutions this ranking was reversed. At both Gallaudet and peer institutions, Staff level of involvement was ranked lowest.

**D. Overall Satisfaction: GU Compared to Peers**

Employees’ rating of overall satisfaction with their institution was higher at peer institutions than at Gallaudet. For 2017 the GU rating of overall Satisfaction was 3.60 as compared with overall Satisfaction of 3.85 at peer institutions. However, while the overall Satisfaction rating at Gallaudet has been slowly but steadily improving from 2015 to 2017, the overall Satisfaction rating at peer institutions has remained essentially the same, ranging from 3.83 to 3.85.

**VI. Key Takeaways**

**Gallaudet Priority Targets**

In 2016 Gallaudet established campus priorities that include a focus on campus climate.<sup>11</sup> In 2016 when this priority was first established, the metrics for the priority included mean scores on two items from the ESS: 1) Teamwork and Cooperation; and 2) Transparent and Informed Communication. These items were identified as key performance indicators or targets because both had been concerns in the previous GU Campus Climate Survey. Both items had also been identified as Challenges on the ESS in 2015 and 2016.

<sup>11</sup> Priority 2: “Create a campus climate where all members feel welcomed, supported, included, and valued for their unique qualities and individual contributions.

In 2017 the target mean scores for both of these indicators were exceeded, and neither were identified as Challenges for Gallaudet. However, “There are effective lines of communication between departments” remains a Challenge, and “transparent and informed communication” was a frequently mentioned comment in the open-ended sections of the ESS. In addition the need for more cross-“silo” collaboration and cooperation, along with greater unity and sense of purpose on campus, also arose frequently in open-ended feedback. This suggests that, if these ESS mean scores are kept as metrics, the target should be increased.

“There is a spirit of teamwork and cooperation at the institution.”

**Mean Scores**

2015	2016	2017 TARGET	2017 Actual
2.37	2.57	2.63	<b>2.84</b>

“Transparent and Informed communication is practiced consistently throughout the university community.”

**Mean Scores**

2015	2016	2017 TARGET	2017 Actual
2.46	2.65	2.70	<b>2.79</b>

**Consistency and Credibility**

Gallaudet has administered the Employee Satisfaction Survey for three consecutive years. In 2017, one key takeaway is the consistency of results across all three years. This consistency lends strong credibility to the results and encourages Gallaudet to carefully consider what can be done to respond to the results.

The Employee Satisfaction Survey provides a variety of information about employee perspectives on issues that impact the climate at Gallaudet. Among all this information, Ruffalo Noel Levitz focuses our attention on Strengths and Challenges as we consider how to strengthen Gallaudet’s climate.

**Gallaudet’s Challenges** Four Challenges, all related to resources, have consistently been reported from 2015-2017:

- This institution makes sufficient budgetary resources available to achieve important objectives.
- My department has the staff needed to do its job well.
- My department has the budget needed to do its job well.
- I am paid fairly for the work I do.

The results of the ESS for three years have also shown us that employee morale continues to be a top priority for the majority of employees. At Gallaudet, as elsewhere, employees are being asked to work harder and smarter as they strengthen approaches to student success and new generations of students.

**Gallaudet’s Strengths** Employees’ perspectives on Gallaudet’s strengths are important to consider as the institution plans to address Challenges. Eight Strengths have been repeatedly identified for three years. Gallaudet employees take pride in working at Gallaudet, and in the work they do. They also feel valued and

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attended to. It would appear that employees are eager to have Gallaudet identify ways in which they can continue to do this work that is so valuable in spite of the fiscal crisis.

- This institution promotes excellent employee-student relationships.
- Staff take pride in their work.
- Faculty take pride in their work.
- I am proud to work at this institution.
- The work I do is valuable to the institution.
- My supervisor pays attention to what I have to say.
- The type of work I do on most days is personally rewarding.
- The employee benefits available to me are valuable.

Gallaudet University employee concerns with budget cuts and employee morale, particularly in times with increased expectations for enrolling, retaining, and responding to students, are not unique. A [2014 report by American Association of University Professors](#) of an employee survey at a state university noted with surprise that “budget cuts were seen as the primary explanation for negative climates.” The report goes on to say that “faculty members<sup>12</sup> felt that the greatest negative impact on their day-today [sic] experiences resulted from things entirely beyond their department’s control.”

What can be done? The AAUP report recommends moving beyond short-term approaches to more strategic, long-term efforts. This recommendation is reinforced in GU Challenges identified for 2015 and 2017: “This institution plans carefully.” A perception that not all employees are involved in planning and decision-making also came through in the open-ended feedback. Future planning and decision-making efforts will need to consider how to meaningfully involve all campus stakeholders. Currently staff, in particular, believe they are the last and the least involved in planning. When decisions are made that are counter to the input received, it will be important to articulate the rationale behind those decisions.

Careful planning is unlikely to be enough, however. In a 2009 *Inside Higher Education* article on [“Cuts and Morale”](#) a community college dean reflects on why morale on his campus has held together. One action he points to is “unprecedented openness with faculty and staff about priorities, processes, and the vagaries of the...budget.” Openness is likely to be particularly significant at Gallaudet University where communication, teamwork, and transparency have long been concerns that have risen to the top in climate surveys.

Communication can also support faculty morale by communicating what is already being done in terms of strategic planning on campus. Identifying ways in which employees at other universities are dealing with the higher education fiscal crises can also be helpful. In addition, recognition will be important at many levels: recognition of what Gallaudet has accomplished, and what employees in all roles achieve every day. Employees, like students, ask that the institution find ways to support Gallaudet as a community by finding ways to unify and celebrate the many positive attributes of Gallaudet University.

### **Peer Comparisons**

Comparison to peer institutions also help to increase our understanding of Gallaudet climate. Although Gallaudet employees’ overall satisfaction has steadily been improving over the past three years, GU employees indicate that they continue to be significantly more dissatisfied with almost every specific item on the climate

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<sup>12</sup> Although “faculty members” is the term used in this report the survey reported was of staff members as well as faculty.

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survey. This comprehensive dissatisfaction with everything at Gallaudet fits with feedback on the survey stating that the institution has a culture that tends to focus on the negative. This negative emphasis may work against efforts to focus and strategically plan for improvement, especially in a time of tight resources. It will be important to strategically consider what Gallaudet does well, and what can bring the greatest improvement in quality for students, as well as employee morale. As one commenter said on the survey, “It’s not always clear what is most important at Gallaudet.”

On the other hand, when asked what institutional goals should be prioritized for the institution, Gallaudet employees are not so different than those at peer institutions. In addition, employees at both GU and peer institutions are similar in their perception of the level of involvement of the stakeholders in their roles: staff, administrators, and faculty.

### **Next Steps for Surveying Employee Climate**

Since results from the ESS have been so consistent for three consecutive years, Gallaudet may want to consider suspending administration of an employee climate survey for one to two years. This would enable the institution to take actions needed to address the Challenges identified in the ESS and conserve the considerable resources used to administer and respond to the ESS for those years. At the end of that period of time, Gallaudet should be able to see progress in campus climate when the ESS is again administered.

### **VII. Limitations**

This report provides an analysis of the responses of all Gallaudet regular status, full-time employees. Within that analysis of all employees, staff, especially non-exempt staff, who made up 47% of the respondents, are over-represented. A supplementary report which analyzes this data by work role provides a more detailed analysis by role. This supplementary report provides a better picture of the perspectives of respondents in each role.

One limitation when making comparisons from Gallaudet’s survey of employees is that Gallaudet defines the employee group surveyed as regular status, full-time employees. While we assume that peer institutions are also surveying full-time employees, we cannot, with certainty, know how they define the employees they survey.

For more detailed information on the survey data, please contact Lindsay Buchko, Director of Institutional Research at [lindsay.buchko@gallaudet.edu](mailto:lindsay.buchko@gallaudet.edu).

## Appendix A: Employee Satisfaction Survey

RESEARCH TOOLKIT – REVIEW SAMPLE

# Noel-Levitz Employee Satisfaction Survey

[INSTITUTION] has engaged Noel-Levitz to conduct this survey of employees to assess their satisfaction. This survey should take about 20 minutes to complete. Your answers are completely confidential, and no information is collected that will allow individuals to be identified.  
Thank you!

Q1	SECTION 1: Campus culture and policies					very satisfied	satisfied	somewhat satisfied	not very satisfied	not satisfied at all
	very important	important	somewhat important	not very important	not important at all					
	The following statements describe different aspects of colleges and universities. Rate how important each of these are to you as an employee of this institution, and then rate your satisfaction with how well the statement is implemented on your campus.									
					This institution promotes excellent employee-student relationships					
					This institution treats students as its top priority					
					This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of students					
					The mission, purpose, and values of this institution are well understood by most employees					
					Most employees are generally supportive of the mission, purpose, and values of this institution					
					The goals and objectives of this institution are consistent with its mission and values					
					This institution involves its employees in planning for the future					
					This institution plans carefully					
					The leadership of this institution has a clear sense of purpose					
					This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of its faculty					
					This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of staff					
					This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of administrators					
					This institution makes sufficient budgetary resources available to achieve important objectives					
					This institution makes sufficient staff resources available to achieve important objectives					
					There are effective lines of communication between departments					
					Administrators share information regularly with faculty and staff					
					There is good communication between the faculty and the administration at this institution					
					There is good communication between staff and the administration at this institution					
					Faculty take pride in their work					
					Staff take pride in their work					
					Administrators take pride in their work					
					There is a spirit of teamwork and cooperation at this institution					
					The reputation of this institution continues to improve					
					This institution is well-respected in the community					
					Efforts to improve quality are paying off at this institution					
					Employee suggestions are used to improve our institution					
					This institution consistently follows clear processes for selecting new employees					
					This institution consistently follows clear processes for orienting and training new employees					
					This institution consistently follows clear processes for recognizing employee achievements					
					This institution has written procedures that clearly define who is responsible for each operation and service					

NOTE: WE CAN ACCOMMODATE UP TO 10 ADDITIONAL CAMPUS-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS IN SECTION 1.

**Q9 SECTION 5: Demographics**

How long have you worked at this institution?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 20 years
- More than 20 years

**Q10** Is your Position:

- Full-time
- Part-time

**Q11** Is your position:

- Faculty
- Staff
- Administrator

**NOTE: WE CAN ACCOMMODATE UP TO 2 ADDITIONAL CAMPUS-SPECIFIC DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS.**

Q2

very important	important	somewhat important	not very important	not important at all	
<b>SECTION 2: Institutional goals</b>					
How important is it to you that this institution pursue the following goals?					
					[A] Increase the enrollment of new students
					[B] Retain more of its current students to graduation
					[C] Improve the academic ability of entering student classes
					[D] Recruit students from new geographic markets
					[E] Increase the diversity of racial and ethnic groups represented among the student body
					[F] Develop new academic programs
					[G] Improve the quality of existing academic programs
					[H] Improve the appearance of campus buildings and grounds
					[I] Improve employee morale
					[J] Some other goal

**NOTE: WE CAN ACCOMMODATE UP TO 3 ADDITIONAL CAMPUS-SPECIFIC INSTITUTIONAL GOALS IN SECTION 2.**

From the list above (in Section 2), choose three goals that you believe should be this institution's top priorities, and enter the letter for that goal below, in order of importance:

First priority goal:

Second priority goal:

Third priority goal:

What other institutional goals do you think are important? Please describe them in the space below:

Q3

	too much involvement	more than enough involvement	just the right involvement	not quite enough involvement	not enough involvement
<b>SECTION 3: Involvement in planning and decision-making</b>					
In your opinion, how much involvement do each of the following have in planning and decision-making at your institution					
Faculty					
Staff					
Deans or directors of administrative units					
Deans or chairs of academic units					
Senior administrators (VP, Provost level or above)					
Students					
Trustees					
Alumni					

**NOTE: WE CAN ACCOMMODATE UP TO 3 ADDITIONAL CAMPUS-SPECIFIC POPULATIONS IN SECTION 3.**



## **Appendix B: Gallaudet-Specific Questions for the Employee Satisfaction Survey**

### **Section 2: Institutional Goals**

1. Improve comparable standards for use of ASL and English in an academic setting.
2. Increase a sense of security and freedom to express diverse perspectives.
3. Increase research activities to establish Gallaudet as the epicenter of research, development, and outreach.

### **Section 4: Work Environment**

1. There are adequate programs or resources in place to strengthen my use of ASL.
2. There are adequate programs or resources in place to strengthen my use of English.
3. There are clear and available statements and policies defining ethical behavior for all members of the campus community.
4. There is regular demonstration of expected ethical behavior and attitudes by influential University leaders.
5. There are regular programs to inform and support ethical behaviors at all levels of the university.
6. Information flows upward and is recognized at higher levels of the administration.
7. University administrators are accessible and receptive to input.
8. Transparent and informed communication is practiced consistently throughout the university community.
9. I am treated with respect for cultural/personal differences in my unit/department at Gallaudet University.
10. There is visible leadership to foster diversity/inclusion on campus.

### **Demographics Section**

1. Is your position:
  - a. administrator (directors and above, i.e. directors, deans, vice president, assistant provost, provost, or president),
  - b. regular status faculty (professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, or lecturer)
  - c. regular status exempt staff (paid salary)
  - d. regular status non-exempt staff (paid hourly)
2. Is your hearing status:
  - a. Deaf
  - b. Hard of hearing
  - c. Hearing
3. Is your ethnicity:
  - a. American Indian or Alaska Native
  - b. Asian
  - c. Black or African American
  - d. Hispanic
  - e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - f. White