

Gallaudet Diversity Action Plan

There has been a very pro-active effort to implement a two year plan to address some of the issues that impede the achievement of a climate that fosters respect for all people and ideas. The President has begun action with the Gallaudet Diversity Action Plan that has two parts: 1.) The President's Seven Point Agenda and 2.) the Democracy Plan. The two parts of the Diversity Action Plan are designed to address issues of inequity, engage students, staff, faculty and alumni in "Living Team Gallaudet", to communicate that diversity is a community responsibility and not the purview of any one individual in the community.

The goals of the Gallaudet Diversity Action Plan are:

- A community that understands and embraces the need for change and demonstrates those behaviors that reflect respect for all people and ideas.
- Establishing structures within the university that ensure sustainable, transparent, inclusive participation, equity, and diversity as shared community responsibilities.
- A better understanding of the issues and climate at Gallaudet resulting in a community-owned sustainable plan to address these issues.
- A community engaged in a continuing dialogue on important issues.

The Seven Point Agenda

This agenda was announced by the President in July 2007 at the National Meeting of the Deaf Black Advocates and was composed of the following action items:

1. Make minority academic achievement K – 12 a priority
2. Direct Gallaudet Development Office to make minority scholarships a priority
3. Establish a President's Diversity Team
4. Appoint a person of color to the President's Management Team
5. Establish measurable targets for the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff
6. Provide university wide training and education programs promote understanding, respect and a commitment to diversity.
7. Seek active partnerships with each of the national organizations.

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A number of steps have been taken to actively address some of the items in the Seven Point Agenda. These items that have been addressed either as completed solutions or are in progress actions:

1. The Dean of the GSPP is asking a number of faculty and researchers across campus to meet on April 2, 2008 to address issues related to minority academic achievement in the K-12 learners. This group will serve as a Think Tank to begin the planning process for ways of addressing solutions and identifying individuals who can analyze some of the existing data collected on learners in this category.
2. The President has directed the Gallaudet Development Office to make minority scholarships a priority in their fund raising for the coming year. The work of that office in soliciting funds is in progress as this has been listed as a priority by the President (February 2008)
3. The President appointed a chair for the Diversity Team (December 2007) and the Team began meeting on January 2008 and is that group is currently meeting and planning activities to get the campus community more involved in the work of respecting the diversity of people and ideas that exists in our community.
4. Mr. Mark Amissah was been appointed to the President's Management Team (PMT). (September 12, 2007)
5. The Office of Human Resources and the EEO Officer have met to begin establishing a base line with peer institutions in the metropolitan area. This process will begin in _____??????
6. The university wide training is being addressed in the next part of the document related to the "Democracy Plan". In addition to the training being implemented through the Democracy Plan, a number of units who are addressing issues of diversity on campus are being called together to begin mapping out a plan that will help all units on campus understand their integrated roles related to diversity.

The Democracy Plan

The second part of the two year plan is the Democracy Plan which resulted from recommendations from two of the work groups that met during the summer to address issues related to our climate on campus. Many within those work groups felt that we had lost our respect for the

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diversity of ideas and people at the university. These work groups suggested that we engage in a significant and sustained dialogue about diversity issues. The work group suggested that we hire a consultant group to help us develop an improved civic dialogue and begin the process of healing. As a result of these suggestions, the CBG consulting team was hired to lead us in this process (January 2008). Their selection was based on their past experience working with faculty, staff and students at Gallaudet University. Information on the background of the CBG consulting group can be viewed at <http://www.gallaudet.edu/CBGconsultants.xml> or by clicking on diversity on the home page.

The following process was suggested by the consultants, approved by the President and adopted by the Diversity Team. Through a strategic partnership between the newly established Diversity Team and the CBG consultant Team, Gallaudet will begin in January 2008 – December 2009 to undertake a plan incorporating information collection, training, education and infrastructure development. This is a process designed to build Gallaudet's in-house capacity for facilitating, coordinating and leading cutting edge campus equity and diversity efforts that are highly responsive to the Deaf, hard of hearing and hearing constituents including the diversity that occurs within those groups. The first phase of the plan will take place in the Spring of 2008 and will extend into the summer and fall of 2008. The second phase of the plan will overlap with the end of phase I and will begin in the fall of 2008 and extend into Spring of 2009. The third and final phase of the Democracy Plan will occur in the Fall of 2009.

Phase I

The “Kick off” activity for this first phase was held on January 31, 2008 with an activity that involved high attendance from the campus community. At this event the plan was unveiled to the campus community and was received positively.

This phase is currently involved in the collection of data through “highly confidential” inventory interviews that are designed to gather baseline information to determine how to best engage students, staff, faculty and other stakeholders. The process being used to obtain this information includes: a.) one-on-one interviews, b.) small group interviews and c.) direct access to the consultants via e-mail. The

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information will be organized into general “finding themes” and presented to the campus for discussion and feedback on May 1, 2008 from 2 – 5 p.m. Based on the findings and feedback, the consultant group, working in collaboration with the Diversity Team will make recommendations for how Gallaudet might best move forward with its diversity efforts.

During this phase, along with the interviews, facilitators are currently being trained to work with “dialogue groups”. Approximately three – four facilitator training sessions have been held with the goal of being able to conduct at least two introductory dialogue sessions before the academic year ends (Spring 2008). These dialogues will continue into the fall semester. The dialogues will be based on different critical diversity topics. The concept is to develop and broaden the cadre of students, staff and faculty who will develop basic skills for and comfort with the discussion of “hot topics” related to issues of equity and diversity as well as to bring people together across differences.

The second cohort of facilitators will begin their training starting in May 2008.

Phase II

The Equity Component consists of the establishment of a Gallaudet Equity Council and a Gallaudet Congress. The function of the Equity Council will be to integrate and monitor compliance in all search and selection processes. The EEO/AA Officer will always be a member of this Council. The Council will also educate search committee chairs and members about how to assess candidate qualifications from a sophisticated multiculturally-responsive perspective.

The Gallaudet Congress will consist of representatives from all the deliberative decision making bodies on campus (students – both graduate and undergraduate, staff- both exempt and non-exempt) and faculty. These groups will assist the President in supporting his Seven Point Agenda

Phase III

The Diversity Component consists of establishing a Gallaudet Center for the Study and Practice of Diversity. This center will have a two fold mission: research and a practical role. The research role will consist of

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scholarly inquiry. The practical role of the Center will be to support four primary initiatives: a.) a minority and recruitment and retention program b.) a sustained intergroup dialogue component that will at times include the larger community, c.) a Multicultural curriculum transformation project, and d.) a campus –wide multicultural organizational development consultation service designed to he afford members of the campus community with access to ways of developing awareness, knowledge and understanding of how differing personal and cultural identities impact interpersonal relationship, classroom dynamics, workplace dynamics and co-curricular activities. This phase of the Democracy Plan is designed to address items one, six and seven in the President’s Seven Point Agenda.