So many of you have given me such a warm welcome to Gallaudet University that now it is my turn to reverse the sentiment. My warmest of welcome to all of you returning from the semester break.

For you who stayed in Washington, you had quite a winter surprise. Snow and cold, and plenty of it! It’s nothing new to me in Rochester, but I hope none of you blamed it on me.

Yes, Washington and Gallaudet faced a cold breeze, but your warm greetings were a welcome thaw.

Now we are back for the start of the New Year.

When we talk about a New Year we mean the year that comes on January 1. But we also mean a NEW year, with an emphasis on the word “new.”

For all of us – students, faculty, and staff we want it to be:

A NEW feeling of moving forward,
A NEW feeling of excitement,
A NEW feeling of change.
That is the Gallaudet we envision.

One of the first things we have done is to establish a Gallaudet President’s Cabinet.

I ask each member named on these slides to stand when your name appears.

{NOTE: President Hurwitz read the content of every slide in the presentation for the benefit of those with vision difficulties. That recitation has been removed from this copy.}
I chose individuals with significant assignments to the betterment of the University.
I chose individuals with a history of accomplishment and the ability for continued contributions.
I chose individuals I could depend on for advice well beyond their current assignments.

The Cabinet may change over time.
The Cabinet may contract or expand depending on the long-term issues we face.
The Cabinet will invite periodic participation from others.

I have emphasized with the Cabinet my expectations that we work together:

With respect,
With trust,
With dialogue,
With open communication,
And critically that we work together as a team.

These values are so important for all of us throughout the University.

Many of you sent me positive comments about the Cabinet.
I thank you for those comments.

Several were upset with the membership.
I understand your comments and intend to meet with you to discuss them.
Let me address your concerns directly.

Some felt there was not a champion for an issue of importance like bilingualism.
Some felt there was not a representative of the diversity on campus.

I understand, appreciate, and respect those views.

I expect every Cabinet member to consider all campus issues.
I expect every Cabinet member to represent everyone on campus.
I expect every Cabinet member to ensure actions are taken for the benefit of the broadest interests.

Please understand, we will work for the most inclusive of environments possible.
Indulge me while I repeat myself.
“We WILL WORK for the most inclusive of environments possible.”

Cabinet members are not my only advisors.
Service on the Cabinet is not the only way your views reach me.

Each of you can become an advisor.
Stop me when I walk across campus.
Send me email.

In fact, many of you are already doing this. It’s wonderful that so many of you feel comfortable communicating with me directly with your support, your ideas, your hopes, and your concerns for the future of Gallaudet. I welcome that communication and thank those who took the time – and who took the risk – to communicate with me.

I accept all of your views very seriously.

During the coming weeks and months I will also meet with students, faculty, and staff.

I will meet with our governance groups. Each group will become an advisory group. Their contributions in the areas of strategic change, and on other issues, are critical to a successful University.

In addition, we will formulate a “University Council” with campus-wide representation from students, faculty, and staff. This group will be asked to consider what is best, in a balanced way, for the entire campus.

We will provide multiple one-of-a-kind opportunities for small and large groups to interact with me. My wife Vicki and I will open our on-campus home, “House One.” It will become another venue – an informal one – through which you can share views with me.

Recall from my presentation during my candidacy for President that our focus will be on people. This starts with students – always at the forefront of our thinking. Our focus will absolutely include faculty and staff. We will be watchful of the critical roles of the Board of Trustees and Board of Associates. We must extend our attention to the extensive
outside constituencies. In this regard, it will be my intention throughout my Presidency to be as visible and available as possible, particularly for students.

Simply put, I will take the time to meet and know people through a wide variety of activities ranging from simply walking the campus, to establishing meetings with a variety of individuals, to hosting groups at House One.

Why will we undertake these steps? Because we envision Gallaudet with the free flow of ideas.

A University is an environment where ideas are shared. A University is an environment in which individuals respect others who are different from them. A University is an environment in which the civil discourse of opposing views is not only supported and respected, but encouraged and welcomed.

In the remainder of our talk let us discuss our mission, the Gallaudet Strategic Plan, and an updated version of my comments from when I was a candidate for the Gallaudet Presidency.

Some say we need a constant reminder of the significance of our mission. I am one of those.

Gallaudet University

Gallaudet University Mission

Gallaudet University, federally chartered in 1864, is:

1. 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:

2. Maintains a proud tradition of research and scholarly activity and

3. Prepares its graduates for career opportunities in a highly competitive, technological, and rapidly changing world.

www.gallaudet.edu

I have reformatted the mission on this slide – without changing any words – into its three thrusts.
Our Gallaudet Strategic Plan includes these five goals.

![Gallaudet Strategic Plan Goals]

Let us talk of our mission and our strategic goals and of the interplay between some of them.

“Bilingual, diverse, multicultural” appears first in our mission statement.

This topic is a vital one.
This topic is constantly before us – before all of us.
This topic is part of the heart of our environment.

This is not a goal we achieve with one activity. It is not a goal we check off as “achieved” at some future date. Instead it is a mindset that each of us must develop in our daily lives on campus.

We must and we will do that.

Research and scholarly activity, the second topic of our mission, are so critical in a University environment. I had the opportunity to review the research section of our annual report. We will indeed build on that work to become the “epicenter” as described in our strategic goal.

“Career opportunities,” the third element of our mission, guided our strategic planning to the goal of refining core programs to position students for career success.
In this area our plans require optimizing programs, developing new programs, strengthening student preparation for employment and career success, and increasing faculty accountability for student learning and development.

This area will be a challenge, demanding all of our efforts. What an exciting challenge we will face.

“Student success” will be our beacon.

“Student success” will help us envision Gallaudet University as a fertile ground for young Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students to develop their global knowledge and skills. It will also guide us to develop student leadership and advocacy skills to enhance the quality of life for all Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing people throughout the world.

“Student success” will help us envision Gallaudet University with its vibrant resources of knowledge and skills to influence and impact education of all Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children in the USA and abroad.

“Student success” will help us envision partnerships with the Washington area consortium of colleges and universities as well as with other colleges and universities. It will allow students to choose from multiple academic paths, allowing students to obtain their highest career goals.

“Student success” will help us envision Gallaudet with a center in which students can exercise their skills at innovation and creativity. Students will be able to test themselves before leaving the University. They will be able to enhance their readiness for graduate study or the work world – including starting their own businesses.

“Student success” will help us envision Gallaudet University as a strong and viable contributor to life in the Washington DC area, helping to reshape the Washington landscape.

Through our strategic planning process, we have envisioned these dreams with a significantly larger student body. That led us to the goal of significant enrollment growth.

Because there is clear evidence that graduation can contribute significantly to future success, we have adopted an ambitious strategic goal to dramatically increase our graduation rate.

None of this happens without obtaining resources and increasing efficiency – another of our strategic goals.

None of this happens without deep commitment.

It requires the deepest of commitment from each of us.
We must understand our mission and its goals.
We must understand our strategic plan and its goals.
We must understand the interaction between our mission and our strategic plan.

We believe what we do today will strengthen what we leave for the next generations.

In closing, let me share my growing love for Gallaudet.

We are given a heritage.
We are given a history.
We are given a legacy.

And with those gifts we are given a responsibility. We must ensure that future generations of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students, and hearing students who work with them, are given the same opportunities we are given.

Past generations have so thoughtfully provided so much to us. We must do the same for future generations.

I know what excites us is a feeling of potential.
I know what excites us is a feeling of possibilities.
I know what excites us is a feeling of future.

Thank you for inspiring each other, and me, with those feelings.

Thank you, thank you all.