



National Black Deaf Advocates, Inc.
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NATIONAL BLACK DEAF ADVOCATES, INC
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6/19/2021

To: Dr. Glenn Anderson, Chair
All Members of Gallaudet University Board of Trustees
800 Florida Ave. NE
Washington DC 20002

To: Ms. Brianne Burger,
U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services Liaison to the
Special Institutions
Brianne.burger@ed.gov

We, the leadership of National Black Deaf Advocates join with the National Asian Pacific Islander Deaf Coalition in strongly condemning the actions of Gallaudet University in the dismissal of several Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) on June 10, 2021.

We are issuing a caution to Black staff, along with other People of Color that the risk of experiencing discrimination, oppression, and trauma while working at Gallaudet University is high.

These dismissals are viewed as punitive to silence dissenting voices of those who had the courage to speak out regarding Gallaudet's discriminatory and oppressive actions. Furthermore, the dismissals give the impression of being retaliatory in nature and fall upon the one-year anniversary date of the Washington Post article highlighting racism and anti-Semitism at Gallaudet.

In response to the community outrage last year, Gallaudet published an anti-racism statement that reads:

“Racism has no place at Gallaudet University. Racism dehumanizes racially and ethnically diverse community members. Racism especially denies racially and ethnically diverse community members full access to their humanity. Racism intersects with audism and other-isms. Thus, racism contradicts and is incompatible with Gallaudet University's mission and values.

Gallaudet University recognizes that it is not enough to simply say racism is not acceptable on campus or by university community members; therefore, the University takes measurable steps to be anti-racist—actively advocating for racial equity and taking a firm stand against racial inequity.”

Actions of the University do not abide by the anti-racism statement. Within the Anti-Racism plan the goal indicates to increase the number of BIPOC in leadership positions, yet this is a significant decrease. Particularly of individuals who have been key performers The University has attempted to deceive the public by placing some BIPOC employees in positions to cover the blatant discrimination, racism and inequality that happens daily. Reports of harassment are disheartening. These reports solidify our belief Gallaudet is not a safe place for Black and other nontenured POC.

On April 15th, Dr. Elizabeth Moore provided an update to the community regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion. She stated: “As we seek to drive social change and address our anti-racism initiatives, we must continue to hold ourselves accountable for creating an inclusive environment at Gallaudet. We encourage the community to be deliberate advocates and ensure that everyone is treated fairly, has equal access to opportunities and resources, and can fully contribute to our success.”

In that same message, she mentioned the two events to address anti-Asian violence. How ironic and distorted it is that the two employees who coordinated those events were laid off less than two months after that community update.

The names of individuals dismissed are not printed in this statement out of respect for their privacy. However, the dismissed individuals are BIPOC Deaf leaders who have worked for decades at Gallaudet; they have national and international recognition, they serve the African American, Asian, and Pan African communities – this is shocking.

The University cites recommendations made by paid consultants as the basis for dismissal as part of its plan for restructuring. While these are recommendations, the administration has influence and the final say on employment matters. A report of these recommendations has not been made public. Gallaudet is funded with federal taxpayer dollars. Therefore, we request the recommendations be made public in the interest of transparency and university accountability.

We should all be concerned. We ask our allies to stand united with us, by asking Gallaudet to show its documentation that these dismissals are necessary. Especially in the face that they are spending hundreds of thousands of federal taxpayer dollars on consultants. The leadership at Gallaudet has a proven record of being intentional in its effort to maintain the status quo and continue racist practices.

Black and non-tenured POC Gallaudet staff are not safe!

In solidarity!

National Black Deaf Advocates and National Asian Pacific Islander Deaf Coalition