



28 June 2007

President Davila:

Hello, I'm Robert Davila, president of Gallaudet University. Today I want to showcase wonderful programs and activities from Gallaudet University. You know that Gallaudet University, for over one hundred years, has invited many international students to come and study here from different parts of the world. In fact, Gallaudet's influence and impact has really reached all four corners of the earth. Many countries have really borrowed ideas and learned from us, and we have gone to visit their countries and help them with ideas to improve the quality of education, services for deaf people, and so forth. So really, I am very pleased to have that kind of world responsibility, and many people on Gallaudet's campus are involved in international activities for various reasons. For some it's part of their job here, so they are involved with helping other countries. Some do it because of personal interest, or some have private ventures, or programs separate from their work. Regardless, they are involved with activities to help international groups. It's really a part of Gallaudet's mission, and part of our outreach efforts to be helpful all over the world.

Today it is really my pleasure to have with us Dr. Richard Lytle, professor of education here at the Gallaudet University graduate school, and also this year special assistant to the president. He and I work very closely together, but he is still involved and interested in pursuing ideas that reach out to different countries around the world.

With him today is a young student from Gallaudet, a senior from Shanghai, China, Zhou Jiayi. Her major is web design and she is minoring in sociology. I am really pleased to have them visit with you today. Good morning.

Dr. Richard Lytle and Zhou Jiayi:
Good morning.

President Davila:
Welcome to *Bob's Vlog*.

Dr. Richard Lytle and Zhou Jiayi:
Thank you.

President Davila:
How are you?

Zhou Jiayi:
I'm excited to be here.

Dr. Richard Lytle:

I'm happy to be here.

President Davila:

That's good. Richard, I'm very fascinated by the international activities that you have been involved with and I want our audience to learn a little bit about the important work that you are doing right now in China. I know that Zhou is your assistant and partner, and she is really involved in your program as well. I want to ask you to give us an overview of your work in China – what's happening, what is the purpose, what are the goals, where are you working, and who is helping you there?

Dr. Richard Lytle:

Thank you. I'm happy to be here this morning. I first arrived at Gallaudet 35 years ago. Merv Garretson gave me a job here. Gallaudet changed my life, so I thought about how I could help change and impact other people's lives.

About 10 years ago my mentor, David Martin, who was a dean here, helped me get a Fulbright scholarship to go to China one summer. I fell in love with the country and I met many people in the deaf community. And then, I thought that our students here at Gallaudet needed an opportunity like I received – an opportunity to go to countries and meet people. So, I started an exchange program and for 7 years we brought faculty and students to China, probably over

150 students and faculty have gone to China to study there; and then, many deaf and hearing Chinese people have come to Gallaudet. We have been doing that for about 10 years now.

President Davila:

That's really great. Now Zhou, I want to ask you ...you grew up in China and your home is in Shanghai, but now you have been a student at Gallaudet for a few years. How has all this impacted your personal life? Has it changed you or influenced you?

Zhou Jiayi:

In China, I was not so noticeable. I was more hidden and quiet. I didn't like to socialize because I felt that deaf culture was missing for me. One time Gallaudet visitors came to China and I was in awe, and I wanted to go to Gallaudet some day. I was able to come to Gallaudet and learn about deaf culture and to interact with people. I feel like the frog in the well; hopping out of the well, I see so many things. I feel inspired and I have learned so much. I've gained a wealth of knowledge which I will bring back to China. I want to impact the Chinese community.

President Davila:

I also know that you are a very exceptional student with a 4.0 GPA. That's amazing and that's good. If you had not come to Gallaudet, would you still have had an opportunity for a college education there?

Zhou Jiayi:

China does not have a college for deaf students. There are none, so I had to come here to study.

President Davila:

That's really good to know because it makes us feel proud that we can give you that opportunity. The purpose of Gallaudet is to provide opportunities across the globe ... so that's wonderful.

I would like to go back to Richard with another question about the nature of your work in China. Exactly what are you doing, where is it, and with whom are you involved?

Dr. Richard Lytle:

We have several programs right now. One is in collaboration with UNICEF – the United Nations. We've made four TV programs in China that show that deaf people can do anything except hear. One was with parents helping them to understand that deaf children can do anything, and helping children to visualize their dreams. And then, helping people to see that sign language is beautiful – language – so we made three videotapes which were distributed and shown throughout China this year. Also the World Bank program is helping China's only leadership school for the deaf, so those are the two most important projects.

President Davila:

How are you getting Gallaudet's faculty and staff, members of our community here, involved with your work?

Dr. Richard Lytle:

Many of our faculty have gone to China – one in particular is Dr. Simon Guteng – he's also in the Department of Education. He went to China and he thought, "Wow." He wants our students now to go to his home country of Nigeria. He will establish a similar program in Nigeria. So, we're really helping each other to do that work in other countries. Also, many students volunteer and get involved with this program like Zhou. She's made this part of her world deaf leadership scholarship program.

President Davila:

That's really wonderful and you know that deaf people in China obviously are the beneficiaries of all these efforts. Give me some idea of how you see improvements and benefits going to people who are deaf throughout China because of the work that you are doing?

Dr. Richard Lytle:

My hope is that this will help support their dream to improve their educational programs, to start new businesses, and perhaps to establish an independent deaf association in China. Obviously all of China's deaf – 100 million people – can't come to Gallaudet, so

setting up their own schools, their own universities, and their own training programs are the goals.

President Davila:

Do you know that when I was at NTID, I was involved in establishing a project that helped a university in Tianjan, China to develop and establish a college level program for deaf people? It has become a major university serving hearing people, but a part of it has a college serving deaf people also. Do you think that it is possible for other universities in China to do the same thing?

Dr. Richard Lytle:

Yes. I've seen the result of NTID's work in China – many thousands of people have been impacted by that. I would like to see similar programs for K–12 established in China, and to provide more opportunities for deaf people and deaf teachers. Right now we're working to establish an interpreter training program in Shanghai.

President Davila:

You do a lot of work with this project and it's very important, but I'm sure that it costs a lot of money. I know that Gallaudet is not paying for this project that you are involved with. Tell us how you get your support for that.

Dr. Richard Lytle:

We've established a 501c3, a non-profit NGO, and this requires that we raise funds. Some money comes from our own pockets.

Sometimes we get consultant work with UNICEF and the World Bank, so we use that money to pay for travel for Zhou, me, and other people.

President Davila:

I see. What do you envision as a good future direction to encourage more young people around the world to consider a college education, and what can we do to work with their governments and countries to encourage them to establish and improve programs to serve them?

Dr. Richard Lytle:

Well, I think we have to establish a good, strong relationship, a respectful relationship, and to always be sure that deaf people in leadership roles... I never go to China without a deaf Chinese partner. I never go to Africa without a deaf African partner. So, I think the goal is that this becomes a deaf leadership program so that their government can see that deaf people can do anything except hear.

President Davila:

I think that is wonderful. What additional activities could we develop and implement here at Gallaudet to give our students that international experience? That really helps all of us because we are able to obtain a global view of the needs around the world.

Dr. Richard Lytle:

I'm happy you asked that question. My dream is that every Gallaudet student has some international experience before they graduate and leave Gallaudet. They're going to have to live and work in the world with many diverse people. One of the best ways is not only to read books, but to roll-up one's sleeves and travel around the world interacting with people. I hope that we can see more and more of our students get involved in this program.

President Davila:

Well, you know we live in a very large world – it's a big place – but there are needs all over the world, I truly understand that.

Nevertheless, what is your opinion of where should our priorities be focused; on which parts of the world?

Dr. Richard Lytle:

I think where we can make the biggest difference is in developing countries – in Africa, South America, and Asia. Those are places where deaf people need support, encouragement and opportunities.

President Davila:

Thank you. That's a good thought. I want to ask you one final question. When you finish with this project in China, and maybe you'll never finish and will continue for some time, but what are some other ideas and plans that you are involved with in the future?

Dr. Richard Lytle:

When you retire, I also will “retire,” but I will continue this work full time. My plan is to move to China for a year so that I can become fully fluent in the language, and work to set-up this organization with deaf leaders. I also will be spending time in Africa with my colleagues, to help them establish a similar organization, and raise money.

President Davila:

I think that’s wonderful. I actually want to save the last question for your partner, Zhou. Zhou, you are a senior this year and graduating in 2009. I imagine you have some plans for yourself. Tell us about those plans – to continue here or to go home – what are your plans?

Zhou Jiayi:

After I graduate, I will attend graduate school in international development, then, of course I’ll go back to China. I look forward to working with Dr. Lytle. Through the PIE we can establish a strong deaf community and, in turn, create a strong connection and exchange with Gallaudet. I’m happy to see their different cultures, and I’m looking forward to that.

President Davila:

I think that’s wonderful. We’re very proud of you and your accomplishments here at Gallaudet University. Gallaudet’s really

proud and happy that it was able to offer you some support and see you develop into an outstanding person. We look forward to seeing your work in China many years into the future.

Zhou Jiayi:

Thank you.

President Davila:

Thank you.

Richard and Zhou, I want to thank you for coming this morning and sharing some ideas. It's important for our audience to see and understand the extent to which Gallaudet really works to reach out to different parts of the world and to help share knowledge, ability, and ideas to make this a better world for people who are deaf and hard of hearing. You know that the world keeps shrinking and we can't network with everyone. It seems as if people are right next door, but really they're around the world. Recently Richard was in China for one week, but I would get emails from him with the same frequency that I do every day when he's here. So, I can see that we need to continue to help the world become a better place for all people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Thank you very much for being with us this morning and we hope to see you again very soon. So long.