



August 27, 2008

President Davila:

Hello, I'm Robert Davila, president of Gallaudet University. Welcome back to *Bob's Vlog*. Today, I am joined by Dr. Stephen Weiner, provost of Gallaudet University. This is a special *Bob's Vlog* for several reasons: Our television studio is now going through major changes and renovations, and is still under construction. We are looking forward to showing you the new changes in that studio in a few weeks. Right now, we are doing the filming for this vlog from the second-floor terrace of Gallaudet's newest building which opened for classes this week. This building is called the Sorenson Language and Communication Center, the SLCC. I'm really excited about this wonderful new building. I want to ask our provost for more information to share with you related to this building. Steve, can you tell our audience something about this new building and what makes it special?

Provost Weiner:

I'd be happy to. Really, this building is a special and exceptionally beautiful building where students can interact and learn, and where faculty can teach and interact. The design is very organic, tied to

nature. The natural concept is seen in the colors and the materials used, like the bamboo used for covering some walls. The natural colors used can be seen in the floor, which is the color of sand. So, that makes a connection to the earth. The blue glass windows make you feel like you are connected to the sky and it symbolizes water. It is a “green building” because it will be economical in use of electricity. Every effort is made for it to be energy efficient and to conserve water. Most importantly, the building is designed to be visu-centric. This means it was designed for deaf and hard of hearing people, a visually comfortable space, specifically in terms of lighting, reduction of glare, and sightlines. People are welcome to come and visit and see the place for themselves.

President Davila:

That’s right. That’s a perfect explanation. And people do need to come here and see it for themselves. Really, you are welcome to come here any time and look through the building and see for yourselves what we have created here. It’s really a wonderful place. In fact, on Wednesday, September 3, I will be hosting a special program here in the atrium of this building. We’ve invited the entire campus community, alumni, and other friends of Gallaudet University to come here and participate in a special program to open this new building officially.

Steve, one more question for you. Other than this exciting new building, what other things are happening as we begin the new school year?

Provost Weiner:

There are many exciting things. Right now we have 233 new undergraduate students enrolled for this fall and 160 graduate students, for a total of 393 new students. More will be coming, too, who have not registered yet. That includes freshmen, transfer students, and graduate students. The new group of undergraduate students ranges in age from 16 to 45. At 45, it is never too late to come to college. However, most of our students are in the typical young age group. Our students come from all over the U.S. and from five other countries as well. They are a wonderful group of young people. I had the chance to meet with them. I also met some from the “never too late” group and talked with them. I admire their passion and drive to pursue their education. That’s a great group of students we have here today.

President Davila:

That’s right. I completely agree with what he said in explaining about our population of students here. It’s really wonderful to welcome so many returning students who are back to continue their education and our group of new students. If it were not for these wonderful students, we would not have Gallaudet University. There would be no reason to have Gallaudet University. But it is the students who make

the University what it is. We are dedicated to doing everything we can to provide them with a good learning environment and help them in any way we can so that they can face and fulfill the potential they have to succeed throughout their lives. So, we serve those students here on campus. Our students, really, I think, are hardworking young people who understand and accept the challenge to come here and develop into fine and capable adults later on.

In addition to our students, what else do you see as changes or new programs that are available this semester?

Provost Weiner:

It's really an exciting fact that we have 13 new professors beginning this fall. Of those 13, almost all of them are deaf. In addition to that, we have two deaf visiting professors who are here and four new President's Fellows. The fellows are studying for their doctoral degrees while teaching part-time for us. Also, I want to add that we have already opened a new molecular biology lab. That molecular biology lab means that our students will have the opportunity to do more in-depth research in biology. We have a great group of professors there. We also have a beautiful new Hotchkiss Field. What was once uneven ground is now very flat. The new turf is more durable and easier to maintain. In fact, it will save us a lot of money over its 20-year lifespan. There is new lighting as well. The new lighting means it is possible to have night games, as well as enabling

intramural and soccer games to be played there. The first night home game ever in Gallaudet's history will be played on November 7.

President Davila:

That's really great news. It's wonderful to welcome so many new faculty. In fact, everyone worked hard through the summer to prepare and be ready for this new semester. You know the Middle States Commission on Higher Education reaffirmed our accreditation last June. That was wonderful news and a wonderful demonstration of our ability in this community to come together and work together and work very hard to achieve an important task like that. That was a good example of collaboration all across the community here. And, it is really a wonderful time to be a student here at Gallaudet. Actually, it's a wonderful time to be here at Gallaudet University itself, to work and study here, and experience the wonderful educational life that is provided to everyone who is here.

I want to thank you for joining us and watching this *Bob's Vlog*. We look forward to seeing you again shortly. So long!