Libraries and Deaf Education: Higher Education
Gallaudet University Library

So, this is going to be libraries and deaf education. So,
we are going to start, we have two segments to this. The first
one is on higher education with three representatives from
Gallaudet University which they have introduced themselves. They
will introduce themselves when they come specifically and we
will go and have a second segment on Pre-K through 12 education
from the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. So, we will do the
first one and then we will move into the second one.

>> Just give us one moment while we get our technology set
up here.

>> Good morning, everyone, I'm so happy to be here today.
My name is Amy Malm. I am the new dean of the library and
archives at Gallaudet University. It is my honor to have been
asked to come here today to present. I will keep my comments
very brief, and then I will be turning this conversation over to
my librarians.

Gallaudet University was established back in 1864. The land
was donated by Abraham Lincoln. We have over 1600 to 1700

students in our undergraduate programs through our graduate and doctoral programs as well. That also includes several international students, English Language Institute students. In our library, we have over 150,000 different resources available for borrowing as well as electronic resources available. We support over 29 different majors and minors for undergraduate students and over 18 different graduate and Ph.D. degrees.

In our archives we have an enumerable amount of resources related to deaf and hard of hearing culture, artists who are deaf, objects that are part of Deaf culture. The oldest book in our collection dates back to 1632 and was written by a deaf author.

The role of the library at our university is the same as at other universities to support research and learning, as well as to advance those obtaining their degree.

So, most of our university resources have been changed from print to digital, and we are working on updating and converting and digitizing all of our resources. It's a big job. Our staff has three librarians who do work full time. One is the director of circulation. We have a night manager as well, and then we have one full-time archivist. We also have two archive technicians. I will turn it over to the two librarians that have come with me today and they will talk about their roles within our library system.

>> NOAH BECKMAN: Thank you. I would like to give you an idea of what Gallaudet students use in the library. Students, faculty, staff and researchers and the student body as a whole, our students, as the video said, are very varied. Some of them have a hard of hearing background, some are late deafened, some are learning sign language later in life, some use spoken English, cued speech, some use cochlear implant.

Also, they have a very different affinities with different identities. Some identify with Deaf culture, some are newly exposed to that. So, as Amy as mentioned, we do have international students that are deaf from all over the world, which it's fascinating to see them signing in their native sign language and see what they are trying to say.

Just to give you an idea of our student body, that's what comprises it. We provide library instruction, how to do research, how to navigate various databases in the library and we also provide one-on-one reference appointments for in-depth research support. So that takes care of students and faculty.

Now, also with faculty, we provide electronic appointments for services or reserves, different readings that they require for their courses on the learning management system, the LMS. I hope I'm not missing anything, am I?

>> ELIZABETH HENRY: Communication with faculty.

>> NOAH BECKMAN: We also have a liaison that communicates with faculty. In my collection area, I see what people need, what the trends are, which department is growing, and so we take that into factor. Am I missing anything?

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>> ELIZABETH HENRY: Hello, my name is Elizabeth Henry, and I am an instructor and reference/electronic resource librarian. I have a lot of hats that I work with at Gallaudet's library. One person remarked something, what's the difference between Gallaudet University and other academic universities? And I'm here to tell you there is no difference between Gallaudet University and other universities, except that the majority of our students are deaf and use American Sign Language to communicate.

But even if you know sign language, still they are going to face challenges with communication, because I'm sure that you might be able to imagine that in America or at your college or university, you have a lot of students from other countries that speak other languages and may have, you know, communication issues. English is not their first language and that happens at Gallaudet as well.

American Sign Language or English may not be their first language. So, in fact ASL or English may be their fourth, fifth, sixth or seventh language. So, we have to negotiate that, and we do face challenges with that. Sometimes international students come from areas with different languages and then there are other students with different communication needs. Some speak a lot. They were raised orally and are just learning sign language. The funny thing is when you think about it, a deaf university library, or if you compare that to a hearing library, a deaf person going into your library that's not for deaf people, the deaf person is going to think how can I communicate with you. For me, if a hearing person comes into my library at Gallaudet, I look at them and the first thing we do is take a pencil and paper and we write down what is it you need help with. So, it's kind of like reversed, right.

So really, it's very, other than that, it's the same as what you deal with in your regular academic universities. It's just that we are deaf and we use sign language to communicate with our student body. One other question that comes up, they say what about technology and so forth. The only thing you really do is screen videos and make sure that they have captions. We require that all videos come in have captions and if they don't, they are not in our collection. Another thing I wanted to say is also we face the same challenges you all do in terms of outreach, trying to get out with the community in terms of faculty and students and draw them into the library. I think

that's the same challenge that any academic university library faces. So that's me.

>> NOAH BECKMAN: In terms of research needs for our students at Gallaudet, they are varied. It's not just deaf studies it could be history, depending on their assignment, but we do have a group of deaf people who want to go in depth in deaf studies, but we are very broad in what we offer.

>> ELIZABETH HENRY: Many people ask us if we have a unique collection at Gallaudet. Well, we do because we at Gallaudet make a point to collect as much as we can about deaf related materials, and we also make a point also to try to get duplicates because we want to maintain our collection for future use, right, but we also want students to be able to use it in present time. So, our goal is to collect for the future, but also have everything related to deaf people that can be used now. And also, international, we get things from all around the world. So, if you have any international deaf, if you have resources from other countries about deaf people in those countries, please share them with us because we would be happy to have them.

>> AMY MALM: Just one final thing in adapting in technology. This year we have experienced a large growth in the population of students at our university who are deaf and blind. And we are learning different -- we are learning different ways to approach and interact with these students and make sure that our students continue to be accessible for all students on campus.

We are thrilled that this semester we were able to set up an open access Braille print machine in our library. This means that anyone can come in, a visitor, a student, a faculty person can come into the library, sit down at the computer, and print something out in Braille, whether that be a student's notes, or some other type of document that needs to be printed, they can all be printed in Braille.

So, we are absolutely thrilled to be able to increase and adapt to the services that are needed for our student population.

>> ELIZABETH HENRY: I think another thing in terms of adaptation. We have electronic books and we try to find electronic books that you can arrange the font so that they can be larger or smaller because different people have very different needs in terms of font size. Not all deaf blind people are the same either. Some need to see things close up. Some people can look at print farther away. So, we want to be as adaptable as we can to meet all of their needs. Also we also do OCR as well. So we want to take care of that.

>> NOAH BECKMAN: On a lighter note, we don't have any audio

books. I guess that's a given being the nature of our school, so no talking audio books. Sorry.

>> MOLLY RAPHAEL: Thank you very much for that presentation. I think it gives us a very good sense about what's the same and what's different, and what to expect if we walked into your library that might be different from an experience that we had in a library that did not have people who could sign to us if we were deaf or whatever. So, thank you for that.

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