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***Major Decision Possible in Fernandes Matter by Gallaudet Board of Trustees***

*The Gallaudet University Board of Trustees is meeting on Friday, July 28, 2006 and Saturday, July 29, 2006 in Herndon, Virginia.*

(PressMethod) - (Revised press release. See additional information below.)

The Board of Trustees of Gallaudet University is meeting this Friday, July 28 and Saturday, July 29, 2006 for a two-day session which will include at least one closed-door meeting.

The meetings will take place near the Dulles International Airport at the Hyatt Dulles at 2300 Dulles Corner Blvd, Herndon, Virginia, 20171. The phone number is (703) 713-1234, and the fax number is (703) 713-3410. Individual board members will be able to receive faxes that are addressed to them personally.

The Hyatt Dulles has several conference rooms, including one large conference room which seats several hundred people, should the board members decide to offer public sessions.

Arrangements have been successfully completed with the County of Fairfax, Virginia to offer free speech areas on the sidewalk in the front of the hotel and also across the street. All those sympathetic to the cause are welcome to join the protesters in front of the hotel on Friday and Saturday. Please come with ready-made signs.

While the meeting agendas have not been released, it is expected that the Gallaudet Board of Trustees is convening earlier than expected on short notice (in July, instead of in August, as planned), in order to reconsider the appointment of President-Elect Jane Fernandes.

A major announcement is possible.

A recent mailer sent out by Gallaudet's Jordan administration to all the alumni members contained neutral language on the Fernandes question--a move which is widely seen as signaling a change in the matter of the selection of the new university president.

Per the mailer, which was signed by Patsy Bowman of the Gallaudet Office of Development (which is dated June 12, 2006, but was received in most mailboxes in early July):

"It cannot go unnoticed, however, that it has been a challenging time at Gallaudet recently; the controversy surrounding the naming of Dr. Jane Fernandes as president has stirred up strong feelings on

the Gallaudet campus as well as for many alumni and friends of Gallaudet around the country."

The mailer continues with the statement that "change can be painful and difficult," but instead of reaffirming the validity of Fernandes's intended appointment to the presidency of Gallaudet, it stays neutral on the matter by saying only that: "Gallaudet will become stronger because of these issues brought forth during the past few weeks--stronger for our students and stronger for all of us."

The mailer includes conspicuously neutral language, which refers to this only as a "time of presidential change and possibility."

As Provost of Gallaudet, Jane Fernandes was the subject of an evaluation which was performed by the Gallaudet Faculty Senate. Attention has recently been drawn to the fact that the presidential search committee which was charged with the task of assisting the Board of Trustees in choosing the next president of Gallaudet did not have access to the results of that evaluation. As confirmed by Professor Mark Weinberg, the chairman of the Faculty Senate: "Only the Senate and (Gallaudet University) President (King Jordan) were privy to the results. I am unaware of a mechanism that would allow the search committee to have access to the data."

Many involved have drawn the obvious conclusion that the in-house administrative evaluations of Fernandes conducted by the Gallaudet Faculty Senate must be brought to the attention of the Board of Trustees, in order to avoid a breach of fiduciary duty on the part of the Board.

Such action on the part of the Board will serve to minimize the appearance of malfeasance of duty and help to minimize the number of trustees displaced when Congress begins to look into the matter of the Fernandes appointment this fall.

Previously, the trustees operated under the premise that Fernandes was the most qualified candidate in areas of administrative capability. Now with the likelihood that the content of the Faculty Senate evaluation will finally be considered, the Board appears to be poised to make a major change.

Some puzzlement has existed (since the no-confidence votes on the part of the Gallaudet Faculty Senate last May against Fernandes) pertaining to the Board's apparent lack of interest in revisiting the matter of the appointment. An accumulation of factors points to the increasing necessity of revisiting the question of the appointment, such factors including a significant increase in leave of absence requests (LOA's) on the part of Gallaudet students, the recent collapse of the Hanson Plaza Footbridge on the Gallaudet campus, plus the specter of a national campaign being launched soon to call on Congress to restructure the bylaws of the Board and remove certain members of the Board or perhaps even every member of the Gallaudet Board of Trustees.

Trustee power broker Dr. Tom Humphries has been seen by some as biding his time and waiting for the appropriate and opportune time to exercise his considerable influence. Widely respected as the scholar who coined the term "audism," many have concluded that his hands have been tied up until now in the Fernandes matter. Now with Jordan issuing obviously neutral language, the Board-internal political field is ripe for change.

For questions about the upcoming meetings of the Gallaudet Board of Trustees, including any possible last-minute changes, contact either Patricia Kunkle or Audrey Young at the Gallaudet President's Office: (202) 651-5005 or e-mail them at [patricia.kunkle@gallaudet.edu](mailto:patricia.kunkle@gallaudet.edu) or [audrey.young@gallaudet.edu](mailto:audrey.young@gallaudet.edu)

Ms. Kunkle and Ms. Young, under Irving King Jordan's directions, are responsible for arranging to fly the Gallaudet Board members in on early Friday afternoon, July 28, 2006. They will be shuttled from the Dulles Airport to the Dulles Hyatt Hotel, participate in meetings, spend exactly one night at the hotel, participate in meetings until early Saturday afternoon, then be shuttled back to the airport where they will depart on their return flights.

The Jordan administration is calling these activities, during this period of only 24 hours, a "retreat."

The Gallaudet President's office is currently issuing press releases which appear to be statements from the Board of Trustees, but which actually only state the position of the Jordan administration at Gallaudet. It is common knowledge that President Jordan, of Gallaudet, effectively controls the Board's actions. As one Board of Trustees member recently stated, being on the Board of Trustees of Gallaudet is not a lot of work. It's just a matter of showing up for a couple days and filling out a lot of paperwork. This Board member's name and the date and context of the comment will be released at a later time, with his or her permission.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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