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Statement to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia
On the Gallaudet University Campus Plan

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I am pleased to appear before you this evening to present the facilities master plan of Gallaudet University for the years 2002-2012. Gallaudet University is the only university in the world designed exclusively to meet the needs of deaf students, and, as such, it is a unique educational and cultural resource for the deaf communities of the Washington region and the United States. Indeed it is a major resource for the deaf communities of the world.

Gallaudet University had its beginnings as a school for the deaf founded in 1856 by Amos Kendall on his farm in the Northeastern quadrant of the District of Columbia at the edge of what were then the city limits of Washington. Kendall hired Edward Miner Gallaudet, the son of the founder of the nation's first school for the deaf, to run the school, after securing financial support from Congress. This began a sequence of annual federal appropriations that has continued unbroken from 1858 to this day.

Gallaudet soon proposed the idea of a college for the deaf, similar in scope to the land grant universities that were being founded throughout the nation during the Civil War. He was successful in gaining support for the college from Congress, and the Gallaudet charter was signed by President Abraham Lincoln on April 8, 1864. Gallaudet hired Frederick Law Olmsted and his partner Calvert Vaux to design a college campus on what had come to be known as Kendall Green, and the plan incorporated a group of graceful Victorian buildings into a design that was intended to provide the tranquility of a rural setting within the increasingly urbanized District of Columbia. The basic Olmsted design has been maintained in the historic area of the campus, which is recognized and protected as a historic district. This historic part of the campus, known as Olmsted Green, including the historic Chapel and College Hall are landmarks of signal importance to the American deaf community, and I take very seriously my role as caretaker of that legacy.

During much of its first century, Gallaudet College, officially incorporated as the Columbia Institution for the Deaf, remained small, enrolling only a few hundred students,

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-02
EXHIBIT NO.44
Case 02-02
Exhibit 44

and was confined primarily to the southern part of the campus fronting Florida Avenue. During the mid-1950's, the College began to grow; it was officially renamed Gallaudet College by act of Congress, and it achieved accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. At the same time, a new phase of construction began, as the physical facilities, including a library, a dormitory, and a major new classroom building, started to spread toward the northern part of campus, around the focal point of a large mall. During the decades of the sixties and seventies, development of the northern end of the campus continued as additional dormitories were constructed. Finally, under separate acts of Congress a demonstration elementary school and a model secondary school were established and facilities were constructed at the far northern end of the campus. The two schools, known together as the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center serve as the public schools for deaf children in the District of Columbia, as well as fulfilling a national mission to develop, test, and disseminate innovative instructional programs for deaf students throughout the nation.

In 1986, Congress enacted further legislation, the Education of the Deaf Act (EDA), changing the name of the institution to Gallaudet University and reaffirming its corporate structure as a private university, governed by a Board of Trustees, receiving a substantial annual federal appropriation, a distinction that it shares only with Howard University. Although its authorizing legislation has been reaffirmed twice since that time, Gallaudet's essential nature has not changed—it continues to be a comprehensive university offering degree programs through the Ph.D., with national demonstration pre-collegiate, preschool through secondary school programs. In addition, the University offers a variety of outreach programs that reach deaf people and professionals who work with them throughout the nation.

At the local level, Gallaudet provides a variety of services to the District and to residents of the Washington area, including audiological services and instructional programs in American Sign Language. Our public school instruction on campus for deaf students at the primary and secondary levels is unique among all universities in the Washington area. Our Kellogg Conference Center, constructed during the 1990's with a grant from the Kellogg foundation provides state-of-art meeting spaces for local organizations and agencies, as well as for the Gallaudet community. The University also sponsors theater and dance performances that are open to the public, and the art gallery in the newly renovated Washburn building contributes to the cultural life of the city. For many years Gallaudet has reached out to the local community through the Gallaudet Community Relations Council in order to improve its standing as a good neighbor, and our students participate in a variety of neighborhood improvement projects through community service programs.

Although the University and Clerc Center programs now enroll about 2,100 students at the Kendall Green campus and 1,000 people work there, the original Olmsted vision of an urban oasis continues to guide our physical development. The plan that we are presenting to you tonight anticipates very modest growth of a few hundred additional enrollments in our graduate programs, and it projects a relatively small increase in gross floor space from our existing campus facilities. Only modest growth is anticipated

because Gallaudet draws its students primarily from the American deaf population, which has stabilized in size. The plan anticipates the construction of a new language and communication building, demolition of the existing library and construction of a new one with the effect of reopening the entire expanse of the central campus mall, demolition and replacement of an existing dormitory complex, and improvements to pedestrian walkways throughout the campus.

The plan is guided in its totality by the following general planning principles:

- Adopt the role of caretaker, to respect the special nature of the Gallaudet campus
- Recommend planning moves that build a visually contiguous campus; academic, residential, and recreational zones should support a one-zone campus model
- Give special consideration to buildings and their relationship to the historic, academic, residential, and pre-college areas of the campus
- Build upon an attractive campus setting with building/open space relationships at an appropriate scale and density
- Develop green and open space to unify the historic and academic zones of the campus
- Provide facilities for Language and Communication programs
- Provide appropriate residence halls and family housing for students that meet evolving needs
- Develop and enhance pedestrian networks to increase accessibility and safety
- Develop and improve the quality of the campus/neighborhood edges
- Provide a unified image and vision for the campus.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.