

**The Challenge of Change:
Bringing the Federal Perspective to the Local Level**

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Olga Welch

Thank you. I have the very distinct pleasure of moderating the presentation for this very distinguished panel of educational leaders. We will move from the consumer perspective to the programmatic, to the institutional, to the state and finally to the federal level. In order of their presentations, we have Dr. Bobbie Beth Scoggins who is the Executive Director of the Kentucky Commission of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The next presenter will be Ms. Susan Queller, Director of Disability Support Services at University of Arkansas in Little Rock. Then Dr. Edwin Barnes, President of New River Community College in Dublin, Virginia will present, followed by Mr. Bob Morris, Assistant Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Labor. Mr. Ramon Rodriguez, a liaison leader for OSERS, U.S. Department of Education will be the final panelist.

During this conference, you are invited to examine the issues and challenges facing postsecondary education in the 21st century. It is some of these issues and challenges which this panel will address. Each brief presentation will address these questions.

1. Identify or describe three significant changes that you had to deal with recently or that you are going to have to deal with in the near future.
2. What is the impact of these changes within your organization?
3. How much control you have over these, particularly within your organization?

Since this conference is organized to encourage dialogue, you are encouraged to enter the discussion with your questions and observations at the conclusion of the presentation.

Bobbie Beth Scoggins

I'll be speaking from the consumers' perspective on these questions. First, three significant changes that you had to deal with recently or that you are going to have to deal with in the near future.

Change. Change in the deaf environment from a consumer's perspective. The immediate reactive question that surfaces is: Is it deaf friendly or is it deaf resistant?

In 1987, Mervyn Garretson said "political activists and advocacy among deaf people in the 1980s was a product of a slow evolution. The communication obstacle was the single most important barrier that prohibits deaf people from effective political participation." How cogent that comment was. Perhaps, without realizing it, Dr. Garretson had stated an inherent truth: that deaf people and individuals and leaders had finally come to accept their deafness, to understand and be understood. The future of the deaf community in America was and is in the political arena. For the masses, government may be an impediment. It has, however, become the catalyst for change for the deaf community for our past, present and future.

From the consumer's perspective, change is first accepted as deaf friendly or deaf resistant. How deaf friendly is this system? Has it been deaf friendly in the past? How deaf friendly is it now? How deaf friendly will it be in the future? Federal funds have been a very positive influence in progress for the deaf community in the past. The federal government has put a lot of money into different organizations throughout the country resulting in accessibility and opportunity for the deaf community that has not before been available.

Obviously, a deaf friendly environment will receive the support of deaf and hard of hearing individuals. They will participate. If not, they will go to where it is deaf friendly. Is that so different from programs for the hearing?

Accessibility. Accessibility relates to the past and present. How flexible is it? This is a critical key. How flexible is that system in meeting the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing? Is there a proactive approach to the benefits of changes in technology which benefit the individual? Is it flexible to such quick changes, or do they just cling to the status quo?

Service Providers. There are three different categories. First, some service providers still cling to the old system. When I say "old system," I'm talking about what I call the "age of the machine". That is a system which is based on methods and approaches. Change is difficult. Change, however, in every aspect of services is rampant throughout all programs. At least, it should be. It is going to be extremely difficult for service providers to continue the old system in the face of such changes.

Changes. Technology. Curriculum. Programs. We have to be flexible and proactive. The future will be saturated with strategy sessions taking long looks at the short future. There are three different categories to be examined and some do overlap. Some service providers use all three of these

categories. It depends on what type of resources are available. Some are very limited. Some services are stuck in the old system. You can't change. And it may be too late for you. Believe me, the deaf individuals entering that kind of program will assess it immediately. Poor programming will be noticed immediately.

At the same time, we must recognize that service providers are restricted by federal, state, and local laws which inhibit change and flexibility. It is hard to be up-to-date, be up-to-speed. A good example is the employee merit system. We know the truth and fiction in this current system. If you work with the state, the merit system does not promote innovation and creativeness. Limits imposed upon us limit us in hiring practices and often we end up with unqualified, unimaginative employees.

Funding. Do we have adequate federal funding? I don't know. Some programs benefit from having qualified grant writers. They are very successful. Other programs are not so successful, resulting in inadequate funding. There is inequity in funding in many places, in many programs. Misunderstanding of the deaf culture results in programs that are deaf resistant and unsuccessful programs don't get funded. Of course, some people do not know how to provide services to deaf and hard of hearing people.

Studies can identify some very serious problems and make recommendations for improvement, but, there is a phase to these studies and reports that some miss. It is called the "implementation phase". Some recommendations die because some interested parties do not take ownership in the recommendations. I'm sure you are familiar with "turf issues". Turf issues are here to stay and they play a major role in the decision making process. Deaf individuals want to participate but they continue to struggle within a "hearing" culture that they do not understand and are not understood. They feel the struggle as a group and as individuals. We are not savvy enough to understand this system and how to change this system.

So the deaf consumer's view of these three (the system, the structure, and deaf friendliness) is actually very different than those who provide the service. It is as different as night and day. Some deaf and hard of hearing persons say, "Well, that's okay," and they're very passive about it. Some have a more militant attitude about it. They say, "Yes, we now have the ADA to support us and we have to have change." Some deaf and hard of hearing people are just totally burned out. They have been in the business of advocacy for many years with minuscule success and they've just given up. They've had enough. Some feel oppressed. And there's a lot of apathy. And some say, "Why bother. Hearing people do not listen to us. They run it. And they do it their way." A lack of involvement with deaf people in the decision making process for decades has produced this reaction. If any environment out there is very open and invites deaf people to participate, they must be "deaf friendly". Deaf people are very sensitive to a "deaf resistant" program and will have nothing to do with it. That is their view and they are entitled to it.

There are three essential changes from the past. The "Deaf President Now" revolt at Gallaudet University, Washington, D.C. resulted in the appointment of a deaf person as the President of the only liberal arts university for the deaf in America. Of course, that truly demonstrated an increased sense of ownership among the deaf. It had been repressed for decades. Since then there have been many more deaf and hard of hearing administrators named to positions of responsibility all over the United States.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Yes! The ADA has increased the level of awareness, particularly to the obligations of service providers in institutions everywhere. Still, deaf children are graduating from high school with 3rd and 4th grade achievement levels. This has been the norm for the last 30 years. Clearly, this is status quo programming. It is like nothing has happened.

But now, currently, what's happening and what's taking place? Deaf people are becoming involved in the political process. They are becoming participants in government. Political activism, legal activism, and lawsuits are commonplace. More are coming. The deaf community is becoming more and more aware of their rights under the law and they are calling on services providers to follow that law. The local battle lines are being drawn. The deaf and hard of hearing are beginning to collaborate, talk, negotiate, and struggle with the system, seeking system change. This is happening now. The future will unfold only as it is forced to do so. Institutions, state agencies, and federal agencies, are all now becoming more and more sensitive, and they are becoming more responsive in supporting goals and issues of the deaf and hard of hearing. We will see more and more of this.

Because of the lack of educational achievement in the primary and secondary grades, high school graduates often become clients of Vocational Rehabilitation which is now utilized as a cure for this educational vacuum. Community colleges have absorbed some of our deaf students who are still struggling in remedial classes, their goal of becoming productive citizens thwarted. And still there is no progress in educational achievement. The future? Deaf and hard of hearing people may, someday, aspire to become senators, representatives, possibly presidents. When is "someday"? Way out there into the future.

And technology. Technology is a coming force in the lives of deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Technology will mature. The demand by the American culture for a practical use of English will require command of a second language for the deaf and hard of hearing. A competent command of English is required in the use of computers. Some day, soon perhaps, will come true voice recognition in computers. We will become more than deaf, we will become blind because we cannot speak to the computer. Then the deaf community will truly be isolated from the benefits of computers. Educational achievement, voice recognition, English as a second language is a true challenge for service providers in meeting the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing student

The Internet, e-mail. Service providers must focus on serving the deaf, not just getting them into the program. We must bring the deaf in as members of the team and be able to change quickly.

The future will see the eradication of those illnesses which result in loss of hearing. Look at the current trend. Medical research is showing surprising success in preventing diseases which cause deafness. There is no more Rubella. Fewer and fewer numbers of deaf people enter the educational system. Residential schools for the deaf may start closing thereby increasing the load on other institutions.

Additionally, there is a mind-set among educators that inclusion is the best educational environment for the deaf. Not so. The least restrictive environment for deaf children is wherever communication can occur. Interpreters are not the answer in a public school setting. Inclusion and technology seem to replace common sense.

A good look at residential schools is in order. They are invariably based on the old system. The residential schools have not kept up with contemporary trends. Empowerment of deaf individuals has begun. America offers the highest quality of life in the world. Deaf individuals must be provided the opportunity of accessibility in our programs and services.

Participation in the decision making process is a must. Deaf and hard of hearing persons must receive educational services accessible to everyone. The deaf must have the opportunity of filling positions within higher authority. We need to see more and more deaf and hard of hearing people in the decision making positions. Local participation in government and political affairs must happen. Deaf people must be involved. Deaf people need to be advocates.

The impact of these changes? How much control do I exercise over these changes? Immense and precious little. I fear the same is true for you.

I wish you well.

Susan Queller

I am going to talk about three changes we are going through from the perspective of a student services provider in a postsecondary setting. First, I will talk about changes in direct services, then in the awareness level of our students, and finally in finances.

Direct services

The students entering postsecondary institutions now are somewhat different than they were ten or fifteen years ago. Many who years ago would have been told that college wasn't a feasible alternative are now entering higher education in increasing numbers. In some cases we may be seeing the very same students that were not entering colleges and universities a decade or more ago. At the University of Arkansas at Little Rock we have a higher than average number of older students, and our students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing have an even higher average age than the general student body--an average age of 35 for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Younger students exiting high schools are more likely to be encouraged to attend college by families, friends, and the vocational rehabilitation system, which often also provides financial support.

Another part of this change is that students are presented with more choices today. They are not all going to a few specialized federally funded programs. As a result, most of us are seeing more students who have a wider range of academic and language experiences. More students are reporting other disabilities in addition to hearing loss. Over half of our Deaf or Hard of Hearing students also have documented visual, learning, mobility, medical or psychiatric disabilities.

Whether this is typical or not, I don't know, but we have served a number of students with dual sensory impairment in the last few years. At one point a couple of years ago we had as many as eight attending at the same time who had varying degrees of both hearing and vision loss, and we currently have a student who is deaf-blind in the sense that he has no usable vision or hearing.

In the past it was probably assumed that an interpreter and note-taker were all that students needed in order to be successful in college. For many of the Deaf students who attended college in the past, maybe that was true. Now we have a much wider variety of needs expressed, and we need to look at service delivery in a new light.

Awareness level of students

Students are much more aware of their rights today. Yes, Section 504 has been around a pretty long time now. But the ADA, while it did not have as huge an effect on most colleges and universities as it did on entities not covered by 504, did increase awareness of rights on our campuses. Many of us are trying to build this awareness so students understand how to exercise their rights in future employment settings. I think it is important to continue to educate students about the details involving their legal rights. They need to know what is reasonable under the law, what isn't, the differences between the employment and education settings, and understand the rationale behind these laws.

A little bit of knowledge can be dangerous here. Our students need to move from awareness to knowledge and understanding of the law. Maybe "dangerous" is too strong a word here, but I have seen a little bit of knowledge of rights be detrimental to the student. I can think of several examples, but will illustrate with just one.

A student who transferred to UALR from a postsecondary program in another state that had a well developed program for serving Deaf students was somewhat perplexed by the differences in service delivery models. In the program she came from she not only had interpreters in every class, she also had tutors in every class. In fact, she said the interpreter and the tutor were always the same person for a given class. UALR has interpreting and tutoring services, but they operate out of different departments. While interpreters may also be tutors if they are qualified in the subject, we do not require them to tutor. When she came to UALR she presented the service model she came from as what the law required all universities to do. She did adjust quickly to the new system, and eventually even discovered that she did not really need tutors for most of her classes, and recently graduated. But my point is that the way she presented her case actually weakened her argument because she didn't have the facts of the law. In order for students to become the best self-advocates that they can be, I believe we need to help them get a good basic understanding of disability law.

Financial changes

As the need for more specialized services is increasing, and as our students come to expect these services and they become better self-advocates, we are facing these potential radical changes in our funding sources. Rehabilitation Services funding for interpreters is no longer available in some states. In Arkansas, Rehabilitation Services has been wonderful to work with, and we still get financial support for interpreters for students who are their clients. But we know that we may not be able to count on that funding forever.

I would like to offer some suggestions on dealing with budget changes:

- Work to maintain your level of funding -- whether through the same or different sources. Go for state funding.
- Work within your institutions as an advocates and educators about the issues. Educate your administrators, other student service programs, the development office, and the communications office about the challenges students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing face.
- Work within your institutions and communities to foster collaboration. Utilize all the resources you have. In Arkansas, we are very rich in creative people with knowledge and experience in Deafness. We will continue to use their brain power in an advisory capacity and any other appropriate capacities to help solve any problems that we have. At my institution we are rich in people who want to help within their own programs or in cooperation with us. We recently had a PEC peer evaluation, and the nicest thing that was said at the end of the three days was that people at UALR seemed to be accommodating not because they were required to by law but because they considered it right. We all need to foster that spirit of accommodation that I think is there in most postsecondary service providers and faculty. Sometimes individuals you work with may not know that it is there within themselves, but I see it as part of my job to see that spirit of accommodation wherever it might possibly be, and to help bring it out in those particular individuals.
- Work within your own departments. Brainstorm with your staff, engage in long-term planning, assess the best use of staff time (e.g., what full time interpreters might do when not interpreting).
- Last but not least, work with your students and others from your Deaf or Hard of Hearing communities. As Dr. Stodden said last night, consumers are our key players.

I want to end on a positive note. We and our students are going to get through this. We will survive change. We will try to shape the future in any way we can, and we may not be able to do everything we would like and consider important to do, but I know we are not ready to throw in the towel yet.

Ed Barnes

It's a real pleasure for me to be here this morning. Our institution has been working with this consortium for many years. The topic I'll discuss this morning is a very complex topic. New River Community College is a two-year public institution that has been state-funded since 1990. From 1990-93, we experienced budget reductions of 24% that will certainly bring change. We are greatly influenced by the actions of the Virginia state government. Virginia, as some of you might know or not know, is a relatively conservative state. So we manage our money well, what we have. We are an institution that's honestly driven by a set of beliefs. Our mission is extremely important to us. One of those beliefs -- perhaps maybe even the most important belief -- is that access is absolutely a top priority in our institution. New River Community College has been widely recognized throughout the nation in the past five years. It's been ranked as one of the top five community colleges in Virginia in service to students with

disabilities. Now, I will tell you that we have not earned that reputation simply because ADA or 504 legislation says that we have to do it. It's been done because we believe in access and we believe that access should apply across the board.

I want to share with you some issues related to change. There's change and then there's restructuring. I will talk with you about three changes that took place at our institution, as well about restructuring that covers a whole number of changes.

We have been told that change is inevitable. I can tell you if it's state-funded, it's inevitable. It will be changing all the time. I want you to think about this: the coffee break just ended. Somewhere right now, there are hundreds of folks putting down their coffee cups and writing new regulations. They're doing it right now. All of these regulations are going to cause you to have to do something that you weren't doing yesterday. Now, let me really ruin your day. These people work full-time. That's all they do. And then let me ruin it still further. Somewhere there is a politician that is trying to find an issue on which to get elected and who is going to get elected. That politician is going to go straight to those folks that write this stuff, and you'll have more changes.

Let me talk with you about restructuring and the changes that it brings about. Fear of restructuring is huge. You should just assume this. You mention restructuring, and people are going to become concerned about job security. They read in the papers about layoffs and people being demoted. These are pretty common things in restructuring. There are some, no matter how honest you are, who believe that you are doing the restructuring simply to get rid of them. If you have an insecure person in your organization, they believe that you are going through all of this trouble to fire 20 people. Then there are those who fear that their new responsibilities are going to be too heavy, their work will be doubled, or they will not have the skills to perform the job.

In this type of change, the level of trust is absolutely critical. Even then, no matter how good it is or how much you trust each other, the best intentions are likely to be misperceived. It is extremely important to proceed in ways to maintain that trust. When we have to go through major change, we have at least two alternatives. We can go through mandated changes to meet the level of law. You do what you have to do. If you've been in this game for a long time, you know how to do what you need to do, don't you? We all know that. Or we can use the opportunity to really improve the organization. We can use it to pursue a better alignment of resources, enrollment, and personnel. If we take the time to identify the needs of our college at that particular time, we can get the right people in the right places to address those needs.

Our strategy was to comprehensively re-think the entire organization. We had several planning precepts, and we used these precepts to guide us through this change. We tested every single action against these precepts to address the fears and the insecurities that we knew would be there. One of the things we wanted to do was to reassure our people that we were going to use our existing personnel to go through the restructuring. That is exactly what we did. We did not want anyone to feel that they would lose a job or be demoted, but we had a number of different things we were going to address. We also decided that we were going to cut administrative costs, not the cost of services directly to students, and we did that, too. Since

this time, the attrition and retirements have reduced our work force by eleven people and \$400,000 in salary and benefits.

But we did something that was rather profound, and this is one of the major changes. We did away with our Continuing Education office. We changed it and integrated it into the Academic Divisions so that a Division Chair would have both credit and non-credit instruction under their supervision. With this model, if we are contacted by industry for a training program, the Continuing Education Director will not have to work it out with the Division Chair. The Continuing Education director had no faculty; and one of the greatest concerns was getting instructors to teach for them. So there are a lot of other reasons. Primarily, we wanted to accomplish three things. We wanted to cut administrative costs, integrate continuing education to improve responsiveness to the community, and involve the professional experiences of our managers.

I want to tell you about the impact of our actions. First, when you cut out \$400,000 in personnel, it means that you have fewer full-time people and more part-time people. You have people do transitional things. Another impact is that we had an advisory committee. There's very little difference between a good advisory one, and a meddling one. We had one committee that didn't want us to integrate Continuing Education, and they have since been disgruntled. But other than that, we've done pretty well.

As far as control is concerned, we have no control over the state saying that we have to restructure. But once you define your ballgame, which we did, we have all the control in the world regarding the process itself. The restructuring plans required approval of the Chancellor and the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia; so from that standpoint, we gave up some control there. As a result of the changes, our executive management has been reduced by 20%. We increased our first level management by 25%. We developed a Division of Distance Education and Learning Resources, and we have solved a lot of problems there. We have actually increased the number of our Continuing Education offerings, and the physical campus of New River Community College has experienced more improvement in the last eighteen months than any other time in the history of the college.

So what could be done? I would say that the college needs to continue to refine things. We need to try to make that advisory commission happier than it is. We need to keep on trucking, but respecting our people and making sure that their experience at New River Community College is a positive one and that restructuring is a positive experience. And we think that by and large it has been.

Thank you very much.

Bob Morris

I am delighted to be here today. I think the theme of the conference is a challenging one. When you talk about change, we can look at the state as a model and have fifty models around the country. I think change is a key operative word in describing what is happening at the state level today. My responsibility in Tennessee is the discipline of employment and training, so I will approach the discussion here today from that perspective. I will, however, deviate from the questions addressed by the others.

Like it or not, we are living in a new global economy. There is a vast change in the environment. A lot of folks are very unhappy with change and they're getting unhappier as we go along. I would like to share with you some numbers and some ideas concerning the changing work place and current trends that are affecting our lives. I put this material together a while back for an economic development conference and the information is fascinating to me.

In 1991 for the first time, U.S. companies spent more money on computing and communications equipment than they spent on industrial, mining, farm and construction equipment combined. This new pattern gives evidence to the fact that we have entered a new era. Quite simply, the industrial age has given way to the information age. As recently as 1960s, almost half of all workers in industrialized countries were involved in making or helping to make things. By the year 2000, however, no country will have more than one sixth to one eighth of its work force in the traditional role of moving and making goods. Already an estimated two thirds of U.S. employees work in the service sector, and knowledge is becoming our most important product. This caused a need for different organizations as well as different kinds of workers. During the early 1900s, 85% of American workers worked in agriculture. Now agriculture involves less than 3% of the work force. In 1950, 73% of U.S. employees worked in production or manufacturing. Now production and manufacturing jobs are less than 15% of American employees. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that by the year 2000, at least 44% of all workers will be in data services. That is gathering, processing, retrieving or analyzing information.

Careers come and go. This is nothing new. What is new is the speed of these changes and the need to adapt quickly and communicate effectively. Today, people change jobs more frequently than in the past. In 1991, nearly one out of three American workers had been with their employer for less than a year and almost two out of three for less than five years. The United States contingent work force consisting of roughly 45 million temporary workers self-employed people, part-timers or consultants has grown 57% since 1980. Going, if not gone, are the five-day work weeks, lifetime jobs, and corporate and cultural security blankets. For a large and growing sector of the work force, the work place is being replaced by cybernetic work space. Career changes will become the norm. We live in a world where in order to compete in the global market, we must generate a labor force that is committed to dealing with change.

Since 1983, the U.S. has worked with 25 million consumers. The number the cellular telephone users jumped. Nearly 19 million people carry pagers, and almost 12 billion messages were left in voice mailboxes in 1993 alone. Communication technology is radically changing the speed and direction of information flow in our world. I shared this information with you since I thought it might set the stage for change.

There are some trends taking place at the state level that I will share with you. They are not in any order of importance. States are now looking at the possibility of block grants. There is legislation that has passed in both the House and the Senate that sets up block grants to the various states and territories. One of the good points is that in the legislation that is under debate in Washington, Vocational Rehabilitation is kept as a separate funding track for both the House and the Senate.

One of the hot topics facing the state in the forming of training, is that of a one-stop shop. Everyone is trying to figure out how to develop a seamless delivery system. It can be electronic or on location, but it varies by community. It will be very interesting to see how one-stop shops develop and how community colleges can fit into it.

One of the hot topics right now facing us is the school-to-work issue. This began several years ago as a state initiative, but is now being pushed actively at the national level. It is an integration of career and occupational education that spans from kindergarten through high school. It ties the education community to the private sector. It is a very interesting marriage there. In the last year or so, I find that although educators, trainers, and private sector folks all speak English, somehow it doesn't quite mesh. We have to teach each other how to speak together. In the past, I think that vocational education has been relegated to second-class citizenship. One interesting note that I ran across not long ago is that, by the year 2005, 80% of jobs will require less than a bachelor's degree, but more than a high school diploma.

Another trend coming at us very quickly is in the area of technical improvements and better electronics. Although it may initially sound superficial, it will give us access to better labor market information so trends can be validated by what we need to do in the private sector or by the employing community. There will be better tracking and there will be better qualitative feedback if all of those things occur.

There is an increasing emphasis on customer satisfaction. Initially this effort has been focused on the participant or the client. We are moving to, at least in most of the states, an equal awareness of employer satisfaction as well. There will be localization of services. Someone finally realized that labor markets are, in fact, local in nature and we need to have local folks involved. There is a lot of emphasis currently on capacity-builders. The feds are giving us money to build our capacity at the state level, and I think you will see that the state ought to be improving its ability to plan and deliver programs and services. There will be heavy private sector involvement as we move more into work force development.

There will be several limitations. One is that there will be an increased emphasis on coordination of services. There will be less protection and we will have to do more with less.

As we mentioned earlier, there will be more services available to the disabled. In addition to Vocational Rehabilitation, you will have the other seamless delivery system so that even with decreased funding of services available for the disabled, I think there will be higher group accountability. I think every sector in our society demands accountability: folks receiving the services, the business community, the taxpayers, the legislators and our governors. You will see more of that.

You will have a technology-driven labor market. While high school diplomas are required for many jobs, many companies are now asking for computer literacy. An article in one of the Memphis newspapers cited 600 openings for computer repair people. One company is moving to another location because they can't find people to fill the jobs. With continued economic expansion, I think employers will be looking more and more at abilities and not disabilities. Life-long learning with increased emphasis on

literacy, mathematical skills and computer literacy will become the norm. I think that the final thing is the changes will continue to accelerate and move faster.

Thank you.

Ramon Rodriguez

I am in the Office of Special Institutions, Office of the Assistant Secretary, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. Last night, Dr. Stodden talked about some major changes taking place in Washington, D.C. As I talk about this, I will also touch on how much control we have, and how much control you have. We often discuss the discrepancy of being here in the local area and being in Washington, D.C. But there are a lot of things that you can do, and I will refer to them as we move on.

You probably have heard a lot about Vice President Gore's concept of reinventing government that involves reorganizing and restructuring. While I have only been in OSERS for five years, most of the people that I work with have been there many more years. Many things that were new to me were very, very old to them. When the notion of restructuring or reinvention came out, my coworkers said, "Nothing's going to happen. We have seen this come through at every administration. " That is not true this time. Changes have already taken place.

I would like to outline for you the structure of the office that provides services to you, to special education. This is OSERS, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. I have worked there for about two years; before that, I was in the Office of Special Education Programs. There are two other components: RSA, the Rehabilitation Services Agency, and NIDRR, the National Institute on Disability Rehabilitative Research. While I had friends in the other two divisions, the divisions had no relationships. We got together for lunch occasionally, and I began to ask questions about programs and services. I noticed that RSA has an interpreter training program. My friends in RSA said, "Yeah. This is one of our long-standing programs, one of our most effective programs." Well, the Office of Special Education Programs also has an educational interpreter training program that have funded around thirty programs; ongoing, there are eighteen. RSA has twelve programs, but the two divisions do not talk to each other about interpreter training.

This is the reason for reinvention: to remove the barriers between components. For the first time ever, senior staff members asked individual specialists in deafness about programs serving deaf and hard of hearing people. Together, Dick Johnson and Vic Galloway from RSA, Ernie Hairston from OSEP, and I all met with them and were asked how to best manage all of these programs across components. We were very surprised. For the first time ever, we met in a room where we actually discussed programs that are serving deaf and hard of hearing people. The outcome of this is probably the notice of proposed priorities for technical assistance in postsecondary programs that you have been hearing about. As Robert Stodden mentioned yesterday, the focus is on technical assistance with an emphasis on outcomes. This is exactly what this internal review and restructuring would like to accomplish. As we review our programs, we find that there are many funded programs that do not appear to be related and we wonder how this happens. It

may be due to political reasons or pressures with little or no relation to the needs of the consumer. For the first time now, we are reviewing these programs to see what they do and what the results or outcomes of these programs are. Then we will go to the consumers, show them what we have and ask them what we need.

For the first time, in a very systematic, structured way, this will come about. The walls between these three components are coming down. Instead of having both programs, there will be functions. All programs related to deafness will in some way be organized by a group or teams. There will be team leaders for specific functions within that group, and for other functions, there will be other individuals leading this team. I think for the first time, even in the face of downsizing, we will find ways to provide for them and continue to serve.

Thank you very much.

Olga Welch

I want to ask that you join me in acknowledging this wonderful panel. Thank you very much. To the panelists, I want to say how very much I appreciate your staying within your time limits. Having been a panelist, I know how very difficult that can be when you have so much information to share, and I invite all of you to engage in many conversations with these individuals, because, as you can see by their biographies in your program materials, they have a great deal of very important information to share with you.