

## **Academic Advising and Career Center – A "One-Stop" Center**

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### *Abstract*

Merging the offices of Academic Advising, Career Center, and Office for Students with Disabilities at Gallaudet University two years ago, provided more comprehensive academic and career advising services for students, including students with disabilities. Session participants will receive the following information: 1) the philosophical basis for combining the three offices, 2) services that offered through Academic Advising and Career Center, 3) the process for completing the merger and cross-training professionals on advising, career, and disability related functions, 4) the process for redefining and developing new and expanded partnerships with other units on campus (Admissions and Enrollment Services, Freshman Year Seminar (FYS), Honors Program, Campus Life, Alumni Programs, academic departments), 5) technological resources that support our services, and 6) benefits of this collaborative approach for students, faculty, and staff.



### **Academic Advising and Career Center - A "One-Stop" Center**

At Gallaudet University, the Academic Advising and Career Center, including the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSWD) is a collaborative, comprehensive advising and career support service. This paper will discuss the purpose of the merger of Academic Advising, Career Center, and Office for Students with Disabilities, the process of the merger, services offered by the offices, partnerships developed within the office and with other offices on and off-campus, technological resources that support our services, and benefits for students, staff, and faculty.

#### **Mission Statement**

Academic Advising and Career Center, including the Office for Students with Disabilities, is a collaborative, comprehensive program that educates, advises, and empowers students to make effective academic and career decisions, and accomplish career goals with appropriate support services and reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. *Note:* Our mission statement was developed after two years of being merged. It is a work in progress and will be periodically reviewed and revised.

#### **Purpose of the Merger**

The merger of Academic Advising, Career Center, and Office for Students with Disabilities occurred in July, 1996. The purpose of the merger was to:

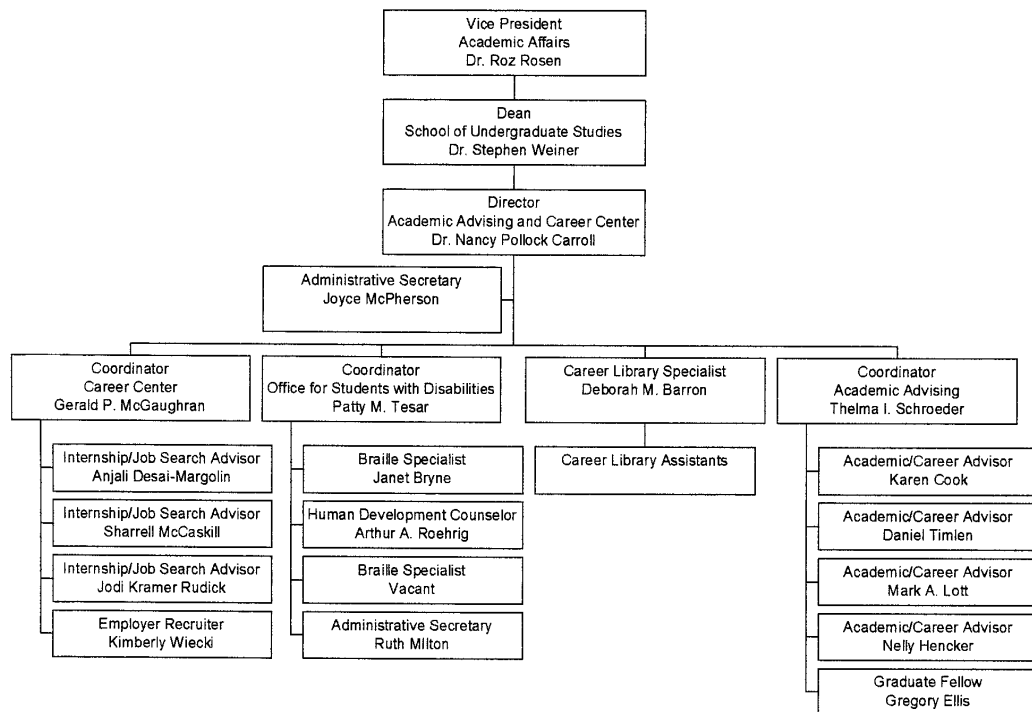
- provide comprehensive advising and career services to all students,
- introduce career decision making opportunities to students as freshman,

- work more closely with and be more visible to students and faculty, and
- provide more coordinated support and services to disabled students and faculty.

A key component of the merger included co-locating Academic Advising and Career Center offices in the same suite in Hall Memorial Building, the main campus classroom building. Office for Students with Disabilities is located on the same floor, down the hall.

### Organizational Chart

Academic Advising and Career Center is made up of four units: Academic Advising, Career Center, Office for Students with Disabilities, and the Career Library. Coordinators for each unit were appointed in February, 1997. All had worked with the units and were promoted into their positions.



### Partnerships with On- and Off-Campus Offices

During the past two years, partnerships have developed with many offices on- and off-campus. On campus partnerships include Freshman Year Seminar, New Student Orientation, Academic Departments, Tutorial Center, Campus Life, Admissions and Registrar, Outreach, and Recruiting, student groups, Community Service, Institutional Advancement, English Works!, Student Health Service, Financial Aid, Business Services, Center for Global Education, Alumni Relations, Athletics, President's Office, Mental Health Center, and Department of Safety and Security.

Academic Advising and Career Center has extensive contact with parents, vocational rehabilitation counselors, employers, and other professionals in the field of deaf education and education.

## **Time Lines for the Merger**

Following are basic time lines for how the merger occurred.

### *July '96 - February '97*

- Adjustment – getting settled in the new location with new identity as a merged office
- Programs remained separate with some discussion between units about how to work more closely together
- Each office developed a separate mission statement that followed the philosophy of the merger
- Staff within each office developed individual performance objectives based on rough unit goals and the mission statements of Academic Affairs and Gallaudet University
- Programs prioritized and worked on staff restructuring with goal of moving the function of career advising to academic advising
- One career counselor moved from the Career Center to the Academic Advising office to learn the process of advising with the goal of deciding where career decision making could be infused in the advising process
- Regular unit staff meetings with discussions of where collaboration could occur
- Two full office staff meetings to share information about individual unit functions and discuss issues relative to the full office (communication policy, mail room organization)

### *Spring '97*

- Discussion of career advising and academic advising – what fits where
- Continued prioritizing – developing and revising mission statements
- Continued individual goal setting and revising
- Discussion and determination of where cross-training would occur

### *Summer '97 - Cross-Training*

- Career advising: Academic advisors cross-trained on career advising by bringing in an outside professional and using expertise of current staff
- Working with students with disabilities: all staff members received training on working with students with disabilities
- Trip to Rowan College – a merged academic advising and career center program in NJ peer meetings – staff met to share unit functions and services
- Continued prioritizing – developing and revising mission statements
- Continued individual goal setting and revising

### *Fall '97*

- Academic advisors began providing career counseling with support from former Career Counselors
- Academic advisors worked closely with Freshman Year Seminar
- Peer meetings – continuing discussion of functions and how to work more closely
- Continued prioritizing – developing and revising mission statements
- Continued individual goal setting and revising

*Don't overlook the importance of professional development for staff who are assuming new/changed roles.*

- Important to continue alliances with professional organizations and involve staff from each office in a variety of organizations

- Important also to take a leadership role in presenting and serving
- National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), Association on Higher Education and Disabilities (AHEAD), American Association of Deaf-Blind (AADB), Cooperative Education Association (CEA), and Washington, DC consortium of career advisors and disability service providers.

### **Information Sharing - The Importance of Keeping Communication Open**

Staff members must feel that they are connected to their unit and to the office as a whole. Here are some of the ways that we are attempting to share information and keep communication open for the larger staff.

- Coordinators met weekly to report on each unit, discuss priorities and issues.
- We held full-staff meetings that include a director's report, unit reports, and special reports (on conferences attended, projects, goals) every two months.
- We held pot luck lunches twice a semester. We closed the doors for two hours to give staff time to relax and network with each other.
- We celebrated special events, birthdays, weddings, and baby showers.

Providing staff with opportunities to socialize and get to know each other on a personal level is critical to the success of cohesive professional collaboration. Added benefit: we are discovering that we have excellent cooks in our ranks! We may think about publishing an Academic Advising and Career Center cookbook!

### **Academic Advising and Career Center Units**

Our merged office is comprised of four units. These include the Career Library, Office for Students with Disabilities, Academic Advising, and Career Center.

#### **Career Library**

The Career Library was designed to be the "hub" of the merged offices. It is a state of the art library that includes career related print materials, video, computer, and on-line resources for career decision making, internships, summer, part-time on-campus employment, and full-time job search. Each of the six computers has access to the World Wide Web, and career decision making, resume, and job search resources. As a direct result of the merger, the Career Library is now more accessible to low-vision and deaf-blind students through the use of "Magic" enlargement software and a closed circuit television (CCTV). Orientations to all services, specific training workshops (resume development, job search, federal government application procedures, interviewing tips and techniques, and group workshops) are held in the Career Library with coordination through unit managers.

#### **Office for Students with Disabilities (OSWD)**

The Office for Students with Disabilities provides counseling and advising services to students with disabilities. Services include: IEP development, faculty contact form development (arranging for accommodations), advocacy training, compensatory training, and on-going referral and collaboration with on- and off-campus links, faculty, staff, and administrators.

Students interested in receiving services through OSWD must submit documentation of disability including current medical, psychological, or diagnostic assessments, evaluations and/or reports that establish disability and the need for educationally relevant accommodations as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990. They are determined to be

eligible to receive services through review of records and consultation with appropriate professionals on- and off-campus. When accepted, OSWD personnel work with students and faculty to ensure provision of appropriate accommodations.

## Academic Advising

1.2 Million

Can you guess what 1.2 million signifies? It's the number of recent college graduates who are out in the work force looking for jobs! This means that deaf graduates are competing with a large number of hearing counterparts. It is of critical importance for them to be well-prepared for the work world by receiving appropriate academic and career education during their Gallaudet experience.

One goal for Academic Advising and Career Center is to provide academic and career information to students as early as possible upon arrival at Gallaudet. This is a direct function for retention because we know that the more a student knows him or herself, the more likely they are to make better academic and career decisions and the more likely they are to persist in college. Approximately 80 percent of new students register for the Freshman Year Seminar (FYS) course at Gallaudet. This course helps orient students to Gallaudet and its resources and services. Academic/Career Advisors work closely with FYS faculty to provide advising and career information to students in the classroom and the Career Library. Academic/Career Advisors encourage students to explore and investigate their interests, values, and skills by working with faculty, advisors, OSWD and through the Career Library/Web resources.

Following are ways that students work with Academic/Career Advisors before they arrive at Gallaudet and in the first two years of their Gallaudet experience:

### *Pre-Freshman:*

- Application process which includes identifying skills and goals – sent on-campus job information, home page, recruiter
- Information about academic/career development accomplishments of Gallaudet students – information sessions/open houses/LINK publications, share information on majors/consortium
- Introduction to academic/career experience through Summer programs (science, special internships), Summer Bridge, College Bound, & New Signer Program
- Screening for special scholarship programs (NASA, Federal scholarships, and private corporations such as JP Morgan or Fannie Mae which involve commitment to summer internships)

### *Freshman Year:*

- New Student Orientation (NSO): covers both academic and career components
- New student interviews – Screened/referred by Admissions to appropriate services – OSWD
- OSWD screening/testing (advisor referral, faculty referral)
- Academic planning – AA; Individualized Education Plan Development – OSWD; referral to campus services
- Freshman Year Seminar (FYS)
- Self Assessment & self screening opportunities: FYS, CISS, FOCUS, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Strong Interest Inventory
- Academic Progress reports (students performance in class, faculty communicates with advisor and student)
- Crisis intervention – OSWD & AA
- Screening for special experiential scholarships (federal government, corporations)

- Can sign-up for Consortium courses
- 2<sup>nd</sup> semester freshmen can apply for EPOC experience by working with Intemship/Job Search advisor
- Receive information about and begin portfolio development- encouraged by faculty and academic advisors, information provided on e-mail distribution lists developed by Intemship/Job Search advisors for their specific majors.
- Explore career options, investigate occupations related to interests (CISS, career advising, FOCUS, JOBTRAK, USA CAREERS, OTI interviews, alumni panels)
- Receive information about experiential opportunities available to begin establishing career credentials.

*Sophomore Year:*

- Continue exploring interests, needs, skills, values with guidance from faculty, OSWD, academic advisors, and through Career Library/Web resources
- Receive information about career options and discuss career educational plans with academic advisors, faculty, OSWD, alumni, employers who visit campus or provide information interviews
- Encouraged by faculty and academic advisors to research employment trends using Career Library and Web resources
- Declare major: Academic Advising files transferred to major faculty advisors
- Continue developing portfolio, especially resume for internships, summer and part time jobs
- Begin securing career-related activities: on-campus employment, involvement in organizations, part-time and summer employment, internships

**Career Center**

Services within the Career Center include on-campus employment (over 1,000 jobs) and Experiential Programs Off Campus (EPOC) for co-op/intemship experiences, summer, part-time, and fulltime job search assistance. The Career Center works actively with over 200 employers, locally, nationally, and internationally, from the private sector, non-profit, local, state, and federal government agencies, and educational institutions. Gallaudet students do internships and are offered full-time jobs from employers in those same employment sectors. Internships can be local, national, or international.

Career Center staff work closely with employers, EPOC faculty sponsors, and academic departments to ensure that students receive top quality internship experiences. Students, academic departments, and the Career Center agree on a learning contract that specifies what the internship will entail, and what the student is expected to accomplish.

The Career Center provides information to 100 percent of Gallaudet students through e-mail and printed information. Approximately 83 percent of Gallaudet students have registered for and received orientations to Career Center services. More than 70 percent have had at least one co-op/intemship with placements throughout the United States and in 40 countries; many have had two or more. Over 1,000 students obtain paid, on-campus jobs and through Gallaudet's Community Service Program others are gaining valuable experience as volunteers. Internships can be paid or non-paid. Students are eligible for assistance with travel, housing, local transportation, and meals though our stipend program. This year, the Career Center has more than \$100,000 obtained from more than 10 foundations to assist students with their expenses.

Following are ways that students work with Career Center staff during their Junior and Senior years:

*Junior Year:*

- Continue developing portfolio, revise resume, develop cover letter
- Explore career opportunities and graduate options; re-evaluate interests, seeking additional career advising if needed from Academic Advising
- Attend workshops, career fairs, employer & alumni information sessions sponsored by Gallaudet and area consortium

universities (emphasis on role models)

- Do practicum experiences, internships; sign up for on-campus interviews (paid and unpaid)
- Receive self-advocacy training, receive instruction in courses which combines career exploration and experiences

#### *Senior Year:*

- Do comprehensive inventory of skills and abilities; develop knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) statement and functional resume; add to portfolio
- Do intensive review of network; develop comprehensive list of contacts
- Do practicum experiences, internships, student teaching
- Complete graduate school applications
- Attend workshops, do research on resume writing, interviewing, job search
- Sign-up for on-campus interviewing
- Conduct personal job hunt, networking, occupational search, establish professional contacts

#### **Vision for the Future**

We still have a great deal to accomplish as we become more of a cohesive unit. Some of the projects we have planned include:

- Continued cross-training of all Academic Advising and Career Center staff
- Work with the University to develop procedure and policy for eligibility and service delivery for students with disabilities
- Block scheduling with Freshman Year Seminar and Academic Departments (English and math)
- Continue to provide training to faculty and staff on working with students with disabilities, including sensitivity, awareness, teaching methodologies, and provision of accommodations
- Continued training of major advisors on academic advising procedures
- Establish a program of faculty advising with pre-major students (professional academic advisors provide training and support)
- Continue to explore ways to partner with academic departments for career decision making, academic advising, resume development, job search strategies, and employer contacts

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#### **Author note:**

If you have questions about the information included in this article, please contact the authors at the Academic Advising and Career Center office. The telephone numbers are (202) 651-5197 (TTY) and (202) 651-5355 (V).

*Appendix A*

**CAREER LIBRARY**

HMB E150  
Hours: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm, Monday - Friday  
Summer Hours: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm  
Academic Advising and Career Center

**Career Library Assistants:** Gallaudet students who can assist you with your questions and your search on internship and career related information.

**Five Computers:** WWW, MS Word for working on resumes and cover letters, College Catalogs on-line and Job TRAK.

**Job Search:**

Full Time  
Part Time  
Internship  
Fellowship  
Summer Jobs

**Job Bank:**

**Job Announcement Categories:**

Gallaudet majors  
Deaf Related  
Education Related  
Government Level  
Clerical/Vocational

**On- Campus Student Employment:**

Position Announcements  
Applications

**Resources for People with Low Vision:**

CTV and Magic Program on 2 computers  
Large Print and Braille available at the request of the individual

**Resources/Services:**

Books on:  
Career Planning  
Resumes/ Cover Letter  
Interview Tips  
Employer Information  
Federal Employment

Intemship/Job Search Services  
Resume/Cover Letter Services  
Career Inventory (CISS)  
International Information  
Employer Files/Web Connections  
Grad School Testing Information

**Handouts:**

Resume/Cover Letter Samples  
Referral Services

Interview Tips  
Career Monographs

For more information, send email to [Deborah.Barron@Gallaudet.edu](mailto:Deborah.Barron@Gallaudet.edu) or call 202-651-5441.

*Appendix B*

**OFFICE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

A UNIT OF ACADEMIC ADVISING AND CAREER CENTER

HMB South 135

Hours: Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Phone (202) 651-5256

Fax: (202) 651-5887

Email: PMTESAR@GALLUA.GALLAUDET.EDU

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The Office for Students with Disabilities (OSWD) provides individually tailored, comprehensive support services and programs for students with disabilities. OSWD empowers eligible students to succeed in their pursuit of higher education by striving to assure equal access and opportunity to curricular and extra curricular activities. Supporting the ideal of life-long learning, OSWD encourages and provides experiences and opportunities to build confidence beyond the classroom. Student autonomy is encouraged through the provision of reasonable accommodations, academic support groups, self-advocacy, and compensatory training. OSWD employs a student-centered, interactive model in which collaboration among professionals and OSWD students results in a nondiscriminatory academic environment.

**SERVICES:**

Individualized Education Plan Development  
Orientation and Mobility Services  
Specialized Testing Services  
Counseling/Advising Services  
Reader Services (audio taping, lecture transcription)  
Braille/Large Print Services  
Adaptive Equipment Services  
Study Lab  
Accessibility Consultations  
Referral Services

**PROGRAMS:**

Advocacy Training  
Compensatory Training  
Academic Support Groups  
Advisory Board  
Scholarships  
Faculty Development Seminars

**RELEASE REQUEST REQUIREMENTS**

OSWD students are protected from discrimination under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990. These mandates carry within them rules regarding the confidential treatment of disability related information. Because disability related information is treated as medical information, it is handled under the same strict confidentiality rules as is other medical information. Disability related records provided by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional are not subject to free access under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. In general, OSWD must have written permission from the student before releasing any information from the student's record.

## Appendix C

### **ACADEMIC ADVISING**

#### A UNIT OF ACADEMIC ADVISING AND CAREER CENTER

The Academic Advising staff consists of professional academic/career advisors. They provide general information regarding Gallaudet's curriculum, academic programs, policies, career advising and career planning. The Academic/Career Advisors are Karen Cook, Gregory Ellis, Nelly Hencker, Mark Lott, Thelma Schroeder (Coordinator) and Daniel Timlen.

When new students enter Gallaudet University, they are assigned an academic/career advisor during the New Student Orientation (NSO) program. The students meet with their academic/career advisor to discuss the requirements for a liberal arts degree, academic policies and procedures, support services available for students, and course selection. Generally, students stay with their assigned advisor until they declare their major. After having declared their major, they are assigned a faculty academic advisor within their major department.

Academic/career advisors meet with students for many hours during the NSO program. The advisors work with students to select appropriate courses based on their English and math placement tests. After course selection, the advisors closely monitor and facilitate academic progress and performance by communicating with students, and faculty members. In addition, timely feedback is provided to students so that they may further improve their performance.

Academic/career advisors have taken on career advising responsibilities in addition to professional academic advising. These functions are a natural fit with the goal of assisting students with making the most effective career, course planning, and major decisions. Academic/career advisors are working closely with faculty, professional staff, and students to share information about courses, majors, internship opportunities and the job market.

#### **ACADEMIC ADVISING OFFICE SERVICES**

**Course Selection:** Register pre-major undergraduate students for the courses.

**New Student Interviews:** Meet with new student to obtain background information and discuss academic and career goals.

**Academic Planning Meetings:** Individual meetings to review student's current academic performance, discuss any difficulties, offer suggestions for improvement, and prepare for course selection for following semester.

**Career Advising:** Assist students in decision making about their major and possible careers.

**Interest and Skill Testing:** Assist with administration of tests and interpretation of results to students.

**Major Declaration:** Help students through the process of declaring their major.

**Academic Progress Reports:** Offer suggestions and advice on how to improve their academics.

**Academic Contracts:** Provide support to students who are currently on Academic Warning or Academic Probation.

**Crisis Intervention:** Deal with a variety of academic and personal situations regarding advisees.

Academic Advising and Career Center  
HMB S141 and E150  
(202) 651-5197(TTY) or (202) 651-5355(V)  
Fax: (202) 651-5736  
Office hours are from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday - Friday.

## Appendix D

### CAREER CENTER

#### A UNIT OF ACADEMIC ADVISING AND CAREER CENTER

The Career Center, together with the Career Library, provides an array of services to students, alumni, faculty, and staff at Gallaudet University for assistance in finding information related to careers, internships, and job search. Here is a listing of our services and a brief description about each.

**Job Search:** Through our Web page (<http://www.gallaudet.edu:80/-cicdrb/>), Career Library resources, and special events and workshops, we assist job seekers in preparing for their job searches. Our Web page provides users direct links to key resources for job search and career information. Through our Career Library, job seekers have access to daily updated listings of part and full-time jobs, and hundreds of books and materials to help them research career choices, prepare portfolios and cover letters, network, prepare for interviews, and identify potential employers. Undergraduates may sign up for individual appointments with their EPOC/Job Search Advisors in our Career Library.

**EPOC Internship:** EPOC/Job Search Advisors partner with undergraduate students and employers to identify internship possibilities. The EPOC internship program is open to all majors. Through EPOC work experiences, students can earn up to 12 EPOC credits before graduating. The EPOC program has grant funds available to provide interns' stipends, which help cover living and transportation costs, when the interns are not earning a wage. Some EPOC employers offer scholarships in addition to paid internships. Undergraduates interested in EPOC may sign-up for EPOC Orientation and individual appointments at our Career Library.

**On-campus Student Employment:** The Career Center manages Gallaudet's On-campus Student Employment Program, which, yearly, provides about 1,000 jobs to enrolled undergraduate or graduate students. On our Web page or in our Career Library we post job announcements, plus provide copies of hiring guidelines, and announcement and application forms. In many cases these work experiences provide major-related experience. The Career Center staff also encourages students (especially pre-majors) to develop voluntary work experiences on campus as one alternative to gaining valuable work experience and exploring career options.

**Resume/Cover Letter Service:** In addition to our many printed and web resources, undergraduate students can receive feedback about their resumes or cover letters through one-on-one appointments, Resume Walk-in hours, Resume Workshops, and our Resume Drop-off Service. Sign-up for individual appointments and Resume Workshop sessions are in our Career Library. We review dropped off resumes every Friday, then return the resumes to the Career Library for students to pick up.

**Workshops/Information Sessions:** Through workshops and other information sessions Career Center staff and guest employers provide information and advice about such topics as Career and Internship Opportunities, Workforce Demands, Portfolio and Interview Preparation, Graduate School Information, Career Center Services, EPOC Internships, Job Search on the Web, Electronic Resumes, etc.

**Graduate School Information:** Through periodic workshops, free handouts, and other resource materials in our Career Library, we provide tips and information about finding and applying to graduate schools, and identifying financial aid resources. Graduate testing information is provided through our Career Library.

**Employer/Supervisor Training:** EPOC/Job Search Advisors provide materials, and on-site training of supervisors and co-workers to help ensure our EPOC interns and their managers have successful experiences.

**Consortium Sponsored Events:** Through a consortium of other universities in the Washington, DC area, including Gallaudet, our students are able to participate in consortium events at other area universities. Examples of these events include a Graduate School Fair, International Student Job Fair, and Career Fairs.

**On-Campus Recruiting and Employer Resources:** Throughout the year we encourage employers to visit our campus to recruit interns and permanent workers, plus contribute to the education of our students and alumni in other ways such as workshop, panel, conference, and classroom presentations. We post information about upcoming on-campus recruiting and career education events, and have sign-ups in our Career Library.

**Alumni Services:** Alumni of Gallaudet University can attend career education events, sign up for on-campus recruiting, plus have unlimited access to the resources of our Career Library (during business hours) and Web.

