

From: brian@gallyfssa.org  
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Subject: Gallaudet's Fernandes' rhetoric permeates media

For Immediate Release

Gallaudet University President-Select Jane Fernandes, as a result of careful PR coaching, has succeeded in planting diversionary rhetoric in the public consciousness, while at the same time she is quickly losing political ground at the university and in public opinion at large.

A search on Google News shows that the phrase "not deaf enough" is permeating the national coverage.

Students who are protesting her appointment are quick to point out the rhetoric doesn't stand up to logic, since King Jordan was accepted for many years and admired by the deaf community as their leader, even though he grew up hearing and did not lose his hearing until he was 21 (as the result of a nearly fatal motorcycle accident.)

When Jordan was chosen to be the first deaf president of Gallaudet University after the "Deaf President Now" protests in 1988, the deaf world embraced him with open arms. This, in spite of the fact that his sign language skills were only moderate at the time and he did not use American Sign Language.

The student protesters point out the shifting nature of Fernandes' rhetoric. First she says she's not "deaf enough," then it's because she doesn't use the right kind of sign language (she uses "Signed English," instead of American Sign Language), then it's because she's a woman and people supposedly don't like taking orders from women.

Student protester Elisa Abenchuchan points out on her Xanga.com blog that the protesters are a diverse group of deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing people all pursuing what's in the best interest of Gallaudet University.

Protesters stress that the main issue involved is the fact of Fernandes' severe lack of political savvy and inability to serve as their liaison and ambassador to the hearing community. Her lack of political savvy has become magnified and even more obvious since the protest began on May 1st. Protesters continually refer to the repetitive nature of her comments, as if she has been coached only to say certain things, and that she is not confident enough and not experienced and knowledgeable enough to have her own wise perspective and comments.

Gallaudet faculty members point out that Fernandes was granted tenure at the university without undergoing the normal process of being accepted by a vote of other faculty members, and that her appointment to provost also bypassed the normal hiring channels.

Students and faculty alike suspect that current President Jordan filtered information that was fed to the hiring committee and the Board in their selection of Fernandes, and that Fernandes was handpicked by Jordan to be his successor.

#### QUOTE:

....Now my concern is that many of us have already had experiences with Jane Fernandes. Yes, we have. She is not new to the deaf community. She is very well known at Gallaudet and it is very rare that we hear positive or inspiring things about her--very rare.

We're all squirming in our seats now because of it. This our message: Many of us do not see her as a leader. The first time many of us met her, we each walked away from the encounter harboring grave doubts about her abilities. So many of us did. You can go down the line. Each and every one of us have the same doubts. And we all love Gallaudet too much to accept this situation. We simply love Gallaudet too much.

We've each personally had this same experience with her, walking away and thinking to ourselves: "That's the person?...It's so difficult to believe what I'm seeing." I have yet to anyone run up to me and say: "Hey, wow! What a wonderful shining example she is..."--No, I haven't.

So my message to the Board of Trustees at Gallaudet is this: You made a grave error. And secondly: We all love Gallaudet too much to accept her as our representative.

We've all already been disappointed with her. So that's why we need to approach the members of the Board and let them know: You've made a very bad mistake in choosing her. You simply didn't listen...

#### UNQUOTE

As seen on video at [www.joeybaer.com](http://www.joeybaer.com) (titled "Unity For Gallaudet")--a message directed at the Gallaudet Board of Trustees at a recent forum for concerned members of the deaf community of the San Francisco Bay area.

Brian Riley (559) 285-5268  
[www.gallyfssa.org](http://www.gallyfssa.org)