

the BUFF *and* BLUE

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WHERE ARE OUR RIGHTS?

Written by Andrew Jones

I sit in HMB as a hearing graduate student in protest of an oppressive and unresponsive deaf university. How did I get here?

It started in high school. I was taking French classes to fulfill my foreign language credit, but in every class I was focused on the ASL class across the hall. I dropped French in my second semester almost immediately to start ASL classes. Luckily I met a deaf person soon after who would become a friend to me and introduce me to the Deaf community and Deaf culture.

My undergraduate major was cultural anthropology with a minor in ethnic studies. Throughout college I was increasingly involved in the Deaf community of Dallas, volunteering at the Deaf Action Center and participating in events as much as possible. I became deeply concerned with so much oppression that I saw the Deaf community faced with, especially people of color in the Deaf community. Racism is definitely an issue to be faced, as is audism.

Unfortunately I have to say that I was shocked when I arrived at Gallaudet. I expected a deaf utopia, a totally signing university. At first I became confused upon seeing many employees of the university that did not sign. I was stunned to find out that some classes were taught through an interpreter – I thought the point of going to a deaf university was to have direct open communication. I have been here since July and this is barely the tip of the iceberg.

As many of you know, just yesterday morning DPS broke in and assaulted students on a supposed report of a bomb threat. I was here. I was inches away from every body that crashed against a wall, floor, or metal rail. I smelt and felt the pepper spray a floor away from where it was sprayed. Worse yet, none of the intent of DPS was communicated with the students. Everyone seemed to be ignored. The students became an obstacle course and were dehumanized in an officers' attempt to silence our protest. There was a bomb threat? Funny, I did not hear that until hours after the break in yesterday night. In emergency situations communication is absolutely crucial; if the intent of DPS's entrance had been communicated, perhaps no students would have been hurt. Audism physically hurt our students yesterday morning and Gallaudet denies that anything happened.

That audism is so firmly rooted in this univer-

sity is appalling. I am deeply saddened that some have become so numb to its reoccurrences as to ignore it. It cannot be ignored any longer, and hearing students must take their part in dismantling such a system.

This protest is about civil rights. Many hearing students have told me they do not feel it is their place, that this is a deaf protest. I understand and respect that perspective, but from my point of view, protecting and fighting for civil rights is everyone's duty. You do not have to be deaf to see the oppression on campus, and you do not have to be deaf to fight to end it. We must fight not for each other, but with each other. As Anthony Robbins said, "You see, in life, lots of people know what to do, but few people actually do what they know. Knowing is not enough! You must take action."



If the Metropolitan Police comes,
please remember to:

Go to the Atrium

Remain calm

Stay with others

DO NOT RESIST

UNITY FOR GALLAUDET!