March 19, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

The Gallaudet University Center for International Programs and Services (CIPS) is pleased to be able to express our support for the Global Disability Rights Library (GDRL) project. The GDRL Project is an important initiative of the US International Council on Disabilities (USICD) and the University of Iowa’s WiderNet Project that will improve the lives of both deaf and hard of hearing people and people with disabilities globally. It will help bring electronic information materials and resources to deaf and disabled people’s organizations (DPOs) in developing countries—whether or not they have Internet access.

CIPS comprises four units. The English Language Institute offers instruction in English as a second language to international deaf students who are preparing to attend university in the United States. The Global Education and Scholar Services provides a range of services to Gallaudet staff, faculty, and students as well as opportunities for international scholars and professionals to attend short-term programs on campus. The International Outreach program provides guidance to Gallaudet faculty and staff conducting international outreach projects. Our International Student Services provides various support services to international students and scholars at Gallaudet. In addition to these four units, CIPS also coordinates the World Deaf Information Resource Project (WDIRP). The WDIRP maintains a web directory of deaf schools and organizations around the world and links to deaf-related information resources. CIPS is itself a unit of the Gallaudet University College of Professional Studies and Outreach (CPSO). Gallaudet University is the only liberal arts university for deaf students in the world.

The GDRL will bring information and educational materials to Deaf organizations, DPOs, decision makers, advocates, and other organizations and agencies that lack Internet access and that serve deaf and hard of hearing people, and people with disabilities in developing countries. This promises to become a critical means for deaf organizations and DPOs to receive information about deaf and disability rights that might otherwise be out of reach for them. As an educational institute, Gallaudet is well aware that knowledge and information is power. Gallaudet’s many outstanding alumni prove this premise as they pursue their stellar careers throughout the United States and in dozens of countries around the world. An educated, well-informed deaf population has the power to transform the world around them and act as stronger advocates for their human rights.
The GDRL Project is an important means for bringing empowering knowledge to people without Internet access who would otherwise be on the wrong side of the information divide.

CIPS is eager to explore ways it can build future partnerships with USICD, including on behalf of the GDRL project. We look forward to the success of the Global Disability Rights Library.

Sincerely,

Dr. Asiah Mason
Director of CIPS