Position Statement on Gene Editing, Gene Therapy, and Human Diversity

Gallaudet University believes that Deaf people are an essential part of human diversity and bring unique value to society. Our signed languages, cultures, knowledge, and ways of seeing the world benefit everyone. Deaf lives are not deficits to be corrected.

Engaging with Emerging Science Responsibly

Gene editing and gene therapy may make it possible to change traits associated with being deaf. These technologies may bring important medical benefits. They also raise an important question: Who gets to decide?

History is filled with examples of societies trying to erase languages, cultures, and knowledge they did not value. A humane future comes not from narrowing human diversity, but from learning to understand and live with one another.

Decisions about the future of deaf people must be shaped and led by Deaf people. Deaf scientists, ethicists, scholars, educators, along with families and communities must be at the center of these conversations and help lead them. Progress cannot be defined without the people whose lives it seeks to change.

Our Commitment

Gallaudet commits to:

- **Lead national and global conversations** about gene editing, gene therapy, and human diversity.
- **Advance knowledge** through research, education, and public engagement.
- **Ensure Deaf leadership** in decisions that affect Deaf lives.
- **Continue to uphold the value of human diversity**, particularly Deaf people, signed languages, cultures, and knowledge.

Our Vision

In a world where technology can increasingly change human biology, Gallaudet will champion a fundamental truth: Deaf lives are an essential part of humanity. We envision a future shaped *with* Deaf people, not for them – where scientific discovery and human dignity advance together, where individual choice is respected, and where human diversity is understood not as an obstacle to progress, but as part of what makes progress worth pursuing.

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