

Appalachian

STATE UNIVERSITY

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June 18, 2008

University Tennessee Board of Trustees

Dear Members of the Board of Trustees:

I am writing to add my voice to the many supporters of the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Department at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. In addition to points that many others have addressed (e.g., the department's historical significance and national reputation, the community service provided by the department, the shortage of audiologists and speech-language pathologists as well as speech and hearing scientists), I would like to point out that though there are currently four graduate programs in speech-language pathology and audiology in Tennessee, none of the programs regularly have difficulty maintaining adequate enrollment because of the limited number of these types of programs in the region. Admission to graduate study in these areas tends to be quite competitive, particularly for students interested in audiology.

As an audiology professor in a university without a graduate audiology program, I have had numerous undergraduate students who have obtained graduate degrees in audiology from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville (with four students who were admitted this year expecting to begin the programs in the fall of 2008). Most of these students were North Carolina residents who applied to UT-K's audiology graduate program in part because of the limited number of audiology graduate programs in the region. There is one clinical audiology doctoral program in North Carolina, at UNC-Chapel Hill. There are no Au.D. programs in South Carolina or Georgia, and only one in Mississippi, one in Virginia, one in Alabama and one in West Virginia. I have had students who chose to attend UT-Knoxville's Au.D. program even when they were accepted by several other programs, including UNC-Chapel Hill's. In addition, the opportunities that the Knoxville program can provide to Speech-Language Pathology students related to working with children with hearing impairment has been a significant attraction for a number of my undergraduate students.

I have long been familiar with the Audiology and SLP department at UT-Knoxville and its outstanding reputation across the areas of research, education and service. I would urge you to support alternatives to the termination of this excellent department. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Dodd Murphy, Ph.D., CCC-A
Associate Professor, Communication Disorders