

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF AUDIOLOGY

11730 Plaza America Drive, Suite 300, Reston, VA 20190-4798 • 1-800-AAA-2336



August 27, 2008

Dear President, Chancellor, and Board of Trustees, University of Knoxville:

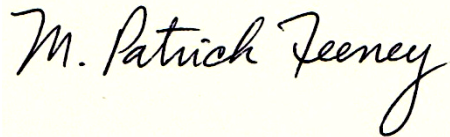
It has come to our attention that the Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville is being considered for closure due to budget cuts. Decisions of this type are invariably difficult, but in this case you are facing the reality of closing a nationally ranked program with 225 majors. The UT Knoxville Audiology and Speech Pathology program graduates 10-12 Doctor of Audiology students and 25-30 Masters in Speech-Language Pathology students annually. These graduates are dedicating their professional lives to helping patients with hearing loss, balance disorders and speech and language disorders. They are helping to meet the ever growing need for audiology and speech pathology services for citizens in your state and region. Additionally, given the acute national shortage of Ph.D.s in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, it is of great significance that the Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology at UT Knoxville has 16 Ph.D. students, 7 of whom are studying Audiology.

The American Academy of Audiology represents nearly 11,000 audiologists, and is the largest organization of, by, and for audiologists in the United States. With integrity, commitment, excellence, and professionalism as our core values, the Academy aspires to be essential in the professional lives of audiologists by advancing the science and practice of audiology, and by achieving public recognition of audiologists as experts in hearing and balance. Therefore, we are dedicated to promoting quality hearing and balance care by advancing the profession of audiology through leadership, advocacy, education, public awareness, and support of research.

The American Academy of Audiology has highlighted the strong national reputation in research of the Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology at UT Knoxville several times in the last few years. For example, the Journal of the American Academy of Audiology recently published an entire Special Issue on Hearing Research from UT Knoxville: *Acceptable Noise Level* (October 2006, Volume 17, Issue 9). In the past three years, the Department has had at least one student receive a research award at the Annual Convention of the American Academy of Audiology, AudiologyNOW! Also this past year two of the three students who received the coveted James Jerger Award for Research at AudiologyNOW! were from the UT program. Finally, this past year Patti Johnstone, a faculty member, received the New Investigator Research Award.

The UT Knoxville Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology is making a strong contribution to the education of future audiologists and speech pathologists for the state of Tennessee and the region; as well as developing future leaders in academia in these professions. I urge you to maintain and adequately fund this program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Patrick Feeney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "M" and a long, sweeping tail on the "y".

M. Patrick Feeney, Ph.D.
President