



**DISABILITY LAW & ADVOCACY CENTER**  
*of Tennessee*

June 11, 2008

**VIA FACSIMILE (865-974-4811)**

President John Petersen  
800 Andy Holt Tower  
Knoxville, TN 37996

**Middle Tennessee Regional  
Office Administration  
and Legal Department**  
2416 21st. Avenue South  
Suite 100  
Nashville, TN 37212  
615-298-1080  
615-298-2471 (TTY)

Re: Proposed Closure of UT Knoxville's Audiology and Speech Pathology  
Department

**East Tennessee  
Regional Office**  
3115 Essary Drive  
Suite A  
Knoxville, TN 37918  
865-689-9020  
865-689-5488 (TTY)

Dear President Petersen:

Disability Law & Advocacy Center of Tennessee (DLAC) is a private nonprofit agency which has been designated as the protection and advocacy agency for Tennessee. Our agency belongs to a national network of agencies mandated and funded by Congress to help enforce the human and civil rights of individuals with disabilities. DLAC is very concerned about the proposal to close University of Tennessee Knoxville's (UTK) Audiology and Speech Pathology Department and the effect that may have on people with hearing and speech disabilities.

**West Tennessee  
Regional Office  
Intake Unit**  
2670 Union Avenue Extended  
Suite 900  
Memphis, TN 38112  
901-458-6013  
901-323-4241 (TTY)

As you are likely aware, the Tennessee School for the Deaf is located in Knoxville. In addition, East Tennessee as a whole is home to a substantial number of people with hearing and speech disabilities. In fact, it is our understanding that the patient base of the clinic operated by UTK's Audiology and Speech Pathology Department is currently comprised of people with disabilities from twenty-five (25) different Tennessee counties. It is our further understanding that approximately thirty-eight percent (38%) of these individuals are TennCare recipients and would be unable to afford audiology and speech services from any other provider. Therefore, DLAC considers it likely that closing the UTK Audiology and Speech Pathology Department will have a direct and negative impact on a significant portion of the disability community in East Tennessee.

As noted on the UTK website, the university "prides itself on adding value to Tennessee." The programs offered at the Audiology and Speech Pathology clinic are a good example of an invaluable service UTK currently provides to this state, and DLAC is hopeful that this will continue. In addition to our concerns about closure of the clinic operated by UTK's Audiology and Speech Pathology Department, our agency is also concerned that UTK's discontinuation of the training provided by this department may well result in a future shortage of qualified audiology and speech pathology professionals in Tennessee and across the United States. DLAC understands that unavoidable budget cuts can sometimes call for drastic changes.

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U.S. Department of Education and  
the Social Security Administration

However, we hope that your university will take steps to ensure that such changes do not negatively impact the availability of services to an already at risk population.

At your earliest convenience, please respond in writing to me at our Middle Tennessee office to confirm whether UTK intends to proceed with the proposed closure of the Audiology and Speech Pathology Department.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martha M. Lafferty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Martha M. Lafferty  
Managing Attorney

Cc: UT Chancellor Jan Simek  
UT Provost Robert C. Holub  
UT Knoxville Board of Trustees  
DLAC Board of Directors