

**From:** Fabry, David [<mailto:DFabry@med.miami.edu>]

**Sent:** Thursday, June 05, 2008 3:54 PM

**Subject:** Audiology program at UTK

**Importance:** High

To the Board of Trustees at UTK:

I was dismayed to see the news this morning of the decision to eliminate the Audiology and Speech Pathology program at the University of Tennessee, due to budget cutbacks at the UTK. For what it is worth, I think that this is a tremendously short-sighted and poorly-timed decision, in light of the aging “baby boomer” population and concomitant increase in demand for audiologists in this country. In fact, Audiology has been ranked as one of the fastest growing and best careers by US News and World Report for the past three years, and they have also consistently ranked UT’s program in the “Top 25” on the annual ranking list for Audiology graduate programs. The roughly 70 million baby boomers are aging as we speak, and hearing loss is one of the most significant disabilities suffered by the elderly, and Tennessee has a growing number of both civilian and military retirees that will require care for hearing and balance disorders.

In my past role as President of the American Academy of Audiology (in 2001), I saw firsthand the consequences of allowing budgetary shortfalls to impact the training of future healthcare professionals. California, which we know has suffered through many crises of this nature, made the decision not to fund several of their programs and they are still feeling the impact nearly a decade later as they have a huge Audiology shortage in their state. In the long run, it is far more expensive to “import” graduates than it is to “grow your own”. It would be one thing if the program at UT was inferior, but they have consistently graduated outstanding students who have made an impact in the clinical, research, and teaching world of our discipline.

I would not have taken the time to write today if I did not feel that this decision was made in error. I realize the impact of budgetary constraints, and the need for moderation, but simply put the elimination of this program would be a huge mistake.

I am happy to discuss this further with you; my cell phone number is 305 510 3133, and I may be reached at any time.

Sincerely,

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