

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Robert Main

> Sent: Thursday, June 12, 2008 3:44 PM

> Subject: FW: UTK Dept. of Audiology & Speech Pathology

>

>

> Subject: Recommendation to Close the Department of  
Audiology & Speech Pathology at the University of  
Tennessee, Knoxville

>

> This past weekend I read an article in the Chattanooga  
Times Free Press that the Dean of the College of Arts and  
Sciences at UTK had made the recommendation to close the  
Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology. The article  
also stated that the Provost, the Interim-Chancellor, and the  
President had signed off on this recommendation. If this  
recommendation is approved by the members of the Board of  
Trustees on June 20, 2008, it will have a devastating effect on  
the rehabilitation field and the people of Tennessee.

>

> As President and CEO of a freestanding rehabilitation  
hospital, I am well aware of serious budget constraints in a  
shrinking reimbursement environment. However, when making  
cuts, one must look at the long-term effect it will have, not only  
on your institution, but on the constituents in your state or  
service area. Speech and language pathologists, along with  
physical therapists and occupational therapists, are so  
important in returning disabled individuals to their maximum  
level of independence in order to have a life that is productive  
and satisfying. Speech and language pathologists are  
invaluable in neuro-rehabilitation and in providing cognitive  
retraining for individuals with traumatic brain injury. Of the  
three disciplines above, physical therapy, occupational  
therapy, and speech/language pathology, speech/language  
pathologists are the most difficult to recruit given their scarcity  
and the high demands for their services. By not having an  
adequate number of speech/language pathologists, the costs  
to a rehabilitation hospital increase significantly since we have  
to use > "> travelers> "> or agency speech/language  
pathologists.

>

> I have to question if any review was done with the  
rehabilitation field in the state as to the negative effect this

action by UTK will have on both disabled individuals and rehabilitation hospitals and units. If I had been asked what effect this would have, my response would have been that we need to increase the number of graduates rather than closing a department. It is my understanding that there are currently more than 200 students in the program and the employment rate for the graduate students is typically 100%. UTK's Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology is the largest program in the state and its graduates are so integral to the recovery of disabled Tennesseans. I am sure that if the University was to conduct a full assessment, they would come to the conclusion that closing the Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology would be extremely detrimental to the citizens of our state.

>

> I would strongly encourage you to vote against the recommendation to close the Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology at UTK at your June 20, 2008 meeting.

>

> Sincerely,

> Robert P. Main

> President/CEO

>

>

>

> Robert P. Main, FACHE

> President & CEO

> Siskin Hospital for Physical Rehabilitation

> One Siskin Plaza

> Chattanooga, TN 37403

> Telephone: (423) 634-1210

> Fax: (423) 634-4509