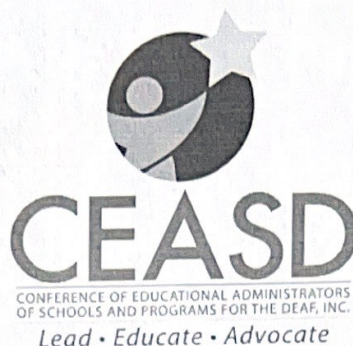


Dr. David Geeslin
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February 14, 2022

Dean Al Smith
Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services
Utah State University
Logan, UT

Dean Smith,

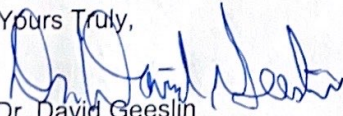
We write to urge you to maintain the Bilingual-Bicultural ASL/English Deaf Education program at Utah State University. As the organization representing the executive leaders of Deaf Schools and Programs across the United States, we recognize the value of USU's graduates in their pedagogical and ASL skills that are essential to our ASL/English programs, and you will find USU graduates in many of our programs across the country, not only in the state of Utah.

A study done by my organization demonstrates that more than 500 new teachers of the deaf are needed in schools for the deaf alone in the next three years (Fischgrund and Tucker, 2018), and this number does not consider the additional teachers needed in mainstream education programs. A study by Dolman (2010) documented a nationwide reduction in deaf education teacher training programs over the past 20 years. A high point occurred in 1985 when there were 81 programs. This number has decreased to 62 with more programs, such as your program at USU, in danger of being closed. The result has led to a substantial reduction in numbers of deaf education graduates. The largest group of 1,680 graduated in 1982 which decreased to 737 in 2009 representing a 56% decline. A 2019 poll of deaf education programs showed that approximately 450 graduated for the past two years with 300 anticipated for 2020. This represents just 10.8% of the graduating class size of 1982. These numbers are unsustainable for our programs and, more importantly, the needs of deaf and hard of hearing students, especially those who use an ASL/English approach for learning.

We recognize that it is your prerogative as an executive leader to ensure continuous improvement of your program. However, we wish you to be aware of the short and long term impacts that a lack of graduates qualified in ASL/English will have on schools and programs for deaf and hard of hearing students in the mountain west and, eventually, across the nation. We would recommend not suspending the program while still focusing on any improvement that may be needed.

Please support the continuation of this vital program for deaf and hard of hearing children. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours Truly,


Dr. David Geeslin
President

Deaf children will thrive!