

SAVE UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY'S BILINGUAL BICULTURAL PROGRAM

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FEBRUARY 12, 2022 | EMILY O'HARA BERGESON

Utah Association of the Deaf – Open Letter

Utah Association of the Deaf (UAD) shares an open letter in which President Kim Lucas and Vice President Ashli-Marie Grant read on behalf of the entire UAD board.



UAD Open Letter

Here is the letter.

[We are] writing on behalf of the Utah Association of the Deaf (UAD) in regards to the announcement of program closure of the Bilingual-Bicultural Track of USU's Master's Program in Communication Disorders and Deaf Education.

We appeal to Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services Dean to reverse this decision. This program preparing teachers of deaf children is vital to Deaf children who need teachers who can use their most accessible language, American Sign Language. UAD supports deaf children and their families and their rights to all communication and language choices and encourages the existence of an ASL/English Program to provide the necessary teachers for this right to choose.

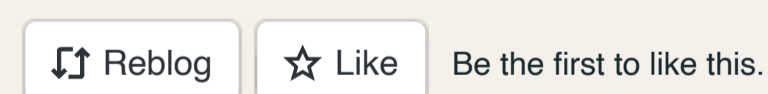
Deaf children need Deaf adult role models in their education and therefore need more Deaf teachers in their schools. Deaf adults who want to become teachers of the Deaf need a program accessible to them and prepares them to teach in their native and natural language of ASL. Deaf adults cannot complete a teacher training program that focuses solely on listening and spoken language which would be the only remaining option at Utah State University.

Utah State University has been the designated program in Utah to prepare teachers of the Deaf since 1985. If this program were to close, it would negatively impact the availability of certified teachers in Utah. It would also reduce the number of teachers who can effectively communicate with deaf children in their most accessible language, which is American Sign Language. It would deprive the Deaf and Hard of Hearing children of their opportunity to learn the subject matter in their native language, thus impacting their educational outcomes.

UAD, as the representative organization of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community in Utah, stands ready to collaborate with USU in ensuring the viability of the masters' program to benefit the students in our state and many other states.

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