



Date: November 5, 2021

To: Hossein Saiedian, University Senate President
Faculty in the Department
Barbara A. Bichelmeyer, Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor

From: Karen Moeller, Chair Academic Policies and Procedure committee

Re: Program Discontinuance in Visual Arts Education

In Accordance with University Senate Rules and Regulations USRR 8.2, the Academic Policies and Procedures Committee (AP&P) has reviewed the documentation and held an open public hearing on October 14, 2021, regarding the recommendation to discontinue the following active programs in the Department of Visual Art in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Kansas:

- Bachelor of Art Education in Visual Art Education
- Master of Arts in Visual Art Education

In the submitted documents titled "Recommendations for Discontinuance of an Active Academic Program," the College recommends discontinuance of these programs secondary to low enrollment (below KBOR minima for the past 8-10 years) and lack of faculty (only one faculty member due to retirements).

At the public hearing on October 14, 2021, fifteen people spoke out against the discontinuance of Visual Arts Education (VAE). Twenty-eight written testimonies were received before the hearing. Faculty supporting the program highlighted the value of art education to the community, students, and the university. Speakers noted, although the programs are small with respect to the number of faculty and students, the faculty in collaboration with visiting professors have developed a highly successful program, as showcased in the Kansas Department of Education (KSDE) review. Additionally, graduates have a 98% placement rate and are recognized by numerous teaching awards and national board certifications. The following key points of the VAE programs were mentioned in statements and testimony.

- Average of 27 majors yearly (range 20-45). This number meets the demands of the job market.
- Largest art education program in Kansas
- The VAE program has the largest number of students in any of the Visual Art (VA) Departments.
- Loss of VAE students will impact enrollment in other VA departments (e.g., 42 credits in studio courses) and in the School of Education
- VAE students average ~ 500 SCH yearly
- Low budget in comparison to other VA programs

During the hearing, faculty and alumni consistently spoke about the huge detrimental impact that Kansas and K-12 students will face if the program is discontinued. If the program is discontinued, Kansas K-12 schools would be at a loss for well-trained art education teachers. Currently, Kansas and surrounding states require training in the arts to graduate high school. Speakers also highlighted how

art helps students cope with stress and trauma by providing an outlet for their emotions. Additionally, the VAE programs at KU provide outreach to the community and works with the Lawrence Art Center, the Willow Domestic Violence Center, and the Alvarado retirement community. VAE also partners with the Spencer Museum of Art, the Lied Center, and the Music Education Program to promote art in the community through workshops and presentations. It was noted that the Spencer Museum just received a \$1.5 million federal grant for education outreach across Kansas.

Faculty also stressed the concern of loss of financial revenue with the discontinuance of the VAE program. Students wanting a VAE degree will have to seek education at other universities and will not come to KU. These losses of students will lead to a loss of SCH and fees to the university. Additionally, the faculty also suggested starting a BFA in VAE to help increase enrollment.

During the hearing, a statement of discrimination was made. The committee recognizes these concerns; however, evaluation of discrimination is outside the scope of this committee. The AP&P committee encourages anyone with concerns of discrimination to work with the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX at The University of Kansas to address these issues.

On October 29, 2021, the AP&P committee met to discuss the submitted documentation and the statements expressed at the hearing. AP&P recommends by a majority vote that the BA and MA in VAE be continued. The committee concluded that discontinuance was not in the best interest for the university due to the loss of revenue and the overall impact the loss of VAE would have on the local and state region. The committee recognizes the small number of faculty in the VAE program and the need for additional support to execute the MA degree. However, the committee feels both the BA and MA are viable programs. The committee saw the level of commitment the new Chair of Visual Arts had for the VAE program. He is deeply committed to making the VAE a successful program and has the ability to develop creative solutions to staffing issue, such as making use of current faculty as well as alumni/adjunct faculty. The committee recommends utilizing adjunct faculty and faculty from other VA programs to support the MA program. The committee feels that the vision and commitment of the new Chair of the VA department will strongly facilitate the programs' maintenance and growth and feels that this support was not clearly in place when the program discontinuance was initially proposed in October 2020. The committee recommends exploring a BFA to help with enrollment.

The committee concluded that discontinuing the VAE program would be a significant loss to the university and its standing within the art community in Kansas. Loss of the program will lead to a loss of future art educators for K-12 schools. The VAE helps fulfill KU's mission "lift students and society by educating leaders" through creation of well-trained art educators. VAE also contributes to "building healthy communities" through outreach to regional programs (e.g., retirement communities, art centers) and through partnerships with other programs at KU (e.g., Spencer Museum, School of Education, Gerontology program). Based on the reasons discussed above, the committee recommends program continuance.

Documentation Reviewed by the Committee:

1. Recommendation for Discontinuance of an Active Academic Program, October 2020
2. Visual art Executive Summary
3. Visual art Program Highlights
4. Visual Art Graduate Dean Report
5. National Association of Schools of Art and Design Visitor's Report

6. Written statements (available on governance.ku.edu webpage) by Kerr, Rosenthal, Iversen, Blair, Waldorf, Amont, Stone, Davis, Westergard, Folk, Schroeder, Kotlinksi, Holton, Santos, Voth, Nelson-Bova, Kowalchuk, Rice, Jorda, McCaffrey, Elipers, Kuhn, Gross, Hanna, Souder, Harlow, Ping, Cooper

C: John Colombo, Interim Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences