

Polly S. Blair

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Karen Moeller

Chair of APP Faculty Senate

Rémy Lequesne

President, Faculty Senate

Dear Ms. Moeller and Dr. Lequesne,

I am writing to urge you to object to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences' recommendation to close the Visual Art Education (VAE) program at KU. As former Secretary of Education William Bennett put it, "The arts are an essential element of education, just like reading, writing, and arithmetic...music, dance, painting, and theater are all keys that unlock profound human understanding and accomplishment."

The University of Kansas has an exemplary School of Education and Human Sciences. The front page of the School of Ed's website says it has been "preparing educators and human science professionals as leaders since 1909." What does it say about our University, however, if merely for a low dip in average graduates, that it doesn't support the arts or art education? Art educators are crucial members of faculty at schools across Kansas; for some students, our arts programs are the one thing that keeps them coming to school. The teaching of visual arts isn't only about making art: it's about collaboration, design thinking, problem solving, and connecting to the human experience.

Is the \$100,000 saved by eliminating the VAE program worth the cost of how it looks that Kansas' premier institution of higher learning doesn't support the visual arts and the educators who teach visual arts? As a graduate student in 2015, I was one of 18 Kansas educators who helped Kansas adopt the new National Art Standards. I have written articles that have been published in magazines and books. I've spoken at state and national art educator conferences. I am the passionate and talented educator I am because of the outstanding VAE faculty and program at KU.

Please support arts in our schools by supporting the VAE program.

Thank you most sincerely,

Polly S. Blair

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Master of Arts, Visual Art Education, 2019