

1931 Larnard Avenue
Lawrence, Kansas 66046

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AP&P
University Governance Office
Strong Hall, Room 33
Lawrence, KS 66045

This letter is in support of retaining the KU's Visual Art Education Program as part of the Department of Visual Art. As a retired faculty with 31 years within this program, I have had first-hand knowledge of and extensive teaching experience in VAE. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to be within a program with a very rich background. Indeed, it has had a very long, successful history that began in 1946. The result is that for 77 years, VAE has contributed to the cultural education of numerous children and youth in Kansas and beyond.

During my career, I was in the position of evaluating the performance of various art education programs across the State of Kansas as part of accreditation teams that were tasked with the goal of determining whether programs upheld national standards for licensing art teachers. I became acutely aware of how KU stood vis-à-vis other art education programs; it was very clear to me that VAE had very high standards and provided the highest quality art education in the State of Kansas. Such preparation is borne out by successful outcomes such as the employment of students. A total of 99.9% of VAE graduating students find good jobs both in and outside of Kansas in art museums, arts organizations, and public and private schools. School principals, who contacted me for student recommendations overwhelmingly commented that KU's VAE graduates were better prepared to art teach than others who had matriculated elsewhere; they were also well equipped to remain in the classroom for the duration of their careers despite the vicissitudes of the

classroom. These are important indicators of VAE's success in preparing future art teachers.

Higher education faces serious fiscal struggles that entail very tough decisions. Amid ensuing conversations, administrators must weigh the value of programs such as VAE. A critical question that must be asked relative to VAE is how can a program be eliminated when it opens the minds of children and youth concerning art and culture? Art education entails imparting big ideas, and asking enduring questions whether it is about freedom, identity, the environment, and others. It also addresses how humankind has been creative and how creativity impacts every-day life. Finally, such an education provides young students the visual and intellectual skills to verbally discuss the cultural symbols of our communities - city murals, monuments, or architecture that provide a record of human achievements.

In sum, KU's VAE program has been very successful, and is important to the education of Kansan children and youth. Therefore, it should be retained.

Sincerely,

Denise L. Stone