

DJD

October 1, 2021

Professor Rémy Lequesne, President of the Faculty Senate
Professor Karen Moeller, Chairperson of the Academic Policies and Procedures Committee
Faculty Senate
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

Dear Professors Lequesne and Moeller

While I have known and worked with a number of faculty and graduates of the University of Kansas over my 50+ year career as an art educator / arts administrator, I have no vested interest in the University or any of its programs. I do have a vested interest in and intense concern about the education of American young people, especially with regard to their education in the arts and culture. Hence, the purpose of my letter. I recently learned that the University of Kansas is planning to discontinue their art education program, and I urge you to reconsider this decision. As a nationally active art educator / art administrator, I can tell you that the art education program at the University of Kansas has enjoyed national visibility and has produced hundreds of graduates who have made significant contributions to educating individuals in the arts and culture at all levels. Their work, along with that of the art education faculty at KU, has brought national recognition and visibility to the University. The art education program at KU has produced hundreds of art teachers for the State of Kansas as well as the Midwest in general. Over the years the graduate programs in art education have prepared students at the masters and doctoral levels who have made a strong mark and have had a significant impact on the field of art education in America.

While the current trends in education seem to emphasize science, technology, engineering and mathematics, a well-educated individual has a much broader education which includes the arts and culture among many other things. The arts provide unique opportunities for students to develop their independent and creative thinking, qualities which serve students well in all areas of endeavor. They are qualities that are rarely specifically taught outside of the arts. It is imperative that teachers are well prepared to deliver an education in all areas, including the arts and culture. The University of Kansas has an established record of providing quality teacher education programs in many areas, including the arts and culture, and can be proud of the contributions that their graduates in these areas have made to society. As a comprehensive R1 institution, I would hope that the University leadership sees the education of teachers as an important part of the institution's broad mission. And, of course, a part of this is educating teachers to deliver a quality program in the visual arts. To close an established and nationally known program will have a significant impact on meeting the needs for providing teachers for the State of Kansas and the Midwest. It will also impact research and the development of scholarship in this area. I urge the leadership of the University of Kansas to reconsider their decision and continue the art education program.

Most Sincerely,



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