

To the following members of the Faculty Senate Committee,

Karen Moeller, Chair of APP
Faculty Senate Committee

Rémy Lequesne
President of Faculty Senate

KU cannot lose its art education program. This program is critical at KU for several reasons. Elementary and secondary public schools pride themselves in robust Visual Arts programs. The Visual Art Education program cultivates the next generation of art educators to go forth and teach in Kansas in addition to other states with proper licensing. The central location of the program in Lawrence, Kansas is irreplaceable and cannot be rivaled in any other community for multiple reasons.

Visual Art has innumerable benefits in school and will never be eliminated from public education. The arts supplement all subject areas including math, language arts, science, and technology. Art helps students access content through multiple means of representation while students can explore concepts viscerally and visually through modeling, recontextualizing, illustrating, organizing, and more. As important as this is, it is more important that students maintain an art-space to explore making judgements about qualitative relationships and problem solving. Students can learn about materials, processes, and problem solving in the art room. These problem-solving skills are also increasing in importance as our world's need for solutions, communication, and relationships increases. Learning in the arts aids students in surrendering to unanticipated possibilities of work as it unfolds and fosters skills of flexibility and adaptation like no other content area. The arts education program equips educators with the expertise to facilitate these learning experiences with enthusiasm.

In this need for art, we will always need art educators who boast a breadth and depth of knowledge of art media and education. KU has an expansive and interdisciplinary Department of Visual Art. This prepares Visual Art Education students to be highly proficient in a variety of studio practices such as drawing, painting, photography, metalsmithing, sculpture, textiles, ceramics, and printmaking media. No other school in Kansas can offer a similar Sculpture foundry, metalsmithing/jewelry, ceramic, and textiles facilities and instruction. The faculty I encountered at KU demonstrated how to be immersed in study at school while also being civically engaged. From them, I learned about the importance of the vitality of a community's museums for nature, history, and art. That is just one more of the many reasons why it is unfathomable that KU would sacrifice such as unique essential component of the institution.

Another reason why this program is irreplaceable and unrivaled is its location in Lawrence, Kansas. The central location among Topeka, Kansas City, Wichita, Emporia, and other surrounding places is necessary for access to art classrooms for Art Education students' fieldwork experiences (both observing and student teaching). Lack of access to real-world art classrooms would be detrimental to the program and for VAE students' practicum and is why KU must maintain a central program with accessible art classrooms for future Art Educators. KU also offers a leading School of Education. When I began my career in public education, I learned about Ci3T model of prevention (of learning and behavior challenges), which I can proudly say I learned about first at KU from Lawrence's own Kathleen Lane, who developed the model of prevention. Additionally, Lawrence is brimming with creative and inclusive culture. There is an emphasis on inclusion, access, awareness, and collective responsibility I have not witnessed anywhere else. There are several Non-profit Arts Organizations that foster creativity and learning for the members of its community unlike anywhere else. Some of

these include Van-Go, The Percolator, The Lawrence Art Center, and the Willow Domestic Violence Center. Lawrence values acknowledging, protecting, and uplifting vulnerable members of its community like incarcerated, homeless, LGBTQI+, at-risk youth, victims of domestic violence, and more. Reaching these populations through the arts is valued in Lawrence through its plethora of organizations and outreach. As a graduated Art Educator, I can see that Arts Education jobs in Lawrence are highly coveted. To remove access to an art education degree and certification seems unintuitive and cruel; I couldn't believe that this was under consideration. If it weren't for the Visual Art Education program at KU, I truly would have been lost and can't imagine what profession I might have ended up in.

To eliminate the Visual Art Education program at KU is to eliminate the dream for so many educators like me, who needed Art Education. It is to cripple Kansas' ability to train the future crop of Art Educators to fill the classrooms in Kansas in a time of desperate need for educators. It is to remove the vehicle for students across the state to access the organizations and resources offered to them in their communities. It will make an endangered species out of us who value a learning environment that nurtures and celebrates problem solving, multiplicity of perspectives, and representing that which can't be put into words. "Arts position in the school curriculum symbolizes to the young what adults believe is important" (Eisner, 2002). We must continue to teach the youth to critically analyze what they are witnessing in their world in this time of social media and digital content that is no longer grounded in truth. I knew when I graduated that I stood on the shoulders of giants who paved the way with Arts Advocacy to give me and my cohorts the opportunities and careers we have. The students I work with each day deserve to grow through arts education and pursue their dreams, especially if it is a creative career. Please refrain from putting more barriers between us and helping our students. Preserve the Art Education Program at KU.

Thank you,

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