

Margie Kuhn
2000 New Hampshire St.
Lawrence, KS 66046
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Re: In support of the Visual Arts Education Program at KU

I earned a Masters degree in Art Education from the University of Kansas in 1995. The KU faculty was outstanding; the VAE faculty brought their diverse experiences in teaching art at primary and secondary schools, as well as museums, into our classrooms and provided us with a broad range of experience and expertise. The coursework included understanding of the history and evolving practices in art education and exposed me to current research in the application of teaching practices in both schools and museums. The faculty encouraged students to attend art education conferences, and often students were involved in presentations both nationally and in the state of Kansas.

My education and experience at KU enabled me to work as art education instructor and administrator in education programs at the Mulvane Art Museum, the Lawrence Arts Center, and Baker University. I taught art education at Baker and also Washburn University; both schools employ lecturers or art faculty to teach one class in art education that serves all students—both education majors and also art education. With this one class, I thought my students at these colleges were woefully unprepared for actual classroom teaching. A single class in art education simply wasn't enough to train students as teachers in primary and secondary education. This situation hasn't changed. At many higher education institutions in Kansas, art education majors still complete one class in art education that is often taught by adjunct or full-time faculty with little or no actual art classroom experience, let alone doctoral degrees in art education. How can they instruct future art teachers when their own background is so limited?

As the flagship institution in the state of Kansas, policies enacted by KU have far-reaching effects for the populace. The University of Kansas should be a leader in promoting art and arts education. Eliminating VAE at KU suggests a lack of support for the arts in general and severely limits the quality of art teachers ready to teach in schools. In a state where public and government support for art is embarrassingly weak, we cannot afford to dismiss art education and the education of future art teachers.

Sincerely,
Margie Kuhn
MA Art Education 1995; MFA Art 1999