

From: [Cooper, Yichien Chen](#)
To: [University Governance](#)
Subject: Letter of support for art education program at KU
Date: Tuesday, October 12, 2021 6:03:58 PM

Dear University Governance at KU,

I am writing this letter to urge you to reconsider the elimination of the Art Education program. As an alumni, graduating in 1998, it saddens me to hear about the potential closure of the Art Education program at the University of Kansas. I cannot express how valuable the education I received at KU is. What makes the Art Education program unique and practical is that it builds a solid foundation in pedagogy and curriculum design for the teaching profession. It utilized three other existing KU assets, namely, art history, the Spencer Museum of Art, and studio art. Its integrated and interdisciplinary approach has impacted me profoundly.

I was an international student hoping to pursue the American dream. Just months prior to my arrival to KU, I was robbed at knife point in New York City. I came with a shattered sense of self with a broken English. Dr. Stone and Dr. Kowalchuk supported me in every way, helping me to fit in, find my own footing, guiding me with compassion and professionalism. I was able to build upon what I gained, venturing out to become who I am today.

Since 2016, I have published six Chinese books about integrating arts curriculum. In my tenure as the President of the World Chinese Arts Education Association, as an Art Commission for the City of Richland, and later as the Chair of the Data Visualization Working Group and the Asian Art and Culture Interest Group at the National Art Education Association, I cannot express how important it is to value education components in the arts. But I can share with you that in all the Asian countries that I visited, China, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Thailand, all share one thing in common. That is, expanding art education in K-12 educational reforms. Take China for example, the subject of art is included in all college entrance exams. In Taiwan, integrated art curriculum has become a new focus to further promote creativity and innovation.

Having a strong education in art provides connections between theories and practices. It gives undergraduates who major in studio art career opportunities. KU's Art Education graduate level program also supports inservice art teachers' professional development. An art education program is the backbone to ensure a vibrant art and culture industry. Without certified art teachers to cultivate aesthetic, critical thinking strategies, and visual literacy, there will be less art connoisseur, but more art-illiterate policy makers who will continuously diminish the importance of art. Without the intricate piece of art education, the field of art will not be sustainable.

I hope you reconsider the decision.
Sincerely,

Yichien Cooper, Ph.D.

Yichien Cooper, PhD

Lecturer, Field Supervisor

College of Education, WSU Tri-Cities

ycooper@wsu.edu 509.372.7592

Chair, Asian Art and Culture Interest Group, National Art Education Association

Honorary President, The World Chinese Arts Education Association

ychiencooper.net

<https://wsu.academia.edu/YichienCooper>