

## **VAPA Diversity Statement**

**The VAPA Department strives to foster a diverse community of artists and scholars who create transformative experiences that build a more compassionate, open, and just society. Throughout our teaching, creative practices, research, and service, we champion a broad range of identities and backgrounds across races, ethnicities, nationalities, genders, sexual orientations, ages, socioeconomic statuses, religious beliefs, neurodiversity, and abilities.**

Whereas UCCS occupies territory that is the ancestral home of the Nuuchiu, which includes the Northern Ute, the Southern Ute, and the Ute Mountain Ute Peoples, who were forcibly removed,

Whereas systemic barriers to education and participation in the arts have historically and presently excluded many students due to their race, class, or marginalized identities,

Whereas arts education has been historically founded upon European practices and has excluded other practices, cultures, and systems of knowledge,

We commit to addressing this history through the following actions:

### **Recruit, retain, and support marginalized students, faculty, and staff**

- Listen to ongoing needs and concerns across the VAPA department, campus, and community
- Examine policies and practices that may perpetuate inequities
- Collaborate around the design and implementation of new policies that enable more equitable outcomes.
- Support students in a wide range of future professional paths, and mentor them to hone skills that are valuable both in and outside of the arts

### **Innovate our arts curricula and foster communities in which diverse artistic practices, research, and exploration thrive:**

- Investigate conventional methods of knowledge production and dissemination, transform notions of artistic literacy, and guide students to seek out deep ways of learning through experience, collaboration, and rigorous inquiry.
- Question notions of canon and investigate a broad spectrum of artistic practices, both past and present from established and emerging artists, including our students
- Remain flexible over time, and adapt our institutional practices to evolving practices, climates, and student needs and interests

### **Connect with artists and communities beyond the UCCS campus:**

- Welcome diverse **guest artists** who offer unique perspectives, challenge conventions, and empower students to create.
- Initiate and engage in **community collaborations** and reduce barriers between the campus and the residents of the city and region
- Support students in developing professional relationships in the region