

AGENCY OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont

TEAM: School Finance/Postsecondary Approvals

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education renew The Center for Cartoon Studies' Certificate of Degree-Granting Authority to offer a Master of Fine Arts, and renew a Certificate of Approval to permit CCS to offer credit-bearing courses leading to a Certificate in Cartooning for a period of five (5) years commencing on May 15, 2024 and ending May 31, 2029?

SECRETARY'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education renews The Center for Cartoon Studies' Certificate of Degree-Granting Authority to offer a Master of Fine Arts and renews a Certificate of Approval to permit CCS to offer credit-bearing courses leading to a Certificate in Cartooning for a period of five (5) years commencing on May 15, 2024 and ending May 31, 2029.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 16 V.S.A. § 176 and 176 a
State Board Rule: 2240 et seq

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The State Board of Education is responsible for issuing Certificates of Approval and Certificates of Degree-Granting Authority, or both, to applicant postsecondary schools whose objectives, programs, and resources, including personnel, curriculum, finances, and facilities, are found to be adequate and appropriate for the stated purpose and for the protection of students and the public interest. The Center for Cartoon Studies (CCS) submitted all requested materials and was reviewed in accordance with State Board of Education Rule 2243.

The Center for Cartoon Studies is not accredited by an entity recognized by the US Department of Education. CCS received initial SBE approval prior to January 1, 2015; therefore, per SBE Rule 2243.3, accreditation is not required for CCS to be eligible for renewal.

Per SBE Rule 2243.7, the State Board of Education may grant renewal of a certificate of approval and/or degree granting authority for a period not to exceed five years.

Title 16 VSA§176(h) requires that the Board obtain the advice of the Vermont Higher Education Council, Incorporated (VHEC) before acting on applications for Certificates of Degree-Granting Authority. As such, the Agency contracted with VHEC to conduct a review of the application and advise the SBE on its recommendation.

In its report to the SBE and the Agency dated February 9, 2024, VHEC's Certification Review Committee recommended five (5) year approval, without stipulation, to offer the MFA degree in Cartoon Studies. Interim Secretary Saunders agrees with VHEC's recommendation and also recommends the same five (5) year approval to offer credit-bearing courses leading to a Certificate in Cartooning .

VHEC's full report and recommendation is attached.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS: There are no fiscal impacts to the Agency of Education or the State of Vermont beyond the staff time necessary to process the request and formulate this recommendation to the State Board. That cost has been partially offset by The Center for Cartoon Studies' payment to the Agency of a \$7,500 fee.

STAFF AVAILABLE:

Cassandra Ryan, Director of Regulatory Compliance and Risk Management