

**State Board of Education  
September 20, 2011  
Consent Agenda Item**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Montpelier, Vermont**

**TEAM:** School Finance / Postsecondary Approvals

**ITEM:** Will the State Board of Education renew The Center for Cartoon Studies (CCS) 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 September 20, 2011 and ending September 30, 2016?

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** That the State Board of Education renew The Center for Cartoon Studies (CCS) 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 September 20, 2011 and ending September 30, 2016.

**STATUTORY AUTHORITY:** 16 V.S.A. §176 and 176a.

**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.

After reviewing complete application materials from CCS, Department of Education staff agrees with the recommendation from Vermont Higher Education Council (VHEC). In its report to the department dated May 18, 2011, VHEC's Committee on Accreditation and Certification recommended the five year approval for CCS's application for Degree Granting Authority for a Master of Fine Arts (MFA). The full report is available at our offices.

CCS also requests renewal of the Certificate of Approval for authority to offer credit-bearing courses separately in the form of certificate programs. Postsecondary education staff conducted a review of CCS's Certificate in Cartooning program and finds the goals, programs and resources to be adequate and appropriate for the stated purpose and recommends that the State Board issue CCS a Certificate of Approval to run concurrently with VHEC's recommendation for a Certificate of Degree-Granting Authority.

**COST IMPLICATIONS:** There are no fiscal impacts to the Department 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 department of a \$4,500 fee.

**STAFF AVAILABLE:** Bill Talbott, Chief Financial Officer; Cathy Hilgendorf, Postsecondary Approval Coordinator