

## State Board of Education Independent School Approval Review Committee

### Draft Meeting Minutes

Meeting Place: Virtual Teams Meeting/Video/Teleconference

Call in #: 1-802-828-7667

Conference ID: 794 189 100#

Date: May 8, 2024

#### Present

**State Board of Education (SBE) Subcommittee Members:** Tom Lovett, Jenna O'Farrell, Lyle Jepson Agency of Education (AOE): Cassandra Ryan, Pat Pallas Gray, Maureen Gaidys, Josh Souliere, J. Deborah Ormsbee

**Others:** Gabrielle Malina, Michelle Ollie, Dave Lloyd, all representing The Center for Cartoon Studies (hereafter CCS), Peter Eden and Dave Wolk from the visiting team.

#### **Call to Order/Roll Call/Amendments to the Agenda**

Tom Lovett called the meeting to order at 2:00pm. There were no amendments to the agenda.

#### **Approve [Draft Minutes from the January 3, 2024 Meeting](#)**

Lyle Jepson made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 3, 2024 meeting with the correction of the spelling of Tom Lovett's name. Tom Lovett seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

#### **Public to be Heard**

There was no public to be heard.

#### **Post-Secondary Renewal: The Center for Cartoon Studies (CCS) – Cassandra Ryan**

The Visiting Team appointed by Vermont Higher Education Collaborative (VHEC) spent the day of November 16, 2023 at The Center for Cartoon Studies (hereafter CCS) in White River Junction, Vermont. The Chair had several conversations and one in-person visit to CCS prior to November 16.

Visiting Team Members: David S. Wolk, Review Team Chair, former President of Castleton University (2001-2017); Jon MacClaren, former Executive Vice President and CFO, Landmark College and Bard College; Katie Flanagan Mobley, Dean of Enrollment and Community Relations, Community College of VT; Samuel Rowlett, Associate Professor of Art, Landmark College.

The Center is requesting a certificate of approval and ability to offer a Master of Fine Arts degree. Offerings are the same as when they came before the State Board previously. They are not accredited and are not required to be accredited. They are grandfathered into the process. The review process was very thorough, and the report was favorable for a five-year approval and opportunity to offer the MFA.

Dave Wolk reported out as Chair of the Visiting Team. He pointed out the process and lauded The Center for Cartoon Studies' quality of education and passion of the faculty and staff. The self-study was carefully crafted and provided a clear picture of the Center.

Enrollment is approximately 30 students, most pursuing a Master of Fine Arts. Mr. Wolk suggested that, if there is a way to do so, that they should receive more than 5 years of accreditation. The statute only allows for a maximum of five years.

The staff fielded committee questions around facilities, admission requirements, revenue structure, application numbers, diversity, mental health support system, housing, transportation, and succession planning for both administration and board members. Some offerings are online. They are primarily an in-person operation.

The VHEC visiting team recommends certifying The Center for Cartoon Studies for another five-year period, without stipulation, and to allow the Center to offer the MFA degree in Cartoon Studies.

Tom Lovett moved that the committee forward to the full SBE the Secretary's recommendation that the Board renew the Center for Cartoon Studies' Certificate of Approval to offer credit-bearing courses and Certificate of Degree-Granting Authority for an MFA program for a period of five years commencing upon the date of the SBE's approval. Jenna O'Farrell seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Lyle Jepson asked for clarification about the process being followed for schools that need to come before the committee for renewal or approval. The Agency is currently surveying school applications using the new July 1, 2023 regulations. It is an intentional pause in bringing schools to the committee, while staff conducts a survey of all independent schools. Also, being developed is the process that the AOE will follow to provide technical assistance. Once reviews are complete, a list will be provided to the committee for those that will be moving forward to seek approval for access to public tuition or not, as well as a list of schools that have chosen to remove themselves from the approval process. A timeline will be discussed in the near future.

Tom Lovett asked about any change in reviewing schools that are not requesting approval for public tuition support. Is it the best use of Agency staff time? Consumer protection is a potential discussion point regarding this topic.

### **Adjourn**

Tom Lovett moved to adjourn the meeting. Lyle Jepson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Lyle Jepson.

