



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
23 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0023

PAUL R. LEPAGE  
GOVERNOR

Stephen L. Bowen  
COMMISSIONER

**EXHIBIT: #VI.C.**

**TO:** Members of the State Board of Education

**FROM:** Stephen L. Bowen, Commissioner\*

**DATE:** June 13, 2012

**SUBJECT:** Clarification and Reaffirmation of the Degree-Granting Authority for the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts (IDSVA).

**BACKGROUND:** 20-A MRSA, § 10704 provides that any educational institution may confer certain degrees if it has been granted initial authority by an Act of the Legislature. Under Chapter 149 CMR, the Maine State Board of Education is required to make a recommendation for action on any initial degree authorization request to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.

In 2006, officials from the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts, located in Portland, Maine, submitted an application seeking authority to confer an initial doctoral degree in visual arts. The application called for the institute to be based in Portland, with instructional sites located in Tuscany, Italy and in New York City. A program approval visit with the applicant and the Institute's Board of Trustees was conducted in Portland on September 7, 2006.

Following the program review a report was prepared which included the review team findings as well as a recommendation for State Board action. With affirmative action by the Board, during its December 13, 2006 meeting (see attached exhibit dated December 13, 2006), this request was referred to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs for Legislative consideration (see attached memorandum of transfer dated December 18, 2006).

In January, 2007 a bill was introduced by the Institute's sponsors and subsequently approved by the Maine Legislature in February, 2007 and signed in to law by Governor Baldacci on March 1, 2007 (see attached copy of Chapter 1, H.P.361, L. D. 462).

Recently, a discrepancy concerning the name of the degree to be awarded by the Institute was brought to the Department's attention. In the initial letter of notification to then Commissioner Susan Gendron specific reference was made to the Institute's "intent to obtain legislative authorization to confer the PhD degree" (see attached letter

from Dr. George Smith to Commissioner Gendron, dated June 14, 2006 and related documents). Throughout the initial application review process for degree-granting authority and the subsequent Legislative consideration of this matter reference was made to a Doctor of Visual Arts (DVA) degree. Following the Board's May 9, 2012 action to approve the proposed team members for the review of the Institute's current application for additional degree-granting authority to confer the Master of Philosophy in the Arts (see attached exhibit copy dated May 9, 2012) it was noted by the Institute's president, Dr. George Smith, that reference was made in the team exhibit to the Doctor of Visual Arts (DVA) which the Institute is not planning to confer. Instead, the Institute plans to confer the degree of PhD in the Arts.

RECOMMENDATION: Given this discrepancy in degree terminology, it is recommended that the State Board of Education accept the Institute's request for degree-granting clarification and affirm its intention, at the doctoral level, to confer the PhD in the Arts instead of the Doctor of Visual Arts degree.

\*Prepared by Harry Osgood  
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