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**From:** Tuttle, Ilene [BOARD] [ituttle@iastate.edu]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 20, 2008 3:25 PM  
**To:** Campbell, Bonnie J.; Downer, Robert; Evans, Jack B.; Gartner, Michael; Harkin, Ruth; Lang, Craig; Miles, David; Vasquez, Rose  
**Cc:** Smith, Dianne [BOARD]  
**Subject:** Attached letter to Sally Mason from the Assoc. of College & University Museums & Galleries  
**Attachments:** ACUMG Letter 81808.pdf

[On behalf of David Miles--](#)

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ASSOCIATION OF  
COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY  
MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

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Vanderbilt University

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Samek Art Gallery  
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**Stefan Sommer, Member at Large**  
Colorado Plateau Biodiversity Center  
Northern Arizona University

August 18, 2008

Sally Mason, President  
The University of Iowa  
President's Office  
101 Jessup Hall  
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1316

Dear President Mason,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Association of College and University Museums and Galleries, the official academic museum affiliate of the American Association of Museums. It has been brought to our attention that you are currently exploring the possibility of selling an important work of art placed in public trust for the people of Iowa in the University of Iowa Museum of Art and that the funds from this sale would be used for purposes unrelated to the Museum's collections. May I state succinctly, that if you were to do this, you place your Museum and its staff in the unacceptable position of compromising both their ethical and professional standards as clearly articulated by the American Association of Museums. To summarize, funds raised through de-accessioning works of art are not to be used for any purpose other than the enhancement of the collection itself. To do otherwise violates the donor's wishes and our professional standards. Additionally, such an action potentially affects the reputation of your institution; its ability in the future to attract donations of all types; its likelihood of retaining its hard-earned distinction as one of only 776 accredited museums (out of over 17,500) in the entire United States, and its future ability to draw talented arts professionals to your faculty and museum staff.

Beyond your borders, such actions very severely compromise all university and college museums and our efforts to expand and improve our collections with donor assistance. Such an action offends our life's work, threatens all of our donor relations, and denies the seriousness of purpose with which we go about the complex work of developing important collections to enhance learning on our campuses and to share that learning with our communities.

The Association of College and University Museums and Galleries (ACUMG) is a network of museums and galleries of all disciplines affiliated with academic institutions throughout North America. ACUMG is an Affiliate Professional Organization of the American Association of Museums (AAM).  
[www.acumg.org](http://www.acumg.org).

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As a native and graduate of a state and university in an equally rural setting due south of you, I can personally attest that the opportunity to see inspiring works of art from different cultures and different times in the university museum was a transformative experience in my youth. For many students, the university museum is their first exposure to great art. I pray that you carefully consider the transformative power original works of art can play on students' lives, imaginations, and romantic engagement with learning as you discuss with your Board of Regents the disposition of one of the nation's most important works of American art held in your care and trust.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



David Alan Robertson  
President, ACUMG  
The Ellen Philips Katz Director  
Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University

Cc:

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