1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
Chair Jerry Berger called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES NOVEMBER 2007 MEETING
Jerry Berger asked for a motion to approve the minutes; Director Van Vliet made the motion, Director Preston Pulliams seconded and the motion was carried.

3. ESSENTIAL SKILLS TASK FORCE
Chair Berger called on Doug Kosty for the Essential Skills Task Force update. Kosty informed the committee that the Essential Skills Task Force has been working to further define the Essential Skills recommended by the State Board of Education for high school graduation, beginning with the class of 2012. A combined Essential Skills and Standards and Assessment
The task force, which includes representatives from all three education sectors plus the business community, has also recommended suitable assessments for the four skills for which the first cohort of students will be responsible (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Applied Mathematics). The consensus recommendation was to assess Reading and Writing through current 10th grade OAKS assessments (both administered at state level) and to assess speaking at the local level. The group recommended state-level assessment of students’ ability to apply mathematics in a variety of settings, but did not reach consensus that the current OAKS mathematics test is appropriate. There was concern that the current test is too closely tied to specific mathematics content and does not put sufficient emphasis on general problem-solving based on fundamental mathematical principles. If the current OAKS test is used, it should be supplemented with problem-solving items. Director Van Vliet asked if there were any comments pertaining to arts and music; Kosty said that those areas haven’t been a task force focus. Chair Berger noted that the identified Essential Skills were minimum requirements that a student must have upon leaving the high school to be successful no matter what direction he takes in life; a student must demonstrate mastery of these skills (math, reading and writing) in all subjects (which is one reason they are essential skills and not content requirements). Thus, in addition to the required credits, to earn a high school diploma students must have these essential skills. He opined that alternative ways of teaching may be needed in order for students to adequately learn and master these basic requirements.

Mark Endsley reiterated Director Van Vliet’s point concerning the arts; he noted that studies have shown that arts and second language scores have declined and the situation needs to be addressed. He noted that, in the past, endorsements were approved by the Joint Boards to move away from the arts and, if thoughtful, deliberate action isn’t taken to correct this trend, then a continuing eroding of the arts requirements will be a disservice to Oregonian students. It was opined that NCLB has been focusing on math/science rather than arts/language and that that influences where emphasis is placed. Superintendent Castillo agreed; however, she noted that past funding recessions have changed the vision and target of the K-12 work. There needed to be recognition of these changes in work focus and how those changes have influenced the direction of this trend. She added that the current vision is that all students will be proficient in reading and math. Director Miller-Jones agreed and then noted that, from a higher education perspective, when a student is proficient in reading, math, and science, that student enters the colleges/universities with only half of the needed skills. That student also needs skills in the arts and languages.

Salam Noor said that he believed that even though the Essential Skills pertained to math, reading, and science, those requirements did not exclude the arts/languages from a student’s curriculum; the issue was how to communicate to schools that skills such as critical thinking were found in all subjects. Director Van Vliet opined that school curricula tended to be driven by business community demands and, as a result, arts/languages were excluded. Elaine Yandle-Roth noted that, as a parent of a class of 2012 child, the curriculum notices she had received did not put undue emphasis on the identified Essential Skills, but, rather built curricula toward creating a well-rounded student.

4. AAOT: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CIA, PROVOSTS, JBAC

Chair Berger called on Elaine Yandle-Roth for an update on AA/OT revision. She reported that there is agreement that information literacy and cultural literacy should be embedded within the current courses required for the AA/OT and that only two unresolved issues remain. One is whether to require the GPA that is currently required to earn an associates degree (2.0) or the slightly higher GPA that is required for automatic acceptance into OUS institutions (2.25). The
other is whether applied arts courses should count toward the Arts and Letters/Humanities requirement of the AA/OT. A subcommittee is working on these questions and a final recommendation will be submitted to UEE in April.

5. COLLEGE ACCESS CHALLENGE GRANT
Marjorie Lowe, Governor’s Office, reported that the federal budget this year will include the “College Access Challenge Grant” in the amount of approximately $700,000 for Oregon, which is timely as the Oregon Opportunity Grant has been exhausted. The federal money is of limited duration (two years) and will be used to target traditional students as well as those who don’t consider themselves college material; this will be incentive funding. Another population that will be assisted is the “lost generation” that elected not to go to college in the past decade due to college being unaffordable.

6. COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING
Salam Noor walked members through the “College Access Networks” document that was the response to a UEE directive to investigate a common web portal for students that would include ATLAS and other sources of postsecondary information. Noor reviewed the key findings:

- State-level websites or portals are a major college access strategy.
- Many states are strengthening their portals with ads, mentoring students, scholarships.
- Many target information and services to specific grade levels.
- Many states offer common services such as applications and financial aid information through their college portals.
- Some colleges outsource some of their portal services to vendors.
- States with portals report more students expressing interest in college.
- States typically designate one entity as the lead agency for creating and maintaining the college access network.
- Putting a portal fully in place takes 1-3 years.
- Budgets frequently run $500,000 to $1 million/year.

Noor noted that most states use contracted marketing consultants for design, creation, and scope of information contained in the websites. These websites are targeting first-generation, adult learners, traditional students, and other constituencies. Connie Green encouraged the committee to explore online websites from other states. Ms. Green drew members’ attention to the Draft Strategic Plan for the Oregon College Access Network. Staff recommendation: pursue this strategy to build capacity/funding in this state.

Additional Discussion: Cost and whether it included the hardware (probably not, but could). The three states reviewed subcontracted the work. Remember the challenges of getting funding from the Legislature for computer-related projects, given past experience. Suggested that UEE use the SB 342 report to demonstrate all the work that’s been done and what is needed to make it very accessible. Could the post secondary institutions help fund such portals? Should this be a discussion of the Joint Boards budget subcommittee?

7. DUAL CREDIT TASK FORCE REPORT
Baldwin van der Bijl, chair of the Dual Credit Task Force, stated that the task force was made up of three representatives each from high school, community colleges, and OUS. The success of students who take Dual Credit was a focus. Also instructor requirements to teach these classes were discussed. A study has been conducted and a report will be presented to the UEE during the April 2008 meeting. The study found that students who have taken a subject as Dual Credit
do as well in subsequent coursework in the same subject as students who do all of their coursework in college or university. The task force is also suggesting that the full potential of the program has not been realized.

The task force has recommended the following:

1. Recommend Oregon explore setting a state standard for Dual Credit Programs. It is suggested that the NACEP standards be examined as a model. This should be explored at a summer summit on this topic. Many programs already resemble these standards, so it would not be insurmountable.

2. Recommend that the academic performance of Dual Credit students be examined regularly, perhaps by graduate students in appropriate OUS programs. It would be helpful to know college by college how the program is working.

3. Another recommendation is to support/fund NACEP accreditation efforts by colleges and universities, since this effort takes money and time ($150,000 for biennium).

4. Another recommendation is to provide some funding to increase student access to these programs; decisions about how to spend the money would be made locally ($210,000 for biennium).

5. A final recommendation is to expand the pool of qualified teachers ($783,400 for biennium).

Discussion: There are many variables involved that could affect the success of Dual Credit students, such as better teachers and smarter, more motivated students. The current study was not designed to address all of the factors. Rather, the intent was to find out if Dual Credit students do as well as their counterparts who take the same courses at a community college or university. The success of the Dual Credit program is based on how the students do in subsequent coursework. The following issues and questions emerged during discussion of Dual Credit programs:

1. Impending retirement of HS teachers who are qualified for Dual Credit programs is likely to reduce the scope of the program – especially in rural areas. The way Oregon prepares its teachers does not prepare them to teach college level classes. Could there be different possible approaches for teachers to be judged acceptable? Could we use retirees from other sectors to teach in the Dual Credit programs? Are there ways to incent people to become teachers (like the defunct Oregon Teacher Corp)?

2. The cost of textbooks to school districts sometimes is a barrier to participation.

3. There is a need for good student counseling, support.

4. Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate are other accelerated learning options. Should these align with Dual Credit?

5. Where does the Expanded Options program fit in and does it increase student access to Dual Credit?

6. Is there competition among different Dual Credit programs?

7. What would national accreditation through NACEP accomplish? Answer: Some colleges/universities don’t accept Dual Credit (e.g., schools outside Oregon and private schools in Oregon), but they would if Dual Credit programs were nationally accredited. Also, there is skepticism on the part of OUS faculty about the level of a university course
that is taught in a high school. Program coordinators desire a uniform set of standards, like the NACEP standards, to help combat that.

8. Do we need to prioritize the list to take to the Joint Boards? Is there the option of taking some or all the recommendations and incorporating them into a Joint Boards package? We need to be clear why we need these resources to grow or maintain the Dual Credit program.

9. Can we document the benefits to the education system of such programs?

10. The financial savings these programs mean to students and families should be emphasized.

11. Is there a danger of asking Legislature for too little? What is the persuasiveness to Legislators of data that shows the program saves money in the long run?

There was agreement that the budget priorities should be grouped as a single package and that the report to the Legislature should include the benefits/successes of this program and how investments in Dual Credit programs would contribute to legislative and joint board goals.

8. STATE SCHOLARS INITIATIVE
Ms. Green advised UEE that the staff looked for partners for this grant and, since none have come forward, the topic has been tabled.

9. TOPICS FOR APRIL 30, 2008 MEETING
The next UEE meeting is scheduled in Portland, from 1:00 – 4:00 on April 30. On the agenda were the following:
- Dual Credit Report (POP)
- Final AAOT recommendations
- Marketing strategy next steps
- SB 324 report
- Essential Skills, how standards would be used by CC/OUS

The committee spoke of the benefits of scheduling a meeting of Joint Boards in May to discuss the two sectors’ Policy Option Packages and directed staff to work on such scheduling.

10. ADJOURNMENT
Chair Berger adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.