

**Minutes of Meeting  
State Board of Regents Executive Committee  
January 8, 2007**

Chair Pitcher hosted the meeting via conference call from the Regents' Offices in The Gateway. He was joined there by Vice Chair Beesley, with Regents Atkin, Jardine, Jensen, and Karras participating by conference call. Also in attendance or on the phone were Commissioner Kendell, Joyce Cottrell, CEU President Ryan Thomas, UCAT President Rob Brems, Jared Hanes, Kevin Walthers, Amanda Covington, Dave Buhler, Mark Spencer, and Gary Wixom. Joining the call for the first agenda item were Laura Snow, John Morris, Chuck Wight, and Alice Whitaker from the University of Utah. Roxana Orellana from the *Salt Lake Tribune* was also in attendance.

University of Utah – Approval to Extend, Through December 31, 2007, the University's Purchase Option on the Entrada Ranch. Commissioner Kendell explained that in June 2006, the Regents had approved a purchase option at \$50,000 for approximately 400 acres near Moab. The property is intended as a research and education training site for the University of Utah, with the ultimate intent of providing opportunities for students to do internships and research. The purchase option expires on January 10, 2007. The University's Board of Trustees approved the extension of the purchase option earlier today. Commissioner Kendell said an individual had offered to purchase this property and lease it back to the University for One Dollar (\$1.00) per year. The extension of the purchase option would cost an additional \$75,000. Commissioner Kendell recommended approval of the extension to the purchase option. **Regent Atkin moved approval of the purchase option extension for an additional \$75,000, non-refundable, to be applied toward the purchase price. Regent Jensen seconded the motion, which was adopted unanimously.**

College of Eastern Utah/Southeast Applied Technology College Merger. Chair Pitcher reminded the Regents the Board had approved the merger of these two institutions on October 26, with the provision that an alternate plan could be submitted to the Commissioner and forwarded to the Regents. A partnership plan was presented to the UCAT Board of Trustees last week. Documents discussed by the Regents included the Commissioner's recommendations, a side-by-side comparison of both models, cost estimates for both models, the role and mission of a comprehensive community college, and UCAT's proposal for a regional partnership.

Commissioner Kendell discussed each documents and concluded that, after studying all of the issues, he determined that his earlier recommendation of a merger between the two institutions was the best decision for students, CEU, UCAT, and the Utah System of Higher Education. If SEATC were to become a fully independent entity, it would cost in excess of \$300,000 to set up its own human resources, information technology, student services and academic services departments. If SEATC were to unite with CEU, its accreditation goal would automatically be achieved. In addition, all of the functions served by UCAT are included in the role and mission of a comprehensive community college. The Commissioner recognized this has been controversial but concluded a merger of the two institutions remained the best solution.

Dr. Walthers said if CEU were to bill SEATC as an auxiliary enterprise for past services, the cost would be \$152,300. He reported the last CEU audit found that CEU did not have sufficient staff in its business department, yet it is providing services to SEATC at CEU's expense.

President Brems, President Thomas, and Commissioner Kendell responded to questions. Chair Pitcher referred to the side-by-side comparison of the issues and commented briefly on the following: Objective 1, Item E: Dual reporting does not work. Objective 3: The students will benefit through accreditation and

opportunities for financial aid. Objective 5: Multiple lines of reporting (to four boards) is cumbersome and just does not work. Chair Pitcher said the intention of this meeting was for the Executive Committee to determine whether to ratify the Board's earlier decision for a merger or to bring the issue to the full Board on January 19.

President Brems said the UCAT Trustees favored the partnership model because it provided for a trial period. He proposed an 18-month trial, after which the Board of Regents would receive a progress report and make a final decision. He said SEATC was a candidate for accreditation and was prepared to move forward with a self-study site visit in April. He pointed out financial aid is different in UCAT institutions than in other schools. A consortium is being formed to deal with financial aid at some of the smaller campuses.

Regent Jensen asked if due diligence had been carried out to the Regents' and the public's satisfaction. Commissioner Kendell said he had received UCAT's proposal in good faith and weighed the benefits and liabilities of a partnership against the benefits and liabilities of a merger. He concluded a merger was the best solution in this instance.

Presidents Thomas and Brems were asked to comment. President Thomas said either option would bring its own challenges and opportunities. He said he would implement whatever the Regents determined to be the best direction. President Brems said, whatever the Regents decided, he would "make it work." The UCAT Board, however, would feel better if time were allowed to fine-tune the partnership and continue the present relationship for another year.

**Regent Atkin said he had not heard compelling reasons to overturn the Board's earlier decision and moved that the motion approved in October be reaffirmed. Vice Chair Beesley seconded the motion.** Regent Jensen expressed his concern that other Regents might feel left out of the final decision. **Vice Chair Beesley moved that the material be sent to all of the Regents with the understanding that the original decision will stand, unless a majority of the Board contact either Commissioner Kendell or Chair Pitcher to request that the issue be placed on the agenda of the January 19 Regents' meeting for discussion by the entire Board. Regent Atkin agreed with the amendment.** Vice Chair Beesley pointed out that a lengthened study would not necessarily result in a unanimous decision by all parties. She urged the Regents to move forward. To prolong the decision would only prolong the period of dissension.

**Vote was taken on the amended motion, which was adopted by the following vote:**

Chair Pitcher – Aye  
Vice Chair Beesley – Aye  
Regent Atkin – Aye  
Regent Jardine – Aye  
Regent Jensen – Nay  
Regent Karras – Aye

Chair Pitcher thanked everyone for their participation. The meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

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Joyce Cottrell CPS, Executive Secretary