

**MINUTES OF THE
EDUCATION INTERIM COMMITTEE**

September 18, 2002 – 2:00 p.m.– Room 303 State Capitol

Members Present:

Sen. Howard Stephenson, Senate Chair
Rep. Marda Dillree, House Chair
Sen. Karen Hale
Sen. David H. Steele
Sen. Alicia L. Suazo
Sen. Michael G. Waddoups
Sen. Bill Wright
Rep. Afton B. Bradshaw
Rep. Judy Ann Buffmire
Rep. Margaret Dayton
Rep. James A. Ferrin
Rep. Bradley T. Johnson
Rep. Merlynn T. Newbold
Rep. Loraine T. Pace

Rep. J. Morgan Philpot
Rep. LaWanna Shurtliff
Rep. Matt Throckmorton
Rep. A. Lamont Tyler

Members Absent:

Sen. D. Chris Buttars
Rep. Jeff Alexander
Rep. Duane E. Bourdeaux
Rep. James R. Gowans

Staff Present:

Ms. Constance C. Steffen, Research Analyst
Mr. Dee S Larsen, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Wendy L. Bangerter, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present and a copy of materials can be found at <http://www.image.le.state.ut.us/imaging/history.asp> or by contacting the committee secretary, Wendy Bangerter, at 538-1032.

1. Committee Business

Chair Stephenson called the meeting to order at 2:20 p.m.

MOTION: Rep. Throckmorton moved to approve the minutes of June 19, 2002. The motion passed unanimously with Sen. Waddoups, Rep. Bradshaw, Rep. Dayton, and Rep. Johnson absent for the vote.

2. Engineering and Computer Science Initiative Report

Mr. John Sutherland, chair, Technology Initiative Advisory Board, distributed and reviewed a progress report on the Engineering and Computer Science Initiative, which was created to increase the number of graduates in engineering, computer science, and related technology. He stated that the initiative has been successful in increasing the number of students enrolled in four-year engineering, computer science, and related technology programs, but ongoing funds will have to be restored to achieve the initiative's original goals.

Mr. Jerry Stringfellow, dean, College of Engineering, University of Utah, stated that the number of students admitted to engineering programs is up 28 percent over the last two years. He stated that industry is pushing to increase the number of engineering graduates, which would enable industry to expand in the state. He said there is still a shortage of engineers in traditional engineering fields, but not as high a demand for software engineers. Nevertheless, computer science is one of the top ten fastest growing occupations.

3. Remedial Courses in Higher Education

Ms. Constance C. Steffen gave a presentation about remedial courses in higher education. She noted that not all students who enter college are ready to do college-level work and, consequently, they may be required to take remedial classes. Because remedial courses do not count towards a degree, it takes more time and money to graduate. Ms. Steffen compared the high school core curriculum, college admission requirements, and college core general education requirements. She noted that the admission requirements of the state's four-year universities are more rigorous than the high school core curriculum mandated by the State Board of Education. The core general education requirements of Utah's colleges and universities are the same systemwide. Because the colleges and universities have varying admission requirements, but identical core general education requirements, it is expected that students at the four-year universities are least likely to need remedial courses and students in the two-year colleges with open admissions policies are most likely to need remedial courses.

Dr. Cecelia H. Foxley, Commissioner of Higher Education, distributed and reviewed "Remedial Education in the Utah System of Higher Education," which contains data on the percentage of students taking remedial courses in the fall of 2001 and direct instructional expenditures for remedial courses. She emphasized that higher education has the responsibility to assure all students have the skills necessary to succeed in higher education and work, regardless of their varied education preparation.

Supt. Steven O. Laing, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, stated that some high school students choose to prepare themselves for higher education by taking a more rigorous course load than the core curriculum, but others do not. He stated that the only way to force students to be prepared for higher education is to take away choice, and he noted that the State Board of Education is considering increasing high school graduation requirements.

4. Public School Choice under "No Child Left Behind"

Supt. Steven O. Laing, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, explained the federal "No Child Left Behind" law and its requirement to offer public school choice to students enrolled in Title I schools that fail to achieve progress goals. He distributed and reviewed information on the number of students transferring to different public schools this fall pursuant to the federal law.

5. Other Items / Adjourn

MOTION: Rep. Buffmire moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously with Sen. Waddoups, Rep. Bradshaw, Rep. Dayton, and Rep. Throckmorton absent for the vote.

Chair Stephenson adjourned the meeting at 4:20 p.m.