FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 6, 2007
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Inter-O rganizational Task Force to Advance Electronic Authentication and Authorization for Higher Education

Washington, D.C. ~ The Board of Directors of the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) is pleased to announce the launch of an inter-organizational eAuthentication/eAuthorization (EA2) Task Force. Representatives from eleven associations and from the U.S. Department of Education, who will serve as Task Force Members, will plan and seek implementation of common eAuthentication/eAuthorization technologies and practices to enable trusted exchange of data among colleges and universities and the federal and state government departments and agencies, and suppliers. Based on widely used open standards, a decade of development, and the successful experience of several projects, the EA2 Task Force expects the results of their work to sharply improve service to students, faculty, and the public; and, to improve security and lower unit costs.

Task Force Chair Charles Leonhardt, Principal Technologist at Georgetown University, states, “The first charge is identifying barriers to broad implementation of the availability technologies and standards. Then we can prioritize the tasks to make most use of current technology and available resources.”

Rob Abel, CEO of IMS Global Learning Consortium, adds, “More and more colleges and universities are using IMS specifications for exchanging learning services and for enterprise integration. We are pleased these will be part of a broad implementation initiative.”

PESC’s Executive Director Michael Sessa states, “Projects currently in production — NCHELP’s widely implemented Meteor Network, PESC’s suite of electronic XML transcripts, JSTOR’s Shibboleth implementation in the U.K. for electronic journals, and CRC’s broadening implementation in financial aid for examples — have demonstrated feasibility, reliability, and security of electronic data transfer. These experiences can be the basis for large-scale implementations.”

“eLearning is being implemented widely to improve our teaching and learning.” Mr. Leonhardt continues. “Now we are integrating eLearning with library and administrative systems and, via the Web, global collaborations and access to information worldwide. The EA2 infrastructure will permit immediate implementation of these trusted exchanges.”

Representatives serving on the Task Force include:
The inaugural meeting of the Task Force is set for Tuesday March 6, 2007 at the National Center for Higher Education, One Dupont Circle NW, in Washington, D.C. and will run from 9am – 3pm. Organizations that are members of any of the eleven associations may send representatives to attend and observe Task Force meetings; and those wishing to attend must register in advance by completing and submitting a Registration Form available at www.PESC.org. The first report from the EA2 Task Force is expected late summer of this year.

About AACRAO
The mission of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) is to provide professional development, guidelines and voluntary standards to be used by higher education officials regarding the best practices in records management, admissions, enrollment management, administrative information technology and student services. It also provides a forum for discussion regarding policy initiation and development, interpretation and implementation at the institutional level and in the global educational community. For more information, please visit www.aacrao.org.
About Educause
EDUCAUSE is a nonprofit association whose mission is to advance higher education by promoting the intelligent use of information technology. The current membership comprises more than 2,000 colleges, universities, and educational organizations, including 200 corporations, with over 16,500 active members. EDUCAUSE has offices in Boulder, Colorado, and Washington, D.C. For more information, please visit www.educause.edu.

About EAP
The Electronic Authentication Partnership is comprised of a wide range of stakeholders, including Federal government agencies, state governments, private sector companies and organizations, public interest groups and trade groups. The goal of the EAP is to provide organizations with a trusted means of relying on digital credentials issued by a variety of e-authentication systems. The EAP welcomes any public or private sector organization. For more information please visit www.eapartnership.org.

About Georgetown University
Founded in 1789, the same year the U.S. Constitution took effect, Georgetown University is the nation's oldest Catholic and Jesuit university. Today, Georgetown is a major international research university that embodies its founding principles in the diversity of our students, faculty, and staff, our commitment to justice and the common good, our intellectual openness, and our international character. For more information, please visit www.georgetown.edu.

About IMS
IMS/GLC is the leading advocacy group encouraging the growth and impact of learning technology worldwide. IMS/GLC is a global, nonprofit, member organization that provides leadership in shaping and growing the learning industry through community development of standards, promotion of innovation, and research into best practices. For more information, please visit www.imsglobal.org.

About Internet2
Internet2 is the foremost U.S. advanced networking consortium. Led by the research and education community since 1996, Internet2 promotes the missions of its members by providing both leading-edge network capabilities and unique partnership opportunities that together facilitate the development, deployment and use of revolutionary Internet technologies. Internet2 brings the U.S. research and academic community together with technology leaders from industry, government and the international community to undertake collaborative efforts that have a fundamental impact on tomorrow's Internet. For more information, please visit http://www.internet2.edu/.

About Liberty Alliance
The vision of Liberty Alliance is to enable a networked world based on open standards where consumers, citizens, businesses and governments can more easily conduct online transactions while protecting the privacy and security of identity information. This world, where devices and identities of all kinds are linked by federation and protected by universal strong authentication, is being built today with Liberty's open identity standards, business and deployment guidelines and best practices for managing privacy. For more information, please visit www.projectliberty.org.

About NCHELP
Based in Washington, DC, the National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs, Inc. (NCHELP) represents a nationwide network of guaranty agencies, secondary markets, lenders, loan servicers, collectors, schools and other organizations involved in the administration of the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP). Since its founding, NCHELP has represented its members on public policy and regulatory issues with the legislative and executive branches of the federal government and has fostered the standardization of exchanging loan information electronically, through oversight of the Electronic Standards Committee (ESC) and the Meteor project; making loan application, delivery, and inquiry processes easier, faster, and more efficient. For more information, please visit www.nchelp.org.

About NASFAA
The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) is a nonprofit membership organization that represents more than 12,000 financial aid professionals at nearly 3,000 colleges, universities and career schools across the country. Based in Washington, D.C., NASFAA is the only national association with a primary focus on student aid legislation, regulatory analysis, and training for financial aid administrators. Each year, members help more than 8 million students receive funding for postsecondary education. For more information, please visit www.nasfaa.org.

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About PESC
Established in 1997 and located in Washington, D.C., the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) is a non-profit, community-based, umbrella association of colleges and universities; professional and commercial organizations; data, software and service providers; and state and federal government agencies. PESC’s mission is to lead the establishment and adoption of data exchange standards in education. The goals of the mission are to enable the improvement of institutional performance and foster collaboration across educational communities in order to lower costs, improve service, and attain system interoperability. For more information, please visit www.pesc.org.

About SHEEO
The State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) is a nonprofit, nationwide association of the chief executive officers serving statewide coordinating boards and governing boards of postsecondary education. Created in 1954 by the executive officers of nine of the ten statewide higher education boards then in existence, SHEEO’s current members are the chief executive officers serving 26 statewide governing boards and 30 statewide coordinating boards of higher education. For more information, please visit www.sheeo.org.

About SIFA
The Schools Interoperability Framework Association (SIFA) is a unique, non-profit collaboration composed of over 400 schools, districts, states, the U.S. and international government agencies, software vendors and consultants who collectively define the rules and regulations for educational software data interoperability. The SIF Specification enables diverse applications to interact and share data efficiently, reliably, and securely regardless of the platform hosting those applications. SIFA has united these education technology end users and providers in an unprecedented effort to give teachers more time to do what they do best: teach. For more information, please visit www.sifinfo.org.

About US Department of Education
The Department of Education was created in 1980 by combining offices from several federal agencies. Its original directive remains its mission today — to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the nation. Its 4,500 employees and $71.5 billion budget are dedicated to: establishing policies on federal financial aid for education and distributing as well as monitoring those funds; collecting data on America's schools and disseminating research; focusing national attention on key educational issues; prohibiting discrimination and ensuring equal access to education. For more information, please visit www.ed.gov.

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