

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

VOLUNTARY SYSTEM OF ACCOUNTABILITY UPDATE

Action Requested: Receive the update.

Executive Summary: President Ben Allen will present an update on this initiative.

Background: The Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) is designed to improve public understanding of how public colleges and universities operate. It communicates information on the undergraduate student experience through a common web reporting template called *College Portrait*.

The VSA, a voluntary initiative for four-year public colleges and universities, was developed through a partnership between the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC). It is designed to help institutions meet the following objectives:

- ◆ Demonstrate accountability and stewardship to the public.
- ◆ Measure educational outcomes to identify effective educational practices.
- ◆ Assemble information that is accessible, understandable, and comparable.

More than 80 leaders from 70 public higher education institutions participated in the development of the VSA program. President Allen was one of 12 presidents selected to serve on the Presidential Advisory Committee. This Committee provided oversight to seven task forces made up of presidents, provosts, student affairs officers, institutional research officers, and faculty members. The Committee identified and evaluated potential data elements during an eight-month period. The task forces were aided in designing the VSA by focus groups, feedback from the higher education community, researchers, and research literature. After reviewing the work of the task forces, the Presidential Advisory Committee selected the components included in the VSA.

The data elements in the *College Portrait* are organized into three sections – consumer information; student experiences and perceptions; and student learning outcomes. Institutions may include a supplemental page if it is clearly labeled as such.

The primary audiences for the *College Portrait* are prospective students and their families. Secondary audiences include governing board members, legislators, policy-makers, education agency administrators, and institutional faculty and staff.

Next steps: The three Regent universities are all participating in the Voluntary System of Accountability. Their *College Portraits* will be available electronically by June 12, 2008, on their university website. On August 7, 2008, there will be a presentation to the Board of Regents about *College Portrait*, followed by a formal announcement to the general public.