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VOLUNTARY SYSTEM OF ACCOUNTABILITY AT THE REGENT UNIVERSITIES

Action Requested: Receive the presentation.

Executive Summary: The Voluntary System of Accountability, 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 communicate information about the undergraduate student experience through a common web reporting template, called *College Portrait*. The three Regent universities are all participating in the Voluntary System of Accountability. Their *College Portraits* became available electronically through their university websites in June 2008.¹ The presentation to the Board of Regents will include a description about *College Portrait*, examples from the institutions' websites, and descriptions about next steps for the institutions.

Background:

- ◇ **Purpose.** The Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) is intended to improve public understanding of how public colleges and universities operate. 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.

- ◇ **Elements.** 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 *College Portrait* template is generated using the tools and specifications provided by the VSA program without altering its form or content. The NASULGC and AASCU Boards established a VSA Oversight Board to review VSA components and determine whether items should be added, modified, deleted, or revised. Each university is responsible for the accuracy of the information in its *College Portrait*. The data elements must be continually updated to reflect the most current institutional information and VSA requirements.

- ◇ **Audiences.** The primary audiences for the *College Portrait* are prospective and current students and their families; governing board members; legislators; policy-makers; education agency administrators; institutional faculty and staff; and the public.

¹ http://www.public.iastate.edu/~inst_res_info/pages/CollegePortrait.html;
<http://www.uiowa.edu/admissions/undergrad/why-iowa/vsa.html>;
http://www.uni.edu/collegeportrait/UNI_College_Portrait.pdf

- ◇ Reporting schedule. The following schedule has been established by the VSA for participating institutions:
 - Student and family information must be available within three months of becoming a VSA participant.
 - Undergraduate success and progress rates must be available within one year of becoming a VSA participant.
 - Future plans data must be available within two years of becoming a VSA participant.
 - Student experiences and perceptions data must be available within two years of becoming a VSA participant.
 - Measurement of student learning outcomes data must be available within four years of becoming a VSA participant.

- ◇ National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The three Regent universities will use the NSSE to measure student involvement on campus. The survey must be administered to a random sample of freshmen and seniors at least once every three years. The universities will be required to administer one of the following three instruments measuring student learning outcomes within the next four years: (1) Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP); (2) Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA); or (3) Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP).