



**MINNESOTA STATE**  
Board of Trustees

**AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

**NAME:** Outreach and Engagement Committee

**DATE:** November 14, 2023

**TITLE:** Voluntary Support of Education (VSE) Survey Update

Action

Review and Discussion

*This item is required by policy*

**PRESENTERS**

Jen Dobossy, System Director of Foundation Services

Kate Adornetto, Executive Director, Central Lakes College Foundation

Jodi Bruns, Sr. Director of Advancement Services, Minnesota State University Mankato Foundation

Missy Doebber-Brever, Operations Manager, Alexandria Community and Technical College Foundation

**PURPOSE**

The Outreach and Engagement Committee will receive an update of the system-wide initiative to complete the Voluntary Support of Education (VSE) survey within a three-year period. This initiative was presented to the trustees in March 2022 and is currently in year-two of its three-year plan. While there are no data findings nor recommendations to share yet, this is an update of progress made this far, plans for year three, and initial observations of its implementation across our system.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The recommendation for system-wide completion of the annual Voluntary Support of Education (VSE) Survey over a three-year period was presented to the Leadership Council and Board of Trustees in March 2022. Since 1957, the VSE survey has collected data on fundraising at U.S. public and private colleges and universities and is managed by the Council of Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). It is the authoritative source of data on charitable giving to educational institutions.

CASE is a global nonprofit association dedicated to educational advancement professionals that includes alumni relations, communications, marketing, fundraising, and advancement services. CASE leads and champions the application and training of the profession's principles and ethics of practice, global reporting standards, competencies, and provision of data and research. They are the world leader in helping advancement professionals make data-informed decisions.

The proposed three year on-ramp to system-wide participation will serve to identify the current baseline of philanthropic outcomes and supports, advancement structures at the campuses, and track progress going forward with system-wide consistent, relevant and reliable data.

The survey inputs are combined totals of foundation and college/university data to get a more accurate picture of true costs and outputs of advancement services. Following year three, data will be reviewed and analyzed along with our current return on investment (ROI) metric to inform recommendations for metrics that should be considered when evaluating the role of advancement.

Timeline for adoption:

- Year 1: Pilot
- Year 2: Wave 2
- Year 3: Final wave

### **Year One/Pilot (July 2022-June 2023): 8 participants, complete**

Participants submitted survey using FY22 data:

- Alexandria Community & Technical College
- Central Lakes College
- Minneapolis College
- Northland Community & Technical College
- Ridgewater College
- Saint Paul College
- Metro State University
- Minnesota State University, Mankato

Presented at the Development Conference on 6/14/23

Update email, invitation to Year Two sent to Leadership Council on 8/10/23

Hosted Webinar for how to engage in Year Two on 8/17/23

Resources developed and supports put into place to date:

- VSE Survey Instructions (i.e., Terms and Definitions, Tips to Find Data and Best Practices)
- Monthly 45 min. Zoom meetings with year one pilot participants for trouble shooting, resource sharing and mentorship on completing the VSE Survey
- Teams channel devoted to VSE Survey
- 1:1 unlimited on-demand support by CASE
- Frequently Asked Questions updated regularly
- Baseline “Level of Readiness” Questionnaire to assist in determining readiness for “submission” year or “data prep” year for year two participation
- Workflow with deadlines for submission year and data prep year

### **Year Two (July 2023 – June 2024): In Progress**

There were two participation tracks from which to choose:

- **“Submission” year** – defined as foundations that determine their systems are ready to participate and will submit their complete survey responses using FY23 data by December 15, 2023.
- **“Data prep” year** – defined as foundations that determine that they need to use this year to ensure that their respective system(s) are set up appropriately to answer the survey questions starting in August 2024 by December 2024 – using FY24 data.

**Submission – 12 (CC-9 U-3)**

Minnesota State University, Moorhead  
 Normandale Community College  
 Fond du Lac Tribal & Community College  
 Minnesota State Community & Technical College

**And all Year One participants:**

Alexandria Technical & Community College  
 Central Lakes College  
 Metropolitan State University  
 Minneapolis College  
 Minnesota State University, Mankato  
 Northland Community & Technical College

Ridgewater College  
 Saint Paul College

**Data prep – 21 (CC-17 U-4)**

Anoka Ramsey Community College  
 Anoka Technical College  
 Bemidji State University  
 Century College

Dakota County Technical College  
 Hennepin Technical College  
 Inver Hills Community College  
 Lake Superior College  
 Minnesota North College  
 Minnesota State College Southeast  
 Minnesota West Community & Technical College  
 Northwest Technical College  
 North Hennepin Community College  
 Pine Technical & Community College  
 Rochester Community & Technical College  
 Riverland Community College  
 South Central College  
 Southwest Minnesota State University  
 St. Cloud State University  
 St. Cloud Technical & Community College  
 Winona State University

**Year 3 (July 2024-June 2025): all colleges and universities are required to submit the VSE Survey**

Key takeaways:

- We are committed to working closely with the foundations/advancement leaders on this implementation and to inform recommendations that result from it.
- Support is needed from CASE to ensure appropriate benchmarking and collective accurate interpretation/understanding of the survey results, its implications and what data is most effective to roll-up for system-wide analysis.
- It takes time to “shore up” databases and learn how to code data and run reports necessary for the survey. Staffing structures and turnover contribute to the ability to participate.
- Given the variety of different databases used across the foundations, customized 1:1 supports are necessary and continue to be updated.

- After year three, the VSE Survey could be a tool to facilitate and promote growth and support the work of fundraising/advancement across all of the foundations. After year three, we might learn that some are still not ready to participate in the survey.